

# **Foundations for Faith**

The Basics of Knowing God

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# 1

## Genesis 1—2:3

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### According to the Bible, What Is God Like?

**W**hat do you think of when you see or hear the word *God*?  
Share your ideas.

There are many ideas about God, and many religions in the world. How can we know which one is true? Or will any of them do?

We can't see, hear, or touch God. Unless God reveals himself to us, we cannot know anything about God with certainty. Has God ever revealed himself? The purpose of these studies is to see what the Bible says about God and how we can know God. After carefully and honestly examining what the Bible says, each person will be better able to choose how he or she will respond to God. In this first study we begin to see what the Bible says God is like.

**Read Genesis 1:1—2:3**, looking for all you can learn about what God is like.

#### Genesis 1:1-5

1. What words describe God's actions in verses 1-5?

2. What would God have to be like in order to do these things?

### **Genesis 1:6—2:3**

3. What was the method by which God created (verses 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24)?
4. In order to accomplish all this, what would God have to be like?
5. What does this section tell us about God's relationship to nature?
6. Observe the order in which God creates things in the six days. What do you learn about God from this?

*Note: The Hebrew word for day can refer to the hours of daylight, a twenty-four-hour day, or an indefinite period of time. If an indefinite period of time is meant here, the length of each day may have been different, some even long ages. While there are differing opinions about the actual events and time frame of creation, the Bible clearly asserts that God brought everything into existence.*

7. What does God think of each thing he makes (verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25)?

How does this compare with most things we make?

8. What is created on the sixth day?

What do humans and animals have in common, according to verses 24-30?

9. What distinctions are made between humans and animals?

How are human beings different from everything else God has created?

10. In what ways do you see that human beings express the image of God as God is portrayed in this first chapter of Genesis?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. In what ways is God greater than humans?

How does it affect your understanding of God when you see that the Bible says a human being is like God, not that God is like a human being?

12. What order does God establish in the relationship of humans to the rest of creation (verses 26, 28)?

13. What difference would it make in your life if you believed that you are made in the image of the God presented in this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. God ***blessed*** (verses 22, 28) and ***gave*** (verses 29-30). What do these actions reveal about God?

What is God's final assessment of what he has made (verse 31)?

## **SUMMARY**

1. Recall the actions of God in Genesis 1:1–2:3. How would you describe God from these verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do the words ***in the beginning*** tell you about God, God's existence, and God's relationship to time as we know it?



3. How is God as revealed in this chapter of the Bible different from various ideas about who (or what) he is? Consider some common beliefs:
  - Nature, such as the sun or moon, are gods; there are a myriad of gods.
  - God is a dispenser of divine favors upon request, to use when you need help, but who can be ignored at other times.
  - God is a product of our minds: If you believe God exists, he does; if you don't believe he exists, he doesn't.
4. In Genesis, God is described not as a created being, but as the source of all life, a living person who made all things, including the first human beings. What attitudes do you think are appropriate for people to have toward such a God?
5. How do you feel about the idea that God, rather than humankind, is central in the universe?

6. What questions about God has this study prompted for you? Write them here so that you can check back and note related discoveries.

The Bible begins with the assumption that God is eternal, and that God created the universe out of nothing by his power and design. Our abilities to plan, choose, evaluate, communicate, take responsibility, and act creatively—all express how we are in the image of God.

### **IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT STUDY**

How does this all-powerful Creator want to relate to us today? Has God gone off and left the world to run on its own? Or does God want to be involved in our lives today?

As you think about these questions, study Psalm 139 before the next meeting, using the questions provided in Discussion 2.