

Sound Words Bible Correspondence Course

The Character of God

Part 3

Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE,
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.

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Introduction

This correspondence course is designed to help you understand what God has revealed to us in his Word the Bible. It is important, therefore, to realise that it is a spiritual exercise that you are engaged in, and we pray it will draw you closer to the Lord. In order to benefit most from it, here are a number of suggestions that will help.

1. The most obvious item you will need is a copy of the Bible. Throughout the course you will be directed to many Bible passages and so you will need to read these for yourself. These will be identified by telling you the name of the book of the Bible, and that will be followed by the chapter and verse. For example, Matthew 23:12 – ‘Matthew’ is the Bible book, the first number is chapter 23, and the verse in that chapter is verse 12.
2. Begin with prayer by asking God to guide you. The Bible is the book he has given us, and so there is no one better to go to for help in understanding it. Ask God to teach you the meaning of each Bible passage. Ask God to draw you closer to him as you study. Then ask God

to help you apply the lessons you will learn to your own life.

3. Allow yourself plenty of time so that you can think about each question. Some of the questions will require you to consider carefully before answering them. It is important not to rush, because there is always the danger that you will miss something important. Remember that all time spent studying the Bible will bring you great benefits, so it is well worthwhile to have an adequate amount of time. There is no time limit on when you complete the course so there is no pressure to rush through it. You may discover that what you will learn will challenge you to think and pray as God speaks to you through the Bible. Then pause and do just that before going on with the rest of the questions.
4. Try to be somewhere quiet so that you will not be distracted by interruptions. You may have a quiet room in your home, or may know somewhere outside. This is not always possible, so if you cannot find anywhere quiet ask God to help so that the noises around you do not hinder your concentration.
5. If there is a question you do not fully understand, make a note of it and tell us when you return your workbook.
6. When you have completed the questions, return the workbook to the address you will see printed at the end of the course. It will then be marked and returned to you. If you want to add more than the space in the work book allows for, then put this on a separate sheet

of paper, noting the question and page number it refers to, and return it with the rest of the course.

7. When your work is returned, prayerfully go over the comments that will be made by the marker.
8. If the course is in more than one part, the next section will be sent to you when your work is returned to you.
9. A certificate will be awarded recording the work done for those who complete each full course.

The course is designed for your own personal use, instead of a group of people. The reason for this is that it will help you to develop your own spiritual life and understanding. It also allows an assessment to be made directly related to you when you return the course for marking, and we trust you will find this a further help to your own spiritual development.

Through the course other questions may arise in your mind but which are not covered in the study. Write these down and send them to us and we will be very happy to answer them for you.

Welcome to the third and final part of the Sound Words Bible Correspondence Course on the character of God. Already you have discovered that the Bible has a large amount to tell us about God, and that of course does not surprise us because God is great. This final part of the course covers five more of God's attributes, and we trust that as you study the Bible you will come to appreciate

God more, and want to honour him in your life. It is essential that you have your Bible so that you can turn to the references to which the questions direct you. May the Lord help you as you study his Word.

1) God Is Holy.

God's holiness means he is distinct from all his creatures and exalted above them in infinite majesty, and that he is absolutely pure and free from all sin and impurity.

1. How do Exodus 15:11 and Isaiah 57:15 describe God's exaltation above everyone and everything?
Exodus 15:11

Isaiah 57:15
2. In 1 Samuel 2:2 how does Hannah teach us God's holiness is unique?
3. How does Habakkuk 1:13 show us that God is absolutely pure?
4. Purity is often described in the Bible by using the term light. How is this applied to God in 1 John 1:5, and what does John mean when he tells us there is no 'darkness' in God?

God's holiness means he is entirely separate from all that is unclean and impure.

5. The Bible teaches us that holiness includes separation. How were the '*holy of holies*' (Exod 26:33-34) and the '*Sabbath day*' (Exod 20:11) separate from other places and other days?
6. How does your answer to question 5 help you to understand that God is separate from sin and uncleanness?

God's holiness is most attractive.

7. We have already seen from 1 Samuel 2:2 that all that is good, lovely, pure and spotless is found in God alone. Why does this make God's holiness attractive? Do this by describing a contrast with the unattractiveness of sin we find in the world.
8. What did King Jehoshaphat say about the splendour or beauty of God's holiness in 2 Chronicles 20:21 and what do you think he meant?

9. All of God's works are good and beautiful because he is holy. How is this seen?
- i. in creation? (See Genesis 1:31 and give some examples.)
 - ii. in God's law? (See Romans 7:12 and show how God's laws are good and attractive.)
 - iii. in God's Word? (See Psalm 19:8-9, John 17:17 and explain why God's Word is holy.)
10. Heaven itself resounds with the joy and delight of those around God's throne because they gaze upon his holy beauty. How is this expressed in Revelation 15:3-4?

God's holiness is shared equally by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

11. How did Jesus address his Father in John 17:11, and why is it therefore wrong ever to use this title to describe a man?

12. The Lord Jesus Christ is the holy Son of God. How was Mary told about his holiness in Luke 1:35?
13. How did Jesus' behaviour throughout his life show to us he was holy? Read 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15 and 7:26 and use these Bible passages in your answer.
14. His very name helps us to realise the Holy Spirit is holy. Because he is holy he produces holy fruit in the lives of each true Christian believer. How is this described in Galatians 5:22-23?

God's holiness is awesome and humbles those who are confronted by it.

15. What did God's holiness make Isaiah the prophet aware of when he saw the Lord in the temple? See Isaiah 6:5.
16. How was Peter affected by the holy power of Jesus displayed in the miraculous catch of fish in Luke 5:8?

17. How did God's holiness affect the tax collector when he approached God in prayer in Luke 18:13, and how should this influence us?

God's holiness draws forth men's praise.

18. Down through the centuries godly men and women have praised God because he is holy. Read Psalms 71:22, 99:9 and 22:3 and describe **in your own words** how and why the Psalmists praised God.
19. Believers rejoice in God because as the Holy One he is also our Redeemer. How did Isaiah describe this in Isaiah 41:14, 47:4 and 54:5?

The holiness of God is the pattern for the believer's holiness.

20. What has God said to the Christian believer in 1 Peter 1:16 that should ensure we are seen to be different from unbelievers? Write out the verse and explain what it means in your own words.

21. Why is holiness of life essential for the Christian believer? Read John 3:19-21 and 8:12 and then answer the question in your own words.
22. In 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Paul teaches us that followers of Jesus are to be separate from the sinfulness we find in the world. Summarise those verses in your own words, and describe the promises God has given us in them that encourage us to live lives that are holy and pure.
23. What is to be the Christian believer's great and constant aim throughout life according to Romans 12:1-2?
24. What is the Lord Jesus Christ's great purpose for his people, the Church, according to Ephesians 5:25-27?
25. What will no one see if they are not holy? (Hebrews 12:14)

26. What does God do to believers to help them develop personal holiness according to Hebrews 12:10? Give two examples of how God might do this.

God's holiness is immense.

27. The depth of God's holiness is seen in his reaction towards sin. What do Psalm 78:40-41 and Isaiah 5:24-25 tell us about this reaction in God?
28. How does the cross of Christ teach us more than anything else that God hates sin? Read Isaiah 53, Matthew 27:46, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Hebrews 9:22 and then give your answer.
29. How should our knowledge about God's infinite holiness affect us when we approach God? Is there ever any excuse for being irreverent or flippant in his presence? Read Psalm 2:11, 89:7 and Exodus 3:5 then give your answer and your reasons.

30. Because God is the source of all holiness the Bible teaches us we are to seek it from him in prayer. Write out Paul's prayer for the thessalonian believers in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

2) God is Righteous

God's righteousness or justice means he always does what is right, just, good and fair, and this is inseparably linked to his holiness.

1. Psalm 99 teaches us that God is the great King. What does verse 4 tell us God loves and does?
2. God's righteousness has always been a source of encouragement to his people. For example Abraham referred to it when he prayed for the city of Sodom in Genesis 18:23-25. What did Abraham say the Judge of all the earth would do, and why is that an encouragement for us when we pray?
3. Because God is righteous this means he is trustworthy. Moses described this in Deuteronomy 32:4. Write this verse out in full, and then add in your own words what Moses meant when he described God as "the Rock".

God's righteousness is seen in all his instructions.

4. How does Psalm 19:7-8 describe God's instructions?
5. If all of God's instructions are righteous and good, how should we respond to them?
6. Is God's Word dependable or not? Give your answer in your own words after you have read what Jesus said in John 17:17.
7. If we believe what the Bible, the Word of God, says, how should Jesus' words in John 17:17 help us to be assured we are doing what is right?

God's righteousness is seen in the fulfilment of all his promises.

8. What was Solomon's testimony about the things God had promised in 1 Kings 8:56?

9. What does Nehemiah say is the reason why God keeps his promises in Nehemiah 9:8?
10. God always tells the truth and keeps his Word. Write out five promises God has given us. You will find three in these Bible passages – Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 13:5 and Jude 24, then add two more Bible promises of your own choosing.

God's judgements are always righteous, just and fair.

11. God never ever makes a wrong judgement. How do Psalms 7:11 and 96:13 describe this?
12. Because God is righteous he must always punish sin. Yet the Bible also teaches us God loves to forgive sinners. How could he punish sin and pardon the guilty? The answer is through punishing the Lord Jesus Christ in the sinner's place when he died on the cross. Write out in full what Paul wrote about this in Romans 3:25-26.

13. The righteous judgement of God on sin only serves to magnify the sheer wonder and mercy of his grace to those who believe in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. What does God do for those who follow Jesus according to Romans 5:1?
14. God gives to each Christian believer a new heart so that they love and live in a righteous way themselves. How is this change described in 2 Corinthians 5:17?

God's righteousness causes him to react against self-righteousness.

15. Self-righteousness, which stems from human pride, is always resisted by God and rebuked. How did Jesus reply to the self-righteous Pharisees who criticised him for meeting with tax collectors and sinners in Matthew 9:12-13?
16. How does Peter warn us against being self-righteous in 1 Peter 5:5-6, and what does he encourage us to be like? Write out these verses then explain them in your own words.

God's righteousness will be declared in the final judgement.

17. We know that the Lord watches over all of his people, but what will he do to the wicked according to Psalm 145:20?
18. Many people struggle with the problem of the prosperity of the wicked. Why do so many in this world seem to get away with the wrong they do? The Psalmist, Asaph found the answer to this problem in Psalm 73:17-20. What did he write and how should this help us overcome this problem?
19. The Lord Jesus Christ himself will be the one who will judge all men. When Peter was speaking to Cornelius what did he say about the Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 10:42?
20. Paul describes the awful nature of Christ's judgement on the wicked in the last day in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10. Write out these verses and then explain in your own words how sinners should respond to this solemn news.

21. While God's righteousness will be seen in the destruction of the wicked at the final judgement, it will also be seen in the glorification and blessing of all who have truly loved him. How is this described in these verses?
22. If God himself is righteous and loves to see righteousness in others, what should our response be to this? See Matthew 5:6.

3) God Is Truthful.

God's truthfulness means he is the true God, and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.

1. In the Bible God teaches us that he is the only one true God. Write out what God said about this in Isaiah 43:10-11 and 44:6.
2. When the people in the city of Thessalonica became Christian believers, their conversion was described as a turning to God. When he wrote about this to them, Paul also described God in a particular way. What did he write in 1 Thessalonians 1:9?
3. If there is only one God then all idolatry is both wrong and useless. Read what Jeremiah wrote about the worthlessness of idols in Jeremiah 10:6-11 and then in your own words summarise what he wrote.
4. In your own words explain what Isaiah says about idols and those who make them and worship them in Isaiah 44:9-20.

5. Jesus taught there is only one God in John 17:3. What did he say?
 6. Because there is only one God, he alone should be the object of our worship and love and devotion. How is this expressed in the first three of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:2-7?
 7. Why can we trust in God with complete assurance according to Romans 10:11?
- God knows the truth about everything, and can never deceive nor be deceived.**
8. Why do we know that God will never deceive anyone according to Numbers 23:19 and 1 Samuel 15:29?
 9. Because God will never act contrary to his character, what will he never do, according to Hebrews 6:18?

10. How do 2 Timothy 3:16 and Titus 1:1-2 show us that God's Word, the Bible, is absolutely true?
11. Why is the Bible to be the standard of truth for all that we believe and do? Read Psalm 119:105 and John 17:17 to help you with this question.
12. If the Bible is God's Word then it follows that it must be an honest book. How does the fact that it records the failings of some of its heroes such as Abraham, Moses, Peter and Thomas, demonstrate that it is honest?
13. Why is it impossible for anyone to deceive God? See Job 37:16 and 1 Samuel 2:3.
14. If God knows the whole truth about everyone, why does this mean his judgements will always be just and fair?
15. What happened to those in this list who tried to hide their sins from God – Sarah, when she laughed at God

and then lied about it in Genesis 18:10-15; David, when he committed adultery with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 and 12; Achan in Joshua 7, and Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5?

Sarah:

David:

Achan :

Ananias and Sapphira :

16. How does God's perfect knowledge about us teach us the urgency of our need of the Lord Jesus Christ to rescue us from our sins?
17. How does God's perfect knowledge about us help Christian believers to be secure? See 2 Timothy 2:19.
18. The fact that God is truthful should have a powerful affect on all Christian believers. What do Colossians 3:9-10 and Ephesians 4:25 say this should be?
19. What does God hate and what does he love according to Proverbs 12:22?

20. What does Revelation 21:8 teach us will happen to liars?

God is faithful in the fulfilment of his promises.

21. Why are believers encouraged to be loyal themselves in holding to the faith in Hebrews 10:23?

22. What did Solomon say about the way God keeps his promises in 1 Kings 8:56?

23. There are many examples in the Bible itself of God keeping his promises. Compare Isaiah 7:14 with Luke 1:34-35 and Matthew 1:20-23 and describe this example.

24. God promised in Isaiah 53:4-6 that he would send a Saviour who would suffer for his people's sins. How was this fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus? See Matthew 27:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 19:34 & 20:24-28 and 1 Peter 2:25 to help you answer this question.

25. How do God's promises help Christian believers to know that they are secure in God's care for ever, and will reach heaven safely? See 1 Corinthians 1:8-9, Philippians 1:3-6 and John 10:27-30.

26. How do we know that God will not forget his children and that he will be with them even in their trials? See Isaiah 49:15-16 and Hebrews 13:5.

4) God Is Sovereign.

The sovereignty of God means he is in control of absolutely everything.

1. How does Paul express this in Ephesians 1:11?

2. Proud king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who was the most powerful king on the earth at the time he lived, thought that he was in control of all things. God therefore had to humble him and teach him that God alone is sovereign. Nebuchadnezzar learned this lesson well. Write out how he described God in Daniel 4:34-35.

3. How does Psalm 135:6-7 teach us that God is in control of the world around us?

4. How do Psalm 104:27-29, Matthew 6:26 and Matthew 10:29 teach us God is sovereign over the animal world?

5. How does Proverbs 16:33 show us God is sovereign over what men call 'chance events'?

6. How do Psalm 22:28 and Job 12:23 show us God is sovereign over the nations of the world?

7. Is God sovereign over every single individual? Read Acts 17:26 to help you answer this question.

God is sovereign over our individual lives.
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8. What do we learn about God's sovereignty over the length of our lives from Psalm 139:16, Job 14:5, and Jeremiah 1:5?

9. What do Jeremiah 10:23 and Proverbs 16:9 and 20:24 teach us about God's control over our actions?

<p>At this point we need to be very careful not to fall into error because God's sovereignty does not make us into puppets. This is difficult for us to grasp, but we need to remember none of these things denies our own freedom and responsibility and accountability for our actions, because these are also clearly taught in the Bible. In a way we cannot fully understand, God is still sovereign in all the events that occur in our lives.</p>

10. What does James 1:16-18 teach us about God's sovereign control over the times of joy and blessing in our lives?
11. What did Jesus in John 15:16 and Paul in Ephesians 1:3-6 teach us about God's choice of those who become Christian believers?
12. If it is God who chose us to be believers, this means we owe all our salvation to his sovereign grace and mercy. How should we respond to such love? See how Paul responded in Romans 11:33-36.
13. God's sovereign control of our lives means he is also over even our times of testing and trial. How did Joseph acknowledge this as he looked back over the years of his life when he had suffered such injustice and hatred from his brothers? Genesis 45:5 and 50:19-20.

14. This aspect of God's sovereignty is seen supremely in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men hated and crucified him, yet God used their very malice to accomplish the provision of salvation for his people. How did Peter express this when he preached on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:22-24?
15. One of the most comforting verses about the sovereignty of God for the Christian believer is Romans 8:28. Write this verse out and then in your own words describe what it is teaching us.
- Although God is sovereign over all things, this DOES NOT mean he is responsible for our sin. We are responsible for the wrong in our lives.**
16. The Bible makes it very clear that God is absolutely pure. How does John put it in 1 John 1:5?
17. James tells us that God never tempts anyone to sin, and that when we sin it is our own fault, not God's. Write out James' words from James 1:13-15.
18. Although God is never responsible for the evil we commit, his sovereignty is so great that he will often use

and overrule man's wickedness to fulfil his purposes. We have already referred to this in the crucifixion of Jesus and the way God worked in Joseph's life. Another example was in Paul's life. When he was unjustly imprisoned his Christian friends at Philippi thought it was a disaster that such a gifted servant of Christ should be locked away. But Paul was able to tell them that God had overruled his imprisonment to bring great blessing from it. What encouraging words did he write about this in Philippians 1:12-14?

19. God's sovereign control of all things is a great source of comfort for the believer. It means his purposes for us cannot be frustrated, hindered or stopped in any way. They are certain and sure, and therefore the Christian believer is secure in God's keeping. List some of God's great purposes and sources of security for the believer from each of the following Bible passages – Jude 24, Romans 8:28-30 and 8:35-39.

20. How should God's sovereignty be taken note of, by those who foolishly try to rebel against God and refuse to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their King? What dangers are they in if they fail to humble themselves before the Lord? See Matt 25:41, Romans 2:16 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 to help with your answer.

5) God Is Almighty.

<p>The Bible teaches us that God has absolute power.</p>

1. How did God reveal himself to Abraham in Genesis 17:1?
2. Because God is sovereign he is often referred to in the Bible by the title 'King'. How does David answer the question, '*Who is the King of glory?*' in Psalm 24:8?
3. By what means did God make the heavens and earth according to Jeremiah 32:17?
4. What, according to Revelation 4:8, is the song that is repeatedly sung in heaven before God's throne?

5. How do the elders before the throne of God in heaven address him? See Revelation 11:17.

God's power means he is able to do whatever his will decides, and he does do whatever he decides.

6. Does Psalm 115:3 agree with the statement in the box above? Give the reasons for your answer.
7. What did Nebuchadnezzar recognise about God's power in Daniel 4:35?
8. What encouragement did the Psalmist gain from God's almighty power in Psalm 121? Read the Psalm and then answer the question in your own words.
9. God's power is seen most clearly in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. His power healed people instantly, raised the dead, delivered the demon possessed, calmed storms and much more. What particular work of Jesus' power is mentioned in 1 John 3:8 and Hebrews 2:14-15, and how is this a great consolation for Christian believers?

Hebrews 2:14-15 : *“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”*

Although God has the power to do whatever he wants to do, this does not mean he can do anything. He will only ever do those things that are consistent with his character. God is unchanging (Malachi 3:6) and therefore cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13). God is holy (Isaiah 6:3) therefore cannot be tempted by sin or tempt anyone (James 1:13). God is truthful and faithful (Deuteronomy 32:4) and therefore cannot lie (Hebrews:6:18; Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29).

10. God's power means there is no deficiency in him at all. Nothing is too hard for him. How was this made a blessing to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:14?
11. God's power has a solemn side to it because it means he is able to judge people, even when they think this is impossible. How was this revealed to Jeremiah concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah 32:27 and the verses that follow?

12. How is God's power in judgement spoken of by Peter in 2 Peter 3:3-10?

13. It is also within God's power to restore what he has destroyed. What does Peter tell us he will destroy and then make new in 2 Peter 3:11-13?

God's power is seen in creation, providence, and redemption.

14. How does Genesis 1 show us that God's power is almighty? Read the chapter then answer the question in your own words.

15. According to Romans 1:20 what does the world and universe around us reveal to us about God?

16. What does the Lord Jesus Christ do by the word of his power according to Hebrews 1:3?

17. How does God, by his power, control the elements? See Psalm 93:3-4, 147:8; Deuteronomy 11:14; Acts 14:17.

18. Does God have the power to overcome the plans of his enemies? Read Job 5:12-16 and then answer in your own words.

19. God's power is seen supremely in his work of redemption, where he rescues sinners from their sin. What is the power that God exerts in making someone into a Christian believer? Read Ephesians 1:17-21.

20. What transformation does the power of God achieve when someone comes to be a follower of Jesus as

detailed in Ephesians 2:1-4? Read those verses then explain them in your own words, showing what God's power achieved.

God's power should stimulate us to praise him, trust him, rest secure in him and to show godly fear to him.

21. What expressions of praise to Almighty God are found in Revelation 4:11 and 19:6-7?
22. How did the almighty power of God encourage David in Psalm 27:1?
23. Using the words of Deuteronomy 33:27 explain how God's power is a comfort and source of help to us even in our deepest trials and distresses?
24. How does God's power help us to pray when in need? Read Ephesians 3:20-21 and then answer the question in your own words.

25. Why does God's power strengthen the believer's assurance of salvation according to Romans 1:16 and Hebrews 7:25?
26. What attitude should our understanding of God's almighty power produce in us? Read 1 Peter 5:5-6.

Personal application.

27. Now that you have completed the third and final part of this Sound Words Bible Correspondence Course on the character of God, write in your own words what you have learned most about God.

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