

KNOWING GOD

"We can trace all of our human problems to our view of God." —Bill Bright

THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

Who is God, and what is He like?

BIG IDEA

God called Himself "I AM" which means He is eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, and personal. Because He is personal, He knows me intimately and loves me unconditionally.

SCRIPTURE USED

Exodus 3:13-14: *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

Exodus 34:6-7: *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands,, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*

Jeremiah 23:23-24: *"Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? Declares the Lord. Do I not fill the heaven and earth? Declares the Lord."*

James 1:17: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

OPENER

For the Opener you will need:

- Movie clip from *Bruce Almighty*, available on DVD, YouTube, and wingclips
- A way to show the clip (TV, DVD player, laptop, etc.)
- Obtain copies of a list of the attributes or names for God in the Bible (available at numerous free web sites such as biblegateway.com)

EXPLAIN

Have you ever had “one of those days?” Well, Bruce is having one! Watch this clip and pay attention to “whose fault” all the bad things in Bruce’s life are...

The longer version of the clip (still only 3 minutes) begins at 17 minutes and 22 seconds and runs through 20 minutes and 36 seconds (in Chapter 5). This may be best if you have no familiarity with the film, as it gives context to Bruce’s no good, very bad day. If you would rather simply explain the negative things going on in Bruce’s life briefly, we recommend shortening the clip and simply beginning at the scene change to the apartment at about 19 minutes (a short minute and a half clip). Before you show this to your group, make sure you watch it yourself a few times. Bruce Almighty is filled with A LOT of wrong views about God, but it can be a helpful tool for us to spot these incorrect ideas about God.

ASK

- **Can you relate to Bruce on any level based on what he expressed in this short segment? Feel free to be honest: how or why?**
- **How does Bruce approach God? Why is that relevant?**
- **How did Bruce explain who God is / what He does in relationship to humanity?**
- **What’s wrong with Bruce’s description, or how would you correct this while being sensitive to what he is feeling or going through?**

LESSON

EXPLAIN

(Leader’s Note—Optional: Every age group loves a good visual! One option for the following is to find simple clip art, or even just draw on a nearby white board for each wrong view of God. Icons help us remember things. So the mean kid / unloving judge could be an anvil or a magnifying glass and an ant, the Santa Claus view could be anything Christmasy, the detached God could be a watch, and the balanced one could be a scale that is balanced, etc.)

Even though this is just a movie, Bruce’s feelings towards God and who He **thinks God is, actually represent how many people do feel about God. It is estimated that people generally fall into one of four categories concerning how they view God.**

The first is similar to Bruce: God is a “mean kid,” or “a harsh judge or policeman.” This view of God generally involves an emphasis on God’s