

“Thou art a sea without a shore, a sun without a sphere...”

Behold your God

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LEADER'S GUIDE
The Weight of Majesty



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PURPOSE OF THE WEIGHT OF MAJESTY

A notional knowledge of God with undigested and unapplied concepts will be an ever-present danger to us as we study. Even so, with the living God, we need not fear. He has given His self-revelation in the Bible, sent His Son to demonstrate His character for thirty-three years on earth, and given every believer His Spirit to help him or her to understand and live upon these truths. It is our responsibility not to settle for anything short of a knowledge of God that produces a change in us.

It is the author's prayer that you will find enormous pleasure as you reacquaint yourself with the weight of God's majesty. There is something wonderful about losing ourselves and our cares in the sea of God's immensity. Listen to the words of the eleventh-century theologian, Anselm:

Up now, slight man! Flee for a little while your occupations; hide yourself for a time from your disturbing thoughts. Cast aside now your burdensome cares, and put away your toilsome business. Yield room for some little time to God, and rest for a little time in Him. Enter the inner chamber of your mind; shut out all thoughts save that of God and such as can aid you in seeking Him. Speak now, my whole heart! Speak now to God, saying, I seek Your Face; Your face, Lord, will I seek.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE WEIGHT OF MAJESTY

The Introduction DVD should be watched at the first meeting. The following week each individual should complete the workbook exercises for Week 1. The Week 1 video should be viewed at the second group meeting. Week 2 workbook exercises should be completed the following week and the Week 2 video viewed at the third group meeting, and so on. The workbook is designed to expose students to the biblical

doctrines which form the foundation for the DVD lesson, prior to watching the DVD.

Ideally, this study is intended for a small group with a seventy-five-minute time frame:

- Five-minute welcome and prayer
- Forty-five-minute video lesson
- Twenty-five-minute discussion time

Behold Your God: The Weight of Majesty can also be used in a sixty-minute class with any size group; however, this will reduce the amount of time available for discussion.

Questions for group discussion may be drawn from the exercises found in the workbook. Additional questions based on material found in the DVD lessons may be found in this leader's guide in the section labeled "Questions for Discussion."

Please note: Using a New American Standard Bible will simplify the workbook exercises because Scripture quotations are taken from the NASB unless otherwise specified.

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS

James warned the New Testament churches:

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. (James 3:1)

The study of God is the deepest and highest topic for the believer. There is endless mystery here. A towering intellect is not required to lead a group in this study. What is essential for the teacher is that he or she possess a diligent, humble, adoring mind.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LEADING A SMALL GROUP

- Diligent: the teacher must put in the needed study to be fully acquainted with the material.
- Humble: the teacher must place God's word above his or her own preconceived ideas and preferences, embracing all that God says about Himself.
- Adoring: the teacher must labor to get such clear views of God that the truth about God captivates his or her heart.

The themes in this study are weighty. They touch upon our fundamental understanding of God. They will not benefit us unless they lead to a life of repentance and faith. It is the author's hope that this study will motivate people to uproot wrong ideas about God and to implant biblical ones. Being under conviction is not pleasant for anyone. As a leader, you must be willing to allow people to feel the weight of God's majesty without stepping in to give them false comfort. You must allow people to deal directly with God without interference. Be kind and sensitive, but do not be guilty like the prophets of old, who said, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. True love for souls will lead you to cooperate with the Holy Spirit by trusting Him to work, praying for the people, and encouraging them to seek comfort only in Christ. Ultimately, we hope that those who honestly face the truths of this study will come through conviction into those "times of refreshing" that come from repentance.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LEADING A SMALL GROUP

1. If possible, choose a meeting place with a warm and inviting atmosphere.
2. Be a good listener. Be sensitive to the spiritual needs of the group members.
3. Be well prepared. Do the workbook along with the members.

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4. Encourage members to make time for the workbook. Remind them to use that time to seek to know God. Completing the workbook is good, but the ultimate goal is to know Him.
5. After you ask a question, give members adequate time to think and respond before you speak again. Avoid the temptation to fill in awkward silences.
6. The workbook and DVD lessons contain many statements that are meant to provoke people to think about things they may have not carefully considered before. It will be easy for discussions to get off onto secondary issues. Be well acquainted with the central truths of the week so that you can wisely guide discussion toward the more important matters and avoid less significant ones.
7. Finally, it is the Lord Himself who must make the biblical truths effective in our lives. We cannot afford to hope in any workbook, class discussion, or gifted class leader. As the teacher, you must lead by example and help the people to understand the importance of depending upon God in prayer as they search the Scriptures.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Below are some general discussion questions that may be used each week:

1. What did you learn in this week's lesson or DVD session?
2. What truth or passage of Scripture have you applied in practical ways?
3. What, if any, questions do you have about this week's material?
4. How are the truths about God that you studied this week a precious reality for those who are in the shelter of Jesus Christ? How are they a

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- terror to those who are outside of Jesus' mediation?
5. How can you depend upon God in light of this attribute?
 6. How can you demonstrate to others these truths about God in the way you live?

Key points in the DVD lessons which might be used for discussion.

Week 1:

1. The seventeenth-century pastor, Thomas Manton, reminded his people: *"We do not meditate that we may rest in contemplation, but in order to obedience."* What comes to your mind when you think about meditation? How can you include meditation—the frequent recalling to the mind specific truths about God and thinking carefully and deeply about them—into your daily schedule?
2. Paul warned the young church of Colossae that they were in danger of being spiritually kidnapped by false teaching (Colossians 2). The church has always been surrounded by false teaching, and our day is no exception. All error in religion, whether nearly two thousand years ago in this young church, or today within our own church and life, has at its heart an inadequate view of God. What attributes of God do you feel have been particularly neglected in your religious culture?

Week 2:

1. 1. How does God's immutability give the Christian hope?
2. Why did the Psalmist in today's lesson plead with God on the basis of His immutability?
3. Why is it comforting for the believer that God will never alter in His perfections or plans?

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4. When you catch a true glimpse of the immutability of our God and then look at the modern religious scene around you, are you grieved as the Psalmist was? If not, why not? If so, why?

Week 3:

1. Why do you think John emphasizes that Jesus was full of truth and grace? Why is it essential that both fill the One who would save us?
2. The “fullness of God” that Paul mentions in Ephesians 3 is given to the believer “according to the riches of [God’s] glory.” What does that mean?

Week 4:

1. Are you satisfied with the mere essential presence of God in your life, or do you long for the real experience of His covenanted presence? What about your church? If your reply is that you desire the nearness of God, what evidence can you give of this? What things in your life have been altered to make room for the nearness of God?
2. In your life, and in your church, what areas of disagreement have been allowed to exist between you and God thereby forfeiting His nearness?

Week 5:

1. Why do you think God revealed Himself as God Almighty to Abraham? Why was it essential to Abraham to understand this truth about the God that he followed?
2. The Sadducees were wrong about the afterlife because they did not comprehend the power of God nor the teaching of the Bible. What errors do you see in the larger Christian culture that demonstrate that we too may not understand God’s power?

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3. What about your church's practical definition of a Christian—what it expects of a person who claims to be a Christian—requires the working of an Almighty God?
4. What does it look like to have the form of Christianity but deny its power?

Week 6:

1. Does God's perfect and complete knowledge of you bring you terror or comfort? Why? True Christianity, even with all its flaws, is a display of God's manifold wisdom. What aspects of God's wisdom (i.e., skillful application of knowledge, or choosing the highest goal and best means to reach that goal) are visible in your church?
2. What about the manner in which God saves sinners strikes you as most expressive of His wisdom?

Week 7:

1. What is the difference between omnipotence and sovereignty?
2. Why is Jesus, the God-man, exalted to the place of highest authority?
3. If Christ is Head of the Church as well as King of the universe, in which (if any) areas do you see your church disputing His rights? In which areas do you see the authority of Jesus most clearly displayed?

Week 8:

1. Job struggles with the question of how any person can be right with the holy God. In Job 9, he gives a number of false hopes, all of which have remained popular from Job's day until our own. According to the book of Job:

- You cannot answer the questions or accusations that God will level against you on the day of judgment.
- Your own conscience will accuse you if you attempt to justify yourself before God.
- You cannot hope to justify yourself because you do not perfectly know yourself, and God does.
- Having a positive attitude will not help you when you are under God's condemnation.
- A religious form of resignation, passivity, is based on a fatalistic despair and will not clear you with God.
- You do not have the tools to clean your soul of its stain
- You cannot hope to win your court case with God because you will never be able to reach His courts and present your case; He is simply too high.

Which of these false hopes is popular in your church? Which did you cling to before you were turned to God through Jesus?

Week 9:

1. Psalm 110 has a number of pictures that instruct the believer. Discuss the significance of each.
 - Throne: He has the right and ability to do all His good pleasure without interference.
 - Footstool: The Father will see to it that all who oppose the Son will be conquered.
 - Scepter: The Son will rule, even in the midst of those who oppose Him most.
 - Army: The Son will gather a voluntary army made up of those who once opposed His rule. They will be made like their King, holy.
 - Priesthood: This King will also have the power to intercede for us and to make peace between us and God.
 - Brook/Stream: The Son will never grow weary as He pursues His

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enemies with an infinite wrath. Consider how the wrath of Jesus against the sins that still tempt His people is a source of real hope. He will conquer all aspects of sin in all Christians.

2. Consider how each of the above aspects of His rule and wrath are worthy of worship.

Week 10:

1. Jesus said that the leaders of His day were close to God with their mouths (professing to love Him) but their hearts were far from Him. If you were to describe your words and your heart, where would they be in relation to God? Equally near? Is your heart nearer God than you can find words to describe? Are you presently using words, whether in small groups, at home, or in a workbook, to make your heart appear closer to God than it really is?
2. Do you think that despising the goodness of God given to you through Jesus Christ is a small sin? How would you compare the failure to love Christ with other sins like murder, adultery, or blaspheming God?
3. In Psalm 27:4 we read, "One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek. . . ." How does love to Christ give an urgency and a simplicity to your life? How does a lack of love for Christ produce a fragmented life that is pulled in many directions?

Week 11:

1. There are different aspects of love. How does God love the Christian, and how is that different than the way He loves the Lord Jesus?
2. 2. What does it mean to abide in the love of God?

3. Jesus is our pattern for living in a relationship with God, hence the repeated use of the “just as . . . even so . . .” logic in John 15:9-11. How did the Son abide in the love of the Father, and how will you abide in the Love of the Son?:

Week 12:

1. Remember our definition for zeal: keenness, heat, and intensity in the pursuit of a goal. It is the opposite of an indifferent and half-hearted approach. Jealousy was defined as an intense protectiveness and watchfulness over one that you love, a legitimate possessiveness. How would Christianity be different if the Triune God was as half-hearted as we often are? Consider the benefits of belonging to one who is filled with an intensity and keenness for His glory and His people's good.
2. God's zeal is immutable. As you read the Bible, do you consider that the zeal and jealousy God displayed in the Old and New Testaments are the same zeal and jealousy that He expresses today? What aspects of God's zeal and jealousy did you once think were no longer being expressed by God?
3. Christian, how do you reflect the zeal and jealousy of God in the ways you are involved with other believers? How do you labor, pray, serve, and talk so as to help them devote themselves daily to one Master? How do you help them to have undivided hearts?
4. Sin can be described as giving God in part what you owe Him in whole. What areas of your church's life have offered God only part of what you owe Him?

Nothing provides the true follower of Christ with more profound and enduring satisfaction than turning from the limitations of self and this world to the unfathomable fullness of the living God. Nothing so directly affects the study of Scripture as one's understanding of what lies behind the little word "God." Nothing calls for such an entire consecration of the mind, heart, and will of the student as the study of this eternal Being, who is the cause and reason for all things. Nothing holds more practical value for the Christian than the realities of God's perfection.

For twelve weeks, *Behold Your God: The Weight of Majesty* guides the reader through passages that reveal God's perfections: His incomprehensibility, self-existence, independence, transcendence, immutability, infinity and eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, sovereignty, righteousness, holiness, wrath, goodness, love, patience, and zeal. The aim of this study is to provide the student with a tool for vastly enlarging his or her understanding of God in a manner that enlightens the mind, captivates the heart, and redirects the will.

God truly is "a sea without a shore, a sun without a sphere." Each of us stands before the boundless immensity of God's majesty. He commands us to know Him. He has provided all that we need to know Him through the redemptive labors of His Son, the illuminating work of the Spirit, and the Bible. A.W. Tozer wrote only the truth when he stated that God "can show a new aspect of His glory to us each day for all the days of eternity, and we have but begun to explore the depths of riches of His infinite being."

May God raise up a people who will say as David did so many years ago:

When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You,
"Your face, O Lord, I shall seek."
(Psalm 27:8)

- John Snyder

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