

Studies on the character and nature of God

Based on work by Margaret McIntyre

God is ...

<i>Creator, ordered, designer, awesome</i>	1
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God is Creator

Genesis 1: In the beginning God created the whole universe.

He continues to create new things, animals, plants and human beings. God can make every person a new being, having His character, when they trust in Jesus as their Saviour.

God can help us to create new things that will be a blessing to Him and to other people.

Subthemes:

Ordered

And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

God was orderly in the way He created everything:

- First He created **light** to work by.
- Next He needed **space** to work in. He made a **space** between the vapours above and the waters below.
- Third, He made **the dry land**, in preparation for the **plants** that would provide food.
- Fourth He created the **sun, moon and stars** to provide man with light by day and night.
- Fifth God made **the birds and sea creatures**. As God created the living creatures to inhabit the earth He made first those that could exist in water and in the air, nesting in the trees above the ground. Was this because the land was not sufficiently dried out to allow animals to survive?

- On the sixth day He created **animals and man**. God prepared for man's coming to the earth following an **orderly plan**. He prepared a place for man to live, then plants to provide food, clothing and shelter, then animals birds and fish over which to have dominion, and provide help with food and labour.

Designer

You created the moon to mark the months; the sun knows the time to set. Psalm 104:19 (GNB)

Only a carefully designed universe could contain such beauty and precision. This could not have been possible through chance, but only through the work of an Intelligent Designer.

Awesome

***Let all the earth fear the Lord;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
For He spoke and it was done;
He commanded and it stood fast. Psalm 33:8-9***

'To stand in awe is to have feelings of respect / reverential fear; or to be inspired by what is grand or sublime. God is an awesome *God*' - (*Dictionary meaning*).

God is Love

***We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19)
Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself (mark 12:30-31)***

God is a loving father who loves His children faithfully, consistently. God is pleased when we love others faithfully, consistently with His love in their hearts.

God's love is a forgiving love. His love heals hearts, spirits as well as bodies. God's love is a complete humbling of Himself in the person of Jesus. Jesus humbled Himself before His disciples. God is pleased when His children live in humility and love, in honour preferring one another. Rom 12:10

God desires our love. He wants us to love Him. Mark 12:30

God knows how much we love Him by how much we obey Him. John 14: 23-24.
God puts His love in our hearts through His Holy Spirit. Rom. 5:5

God enables us to love as we yield to Him. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22
We know that God's Spirit lives in us, making us new, changing us, by the love we have for others. God's love banishes fear of punishment. 1 John 4:18.

Subthemes:

Father

How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called children of God (1 John 3:1)

The relationship of Jesus to His Father in heaven is expressed in the following passages: John 5:19-47; John 6:41-51; John 14; 15; 16; 17.

The key is, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." John 14:9

All that Jesus expressed about His Father and Himself and their relationship together is possible for us through Him.

Jesus said: "Let the little children come to Me." In saying this, Jesus also meant, "Let the little children come to the Father, God."

Jesus is:

- the Way to God the Father
- The Truth about God the Father
- Life in God the Father

A father is

- a procreator
- provider
- protector

God the Father procreates His spiritual children. He provides for His children... food, shelter and clothing. He protects His children, spiritually, physically.

Shepherd

I am the good shepherd; and I know my own and My own know Me - I lay down My life for the sheep. (John 10:14-15)

Psalm 23 describes the Good Shepherd, who cares for his sheep, lead his sheep and protects his sheep.

In Bible times -

Caring involved

- finding food and water for them
- Treating cuts and bruises

Leading involved

- choosing the way they should go
- Keeping the flock together
- Keeping the sheep close to himself
- Knowing them all by name.

Protecting involved

- from wild animals
- Finding them the shelter of a sheep fold at night
- Being himself the 'door' of the sheep fold

John 10 - the Good Shepherd;
 Ezekiel 34 - The false shepherd then the good shepherd
 Matthew 18:12-13; Luke 15:4-6 – The lost sheep
 Matthew 25:31-36 - Separating sheep from goats
 Matthew 10:6- Sheep amongst wolves
 Micah 2:12-13 - The sheep gathered in the fold.

The power of the shepherd is to fight on behalf of the sheep. Jesus the Good Shepherd made this possible in a new dimension when He sent the Holy Spirit to empower His people.

Friend

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)

You are My friends if you do what I command you. (John 15:14)

I have called you friends, for all things I have heard from My Father I have made known to you (John 15:15)

The words of an old children's song describe Jesus as the perfect friend:
*The perfect friend is one who knows the worst about you but loves you just the same.
 There's only one who loves like that and Jesus is His name.*

Jesus is a friend of children
 "Let the little children come to Me." Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13-16
 Jesus showed friendship to the outcasts (Luke 17:11-19; Matthew 8:1-4)
 Jesus was a friend of publicans and sinners (Matt. 9:9-13)
 The Good Samaritan moved out of his comfort zone in extending friendship (Luke 10:25-37)
 Jesus is our friend. He calls us by name (John 1:43; Matt. 4:18-22; John 10:14-15)
 Jesus helped his friends (John 11)
 We can talk to Jesus as a friend (Matt. 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13)

God is Wise

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. All those who practice it have a good understanding (Ps 111:10).

The dictionary defines wisdom as "having knowledge of what is true or right, coupled with just judgment."

In a child's language this is: 'knowing the right thing to do, and doing it.'

Therefore, God has the complete knowledge of all things and how they are best put to use.

God is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).

As God's Holy Spirit lives in His people it is His wisdom we use in choosing: how to behave towards other people how and what we apply our minds/emotions to how to know God and to respond to His call on our lives.

John 14:6 - (The Holy Spirit) will teach you all things.

John 16:13 - The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth.

Jesus said "If you love Me, obey Me.) i.e. Keep my commandments.

Luke 2:40 Jesus *was filled* with wisdom.

Luke 2:52 Jesus *increased* in wisdom.

We should continue to grow in wisdom and understanding of God and His ways. Even after our bodies cease to grow our spirits must continue to grow.

Subthemes:

Guide

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).

Wisdom was the first creative act of God, (Proverbs 8:22).

The Lord created me (wisdom) at the beginning of His work, the first of His acts of old. Each created thing was planned and brought forth in wisdom. Proverbs 8:23-36.

God had a meaningful plan for each person/thing He created. When we are obedient to the principles expressed in His Word, i.e we have the wisdom to fear the Lord, then all His creation will function with the perfection He originally intended.

It is wise to let God be our guide:

The Israelites were guided by fire and cloud (Ex. 13:21-22)

It is wise to take advice from those who have God's wisdom: (Prov. 13:10 & 20; Prov. 6:20)

The Bible is our guide (Ps. 119:105). It is wise to follow its advice.

Proverbs 6:20 - Our parents guide us to maturity.

Psalm 16:7 - I praise the Lord because He guides me. Even at night I feel His leading.

Matthew 2 - The magi were guided by the star and the scriptures; an angel guided Joseph through a dream to make the journey to Egypt, and later, back to Israel.

Just

Psalm 89:14 - Righteousness and justice are the foundations of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before you.

Although grace, mercy and justice are three distinct qualities, each one is incomplete without the other two.

In His wisdom, God has established laws, principles and commandments for man to live by.

When a person breaks a law, God's justice (righteousness) would require that the sin is dealt with and the sinner should receive punishment

God is just. He gives us what we deserve.

But God is merciful and therefore He has provided for man to be saved from His wrath and punishment. He sent Jesus to earth to be the Savior of man:

1. to show people how God wants them to live on earth,
2. to take the punishment for man's sin (Hebrews 10:4-10)
3. to demonstrate God's power over sin and death by raising Jesus from death.

God is merciful. He doesn't give us what we deserve

God is gracious. He gives us forgiveness, wholeness of body, mind and spirit. He gives the power of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

If we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

God is gracious. He gives us what we don't deserve

Jesus is the supreme expression of God's justice, mercy and grace.

Sustainer

Come unto Me all who are heavily laden and I will give you rest (Matt 11:28)

I am the Vine and you are the branches – John 15:5

Stay connected to Jesus and He will sustain you.

Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you – 1 Peter 5:7

If we look to God for wisdom and strength, He will show us the right thing to do, and the right path to follow.

God is the sustainer of life

The loaves and fishes (Mark 6:30-44)

Jesus, the Word (John 1:2 & 14)

God's word as our spiritual food (1 Peter 2:2)

God is Protector

“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him for he acknowledges my name” (Psalm 91:14)

God protects His people through:

- the blood of Jesus
- the name of Jesus
- the word of God

Through the blood of Jesus we have protection from the punishment for sin:

- protection from enemy attack in the spirit world.
- protection from sickness and disease
- In the name of Jesus we have protection from sickness
- protection from physical danger
- protection from demonic attack

2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-20; Proverbs 18: 10; Mark 16:15-17

The word of God protects our *minds* from enemy attack.

Psalm 119:11 I have laid up thy word in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

Psalm 34:19-20 The good man does not escape all troubles—he has them too. But the Lord delivers him out of them all; God even protects him from accidents.

God protects the daily walk of His children, as they go in the faith that He is their protector.

Psalm 91: expresses the psalmist’s faith in God’s constant protection. Special mention is made in it of angels. It is good to remind ourselves and our students of the constant presence of angels.

God’s protection is demonstrated in the story of Moses in Exodus.

Moses was protected as a baby, a child specially chosen by God. The Israelites were protected from the death of the eldest child at the Passover time, by the sign of the blood of a lamb over their doorposts. This typifies the sacrifice of Jesus that protects those who believe in Him from eternal spiritual death.

The column of cloud in the day and fire in the cloud at night protected the Israelites from the Egyptians before they crossed the Red Sea. God protected the Israelites from thirst and starvation by the provision of manna, quail meat and water from the rock.

Subthemes:

Deliverer

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer (Psalm 18:12)

God delivers his people in times of trouble:

God protected Paul during the shipwreck (Acts 27 & 28)

Protection from effects of snake bite on Malta (Acts 27 & 28)

Paul and Silas in jail (Acts 16:16)

2 Kings 6 - Elisha and God's army of angels

Isaiah 41:10 7 43:1-2 - Fear not

Acts 12:1-9 - An angel saves Peter

Daniel 3 – God delivers Daniel

Psalms 4:8 - God makes us dwell in safety

Psalms 56:13 – God my deliverer

Isaiah 31:5 - The Lord protects Jerusalem.

Isaiah 54:10 - Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken.

Defender

If God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

God protects us from harm and evil:

Angels protect us (Ps. 91)

The Lord is my Shepherd (Ps. 23)

Elisha and God's army of angels (2 Kings 6)

Fear not (Is. 41:10 & 43:1-2)

Three men in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3)

An angel saves Peter (Acts 12:1-9)

Ephesians 6:10 - 20 describes the spiritual armour which God has provided for the protection of His people.

- the breast-plate of righteousness. My heart is made righteous by my faith in
- Loins girded with truth
- Shoes of peace... peace with God through the blood of Jesus; peace in our own hearts because of His Spirit within us; peace with other people.
- The shield of faith.. the invisible protection of the powerful blood of Jesus to forestall the enemy's attacks on the mind, body or spirit. The power of the name of Jesus.
- The helmet of salvation... the protection particularly of the mind. Sin begins in the mind, in our thinking about an act until it becomes a reality
- The sword of the Spirit - the use of the word of God

Refuge

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God is whom I trust" (Psalm 91:2)

God is our shelter:

God is a shelter for us (Ps. 17:8; 27:5; 32:7)

God's protection of the Israelites entering the Promised Land (Jos. 2-6)

Protection of the Jews through Esther (Esther 1-10)

God is our refuge and strength, a present help in the time of trouble (Psalm 41:1).

In the day of trouble He will shelter me (Psalm 27:5).

Psalm 46 - God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in the time of trouble.

2 Samuel 22:2 & 32; Psalm 18:30-36; Psalm 31:3; Psalm 71:3; Psalm 89:26; Psalm 91:5 - God is a rock

2 Samuel 22:33 - It is God who arms me with strength

Proverbs 18:10; Psalm 61:13 - God is a strong tower

Exodus 7-14 - God set the Israelites free, and by His strength He held back the Red Sea.

Judges 6-8 - Through His power God used Gideon to set the Israelites free.

Joshua 6 - The walls of Jericho. God's power is greater than man's strength.

Joshua 10 - By His strength and power God caused the sun to stand still.

Luke 1:37 - Nothing is impossible with God.

God is Powerful

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:6).

God has power to change things:

Jesus changed the lives of the first disciples (John 1:35-50; Matt. 4:18-21; Matt 9:9-13)

Zacchaeus (Luke 19:9-13)

Healing for a paralysed man (Matt. 9:1-8)

Saul's conversion (Acts 9)

Healing for Naaman (2 Kings 5)

Jesus changed water to wine (John 2:1-12)

Nothing too difficult for God (Jer. 32:17)

God has power to raise the dead

Elijah brings a boy back to life (1 Kings 17:17-24)

Elisha and the Shunamite woman (2 Kings 4:8-37)

Jesus gives life to Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:22-43)

The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

God is a source of power

God gave power to Samson (Judges 13-15)

The miracles of Jesus (an overview)

A man with demons ((Mark 5:1-19)

The Vine (John 15:1-5)

The disciples receive power (Acts 1:8; Acts 2)

God's power shown through Peter, John (Acts 3); Paul, Barnabas (Acts 13:4)

Subthemes:

Healer

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases (Psalm 103:2)

God has power to heal:

The hem of His garment (Mark 5)

Through the roof (Mark 2)

The sick servant (Luke 7)

God can heal the body, mind, will, emotions, spirit. His desire is to restore wholeness to His creation. This includes both man and the created world, Romans 8:19-22.

Man receives healing of body, mind, will, emotions for God's glory. e.g. John 9 - the man born blind.

When people call upon God in repentance, He will heal their land, 2 Chronicles 7:14.

God can heal others through me when I am submitted to His will, Acts 9:36.

In many cases repentance and subsequent forgiveness are prerequisites to the healing of body, mind and spirit.

Jesus demonstrated God's power over all manner of ailments: Matt 4:23-25; Mark 6:53-56; Matt. 15:30-31; Matt 19:1-2; Luke 6:17-19; Mark 1: 32-34; Luke 4:40; John 2:23.

Lord

The Lord rules... greater than the roar of the oceans, more powerful than the waves of the sea (Psalm 93:4 (GNB)).

God says, "I am that I am".

He is lord of Lords and King of Kings. (Revelation 17:14)

"I the Lord make light and create darkness; I am the Lord and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:6-7)

God is holy, pure, eternal and infinite.

"I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13)

"You shall be holy for I the Lord am holy." (Leviticus 19:2)

"You must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

God made possible the forgiveness of man's sin by providing the Lamb of God, Jesus. Jesus was a willing sacrifice and a victorious Saviour. His resurrection established for eternity His power and lordship over evil.

The Lamb of God is the Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5-6).

Our response should be: To know God's character is to live in reverent fear of Him.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, obey Me." To obey the commands of Jesus is to obey God. (John 14:15,23)

God requires His people to be holy, pure, righteous; therefore they go through difficulties that refine their character. (1 John 3: 1-3)

King

Fight the good fight of faith...until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ – God the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:12-15)

Jesus was born a king (Matt. 2) – Jesus the humble King
Jesus was placed on trial for being a King (John 18:28-38) – Jesus the sacrificial King
Jesus will return to reign as King (Acts 1:6-10) – Jesus the eternal King

Psalm 2:6 – The Lord is King forever.

Psalm 24:7-10 – Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty.

There is only one Lord and one King of the universe.

We can become a child of the King by making Jesus Lord of our life.

A King is to be honoured and respected.

But King Jesus is not remote. He has reached out to us so that we can have a personal relationship with Him. He accepts us if we accept Him.

God is Truth

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth (John 16:13).

The word of God is truth:

John 5:46-47 - "If you do not believe what Moses wrote, (Genesis), how can you believe what I say?"

John 14:6 - Jesus is the Way, the Truth, the Life.

Mark 4:1-8 - The parable of the sower shows the need for a solid foundation of faith.

Proverbs 30:5-6 - The word of God is truth.

Psalm 119:105 - God's word is a lamp to our feet.

Ephesians 6:17 - God's word is a sword.

Luke 24:13-35 - The two followers on the road to Emmaus. They did not recognize the truth because of unbelief.

Genesis 1 - God created living things after their own kind.

Seek the truth:

Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. (GNB)

Acts 14:7 - God has always given evidence of His existence by the things He does. (GNB)

Luke 11:9-10 - He that seeks finds.

Matthew 16:13-20 - Peter declared that Jesus was the Son of God, a truth given directly by the Father.

Acts 7:51-60 - Stephen gives his life for believing the truth.

Subthemes:

Teacher

The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you (John 14:25).

Matthew 7:24 - Build your life on truth.

Luke 11:9-10 - Ask, seek, knock. He that seeks the truth will find it.

Matthew 6:33 - Seek first God's kingdom.

Matthew 13:44-45 - The pearl of great price.

John 20:24-29 - Unbelief prevented Thomas from knowing the truth.

John 1:17 - Truth came through Jesus Christ.

The Way

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).

Matthew 7:13-14 - The broad and narrow way

Matthew 16:13-17 - Jesus asks, "Who am I?"

Acts 4:12 - There is no other name by which we are saved.

John 10:1-8 - The Good Shepherd. The sheep recognise His voice.

Matthew 7:15-21 - Wolves in sheep's clothing.

Acts 17:16-34 - The unknown god

Exodus 20:3-4; Isaiah 42:8 & 17 - No other gods.

Discerning the truth:

Proverbs 11:1 - The Lord hates dishonest scales, but He is pleased with correct weights.

Matthew 7:15-21 - Wolves in sheep's clothing.

John 18:38 - Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice.

John 10:1-8 - The Good Shepherd. The sheep hear His voice.

John 14:6-7 - I am the way, the truth and the life.

Exodus 20:3-4; Isaiah 42:8 & 17 - No other gods.

2 Peter 2 - False teachers.

2 Corinthians 11:13-14 - False apostles, and Satan as an angel of light.

1 Peter 5:8 - Satan is a roaring lion.

Luke 4 - Jesus knew how to deal with Satan.

Faithful

I am the Lord I change not (Malachi 3:6).

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

God is faithful in that He never changes. His truth is constant.
God wants us to be faithful and never depart from His truth.

God is faithful to His word. He keeps every promise He makes (Prov. 30:5)
God gave the rainbow as a sign of His promise to us (Gen. 9:8-17)
God kept His promise to Abraham (Gen. 15, 17 & 18)

God's truth doesn't change. Our commitment to truth should not waver.
Honesty in word and character (Prov. 20:23; Prov. 21:22)
Faithfulness to the God of truth: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Dan. 3)
The golden calf (Ex. 32)

God wants us to obey the truth.
God of Israel or Baal? (1 Kings 18)
Worship no other god (Ex. 20:3-6)
The dishonesty of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)
Josiah the boy king (2 Kings 18)
Live a life that measures up to the standard God set when He called you. Ephesians 4:1 (GNB)

God is Pure

***He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth (1 Peter 2:24).
How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to God's word (Psalm 119:9)***

God cleanses us from sin

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sin God will forgive us.
Psalm 51:1-7 - Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
Isaiah 1:18 - I will wash you as clean as the snow.
Psalm 145:17 - The Lord is righteous in everything He does.
1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 9:14 - Jesus was without sin.
Isaiah 43:25 - I am the God who forgives your sins.
Matthew 9:1-7 - Jesus not only healed the paralyzed man but forgave his sin.
John 4 - Jesus forgave the sins of the woman at the well.
John 18 - 19 - Because Jesus was without sin He was able to die for us.
Exodus 30:17-21 - Those presenting an offering had to wash their hands for purity.

Subthemes:

Righteous

God is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works (Psalm 145:17).

Isaiah 6 is Isaiah's account of how he learned that God requires holiness in His people before they can be called into special work for Him.

We are called to be righteous. Goodness is a fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22-23 - The fruits of the Spirit

Mark 12:30-31 - **Love** your neighbour as yourself.

Acts 3 - The lame man healed, walking and leaping with **joy**.

Matthew 6:26 - Do not worry. (Have **peace**)

Ezra 4-6; Nehemiah 1-6 - **Patience** in rebuilding Jerusalem

2 Samuel 4 & 9 - **Kindness** to the lame prince, Mephibosheth

Luke 10: 25-37 - The Good Samaritan is a story of **kindness** and **gentleness**

Ephesians 5:8-11 - Show **goodness**, by living as children of the light

Jonah - Being **faithful** is obeying the Lord.

1 Samuel 17; 1 Samuel 26 - King Saul lacked **self-control**. His jealousy caused him to lose his temper.

Ephesians 6 - Put on the armour of God so that we may do the things God wants us to do.

God's righteousness, not self righteousness:

The righteous Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14)

The tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9)

The woman caught in adultery (John 8:4-11)

Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-6)

Holy

Be holy for I am holy (Leviticus 19:2)

Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord who makes you holy. (Leviticus 20:7).

God is pleased when His people reflect His goodness, righteousness, holiness.

God has provided a way for His people to be good, righteous, holy through Jesus Christ: Hebrews chs 9, 10; 2 Cor. 5:21

Matt. 5:48 - Be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Romans 8:1 - There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

1 Cor. 6:19 - Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? And you are not your own, you are bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.

Holiness through Jesus:

Acts 2:1-18 - The disciples received the Holy Spirit.

Leviticus 16:11-13 - God chose fire to remind people of purity and holiness.

Hebrews 10:5-9 - God no longer requires sacrifices.

Hebrews 10:10 - We are made holy through Jesus.

Luke 18:9-14 - The righteous Pharisee

1 Kings 18:1-40 - God of Israel or Baal? The fire of the Lord burned up the sacrifice.
Hebrews 12:29 - Our God is a consuming fire.
Zechariah 13:9 - God's refining of His people like the purifying of silver and gold.
Genesis 19 - Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire.
Jeremiah 18:1-4 - God can change us.
Malachi 3:2-3 - The refiner's fire

Light

God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).

Light is a symbol of purity:

Genesis 1 - God's light
Ephesians 5:8-11 - Live as children of the light.
Deuteronomy 6:18 - Do that which is right and good.
Galatians 5:22 - Goodness is a fruit of the Spirit.
Romans 13:12 - Put on the armour of light.
James 4:7 – Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
Matthew 5:13-16 - Christians as salt and light.
John 8:12 - Jesus, the light of the world
1 John 2:28-29 - Everyone who does what is right is of God.
Matthew 6:22-23 - If your eye is clear your whole body will be full of light.
Genesis 9 - The sign of the rainbow

Christians should be lights to the world:

Live as children of the light (Eph. 5:8-11)
Christians as salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16)
Jesus, the light of the world (John 8:12)
Walk in the light (1 John 1:5-7)
The armour of light (Rom. 13:12)
Goodness, a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22; Deut. 6:18)
Things that are true, noble, right and pure (Phil. 4:8-9)

Life and light in the spirit of man:

In the spirit, as the light of God's love is allowed to shine into our inner being, it changes what is there and transforms us first internally, in our inner self. As God's light works on us and in us, the change and transformation is evident externally. The light of the knowledge of God shines in our faces. This is the external evidence of internal, spiritual growth.

Light enables life to exist
New life in God is associated with light

God is Patient

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love (Psalm 103:8)

God is patient with us:

Jesus stands at the door and knocks (Rev. 3:20)

God is slow to anger (Ps. 103:8-18)

God forgives us (Luke 23:34; 1 John 1:9)

We need to have patience with others:

1 Corinthians 13:14 - Love is patient and kind.

Galatians 5:22 – Patience and self-control are fruits of the Spirit

Luke 10:27; Matthew 22:39 - Love the Lord with all your heart...and your neighbour as yourself.

John 13:34 - A new commandment...love one another.

Patience is listening to God:

Luke 10:38 - Mary and Martha

Matthew 13:10-16 - The hidden meaning of the parables. We need to listen with 'special ears'.

1 Kings 19 - God spoke to Elijah in a still small voice.

Matthew 14:23 - Jesus went to a quiet place to pray.

Psalm 85:8 - I am listening to what the Lord God is saying.

John 10:14-15 - The sheep know the shepherd's voice.

1 Samuel 3 - The boy Samuel hears God's voice.

Luke 18:10-30 - The two men at the temple. Only one communicated with God.

Genesis 2-5 - God spoke face to face with Adam and Eve.

Genesis 37-40, Daniel 2 - God speaks through dreams.

Numbers 22 - God spoke through Balaam's donkey.

Exodus 19,20 - God spoke to Moses when He gave the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 3-17 - God speaks through signs and wonders.

Samuel 1 & 2 - Jeremiah and other prophets speak God's message.

John 1 - Jesus as God's Word.

Subthemes:

Kind

Love is patient, love is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4).

The kindness and gentleness of God are fully expressed in His Son, Jesus.

Jesus expressed special kindness towards people in need:

- the traveler and the Good Samaritan - Luke 10: 25-37
- the sick - Mark 1: 29-34
- the weak and those unable to defend themselves against society
- little children - Mark 10 :13-16
- the woman taken in adultery - John 8:1-11

- the Samaritan woman at the well - John 4

Jesus taught kindness in attitudes to others:

- Luke 10:38-40 - Martha was chided for her critical attitude. Mary commended for choosing to be in the presence of Jesus.
- Mark 12:41-44 - Jesus commended the widow who gave all she had.
- John 12:1-11 - Jesus defended Mary of Bethany against critics who thought her wasteful to use costly ointment on Jesus' feet.

God is pleased when His children express kindness to others, irrespective of who they are. It was His gentleness and kindness that won us back to Him and it will be His kindness in our hearts that will win others back to Him through us.

Father

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters," says the Almighty (2 Cor 6:18)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God (1 John 3:1)

God the Father is patient with us:

The Prodigal son – Luke 15:11

The lost sheep – Luke 15:3

The lost coin – Luke 15: 8

As children we ask God for what we need and wait with patience.

Ask and keep on asking. Your Heavenly Father knows what you need. – Luke 11:11

Forgiving

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:9).

This verse speaks about our relationship with God and with others.

Forgiveness is a 3-way process: 1. Repentance; 2. Receiving God's forgiveness; 3. Forgiving others

God expresses His relationship to me through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. To receive God's forgiveness I need to repent and ask Him to forgive me, and then He will freely forgive me.

Forgiveness and repentance are two sides of the same coin. For a full relationship to be established between two people (either God-man or man-man) there first needs to be repentance in the heart of the offender, then a loving relationship can be established as forgiveness is expressed towards the offender. The offended one can have an attitude of forgiveness towards the offender, whether or not he has expressed repentance, but only repentance on the part of both parties can establish a full relationship between them.

As God forgives us, so we should forgive others:

The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:12)
Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Luke 6:37)
The son who left home (Luke 15:11-32)
The parable of the king's servant (Matt. 18:23-35)

Matthew 18:21-22; Colossians 3:12-13; Ephesians 4:32 - We should forgive one another.

God is a Servant

Whoever wants to be great must be a servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:27-28).

So the last will be first, and the first will be last (Matthew 20:16).

Jesus, the willing and obedient servant:

John 12:26 - Jesus said, "Whoever wants to serve me must follow me."
Joshua 24:15 - As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
Luke 2:41-52 - A visit to the temple - Jesus obeyed His Heavenly Father.
John 2:1-11 - Jesus helped as his mother asked and helped the hosts at the wedding.
1 Samuel 3 - The boy Samuel served in the temple. He obeyed Eli, and also obeyed God.
Ephesians 6:1 - Children, obey your parents in the Lord.
Luke 4: 1-13 - Jesus, when tempted by Satan, obeyed God.
John 13:3-5 - Jesus washed the disciples' feet.
Galatians 5:13 - In love, serve one another.
Matthew 20:20-28 - If you want to be great, then you must be a servant.
Isaiah 1:19 - Be willing and obedient.

Going the extra mile:

Matthew 5:41-42 - The extra mile
John 15:13 - Laying down one's life for his friends
Ephesians 6:7 - Serve wholeheartedly.
Matthew 8:14-17 - Jesus healed Peter's mother, even when he felt too tired to do any more work.
Luke 18:10-28 - Jesus healed a crippled woman.
Galatians 6:2 - Carry one another's' burdens.
Luke 10:30-37 - The Good Samaritan served the wounded man, even when he may have been looked down on for helping someone from an opposing country.

Subthemes:

Humble

Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ who being in very nature, God, did not consider equality with God, but made Himself nothing, taking the very

nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross (Philippians 2:11)

Jesus, the humble servant:

Jesus was born in humble circumstances (Luke 2)

Jesus, the Son of God demonstrated His Father's meekness and humility by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. In Eastern countries the ass is the animal of peace and honour.

Jesus was baptized by John – an act of humility (Matt. 3:13-17).

Jesus allowed the Jews to honour Him as king, and obeyed God His Father, knowing that He was in reality riding to His death on a cross. He knew that He must die in order to rise again and demonstrate His power over sin and death.

God is pleased when His children obey Him through obeying their parents, teachers and other leaders.

Jesus has a meek and humble spirit. He taught His disciples this by example and in parables. Luke 14: 10: The parable of the marriage feast: "Come up higher, friend."

Victory over the world is found in exercising a meek and humble spirit:

Matthew 21:1-11 - King Jesus enters Jerusalem knowing He was riding to His death but also His victory over death.

Proverbs 25:6-7 - He who tries to honour himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be honoured.

Jesus taught that humility is being willing to be known for who you really are. That means our lives are completely open before God and men.

Matthew 18:3; Luke 9:17; "Be as little children."

The rich man and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)

Don't make yourself important (Luke 14:7-11)

A servant of all (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45)

Faithful

Fix your thoughts on Jesus. He was faithful to the one who appointed Him (Hebrews 3:1-2).

Jesus, the faithful servant:

Jesus was faithful to the disciples (John 17:1-26)

Jesus loved and forgave His friends (Luke 10:4; Matt. 17:27; John 21:15)

Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13:4-5)

Lessons of faithfulness:

The faithful servant (Luke 12:35-47)

Faithful friendship between David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18-20)

A friend loves at all times (Prov. 17:17)

Faithfulness of the disciples and apostles (Acts 1-2; Acts 4:13-22; Acts 7)

Faithfulness in little things (Luke 16:10)

Parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-29)

Healer

Surely He took our sicknesses and carried our sorrows; He was pierced for our sins, the punishment that brought us peace, and by His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Jesus, the healing servant:

The healing miracles of Jesus:

John 9:1-34 - The man born blind

John 5:1-18 - The man at the pool

Luke 8:43-48 - The woman who touched the hem of His garment

Luke 5:18-25 - Through the roof

Luke 6:6-10 - Jesus heals a paralyzed hand

Mark 10:46-52 - Blind Bartimaeus receives sight

Matthew 4:23 - Jesus healed all kinds of diseases

Luke 4:18 - He has chosen me to bring good news to the poor and recovery of sight to the blind...

Luke 6:17-18 - They had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases.

Matthew 14:14 - He was filled with pity for them and healed those who were ill.

Matthew 9:35-36 - Jesus healed people with every kind of disease.

Revelation 22:3 - The leaves of the tree are for healing of the nations

God is Life

Through Him all things were made; In Him is life, and that life was the life of men (John 1:3-4)

God is a living person:

New life from the grain of wheat that dies (John 12:24)

The sower (Mark 4:1-8)

Eternal life (John 17:3)

Made new in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)

The Vine (John 15:1-11)

Jesus, the Living Water:

Jesus, the Living Water (John 7:37-39)

The woman at the well (John 4:5-30)

The Holy Spirit (John 14:26 & Acts 1:8)

The disciples receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2 & Acts 10:44-48 & Acts 11:15-17)

Ask for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13)

God is the sustainer of life:

Life is more important than food (Matt. 6:25-34)

Man shall not live by bread alone (Matt. 4:4)

God sustained the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus)
Jesus, the Vine (John 15)
Trees by a stream (Ps. 1:1-3)
Abundant life (John 10:10)

Subthemes:

Redeemer / Saviour

But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier (Ephesians 2:13-14).

God gives new life:

Jesus called the disciples to a new life (Matt. 9:9-12; Luke 5:27-32; John 1:43-50)
Nicodemus asks about new life (John 3:1-3)
The Great Feast (Luke 14:15-24)
For God so loved the world (John 3:16)

Joy

The joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

God is the joy of life

Joyful praise to the Lord (Ps. 95:1-5; Ps. 100; Ps. 147:1 & 7; Ps. 66:1; Ps. 148; Ps. 149; Ps. 150)
The people praised Jesus as He entered Jerusalem (Luke 19:37-40)
Joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22)
The lame man healed (Acts 3:1-10)
Paul and Silas sang praises in jail (Acts 16:23-26)
Rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:4-7)

Creator

You gave life to every living thing (Nehemiah (:16).

God is the giver of life. He created life.
God gave life to man (Gen 2:7)
In Him we live, move and exist (Acts 17:28)
We are wonderfully made (Psalm 139)
All creation praises the Lord (Psalm 148:9-13; 150)

God is Provider

Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about what you will wear. Look at the birds – they do not sow or reap or store food, yet your Heavenly Father feeds them...and why worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the fields grow. Aren't they beautifully dressed? If God clothes the lilies, won't he clothe you? Matthew 6:25-31).

God is the provider of all man's needs. These are:

- Physical needs
- Emotional needs
- Spiritual needs

Physical needs:

All creation on earth was placed in the care of man, "to fill and subdue it" In creating the earth God had supplied all man's needs for food, shelter, and clothing. He made us originally with whole bodies and He gives us wholeness and healing.

Emotional needs:

God places people in families for their mutual help, comfort and love. He has created a beautiful world of sight, sound, taste feel and smell for people to enjoy.

Spiritual needs:

God has provided guiding rules to keep us from straying from Him. When we do sin, He has a way back to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. Galatians 3:19.

The character qualities God would develop in His children as they understand His function as provider are:

- gratitude to Him expressed in thankful prayer and praise.
- generosity in gladly providing the needs of others as God shows us.

Subthemes:

Faithful

Your Love, O Lord, reaches the heavens, your faithfulness reaches the skies (Psalm 36:5).

God faithfully provides:

Genesis 1:29 - God said, Look, I have given you all the plants that have grain for seed. And I have given you all the trees whose fruits have seeds in them. They will be food for you."

Ruth - God provided grain for Ruth and Naomi.

Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6 - Jesus feeds the multitudes.

Exodus 16; Exodus 3:8 - God provided food for the Israelites.

Proverbs 12:1 - He who works his land will have abundant food.

Matthew 6:25-34 - Do not worry about food or clothes.
1 Kings 17 - Miraculous provision for the widow when Elijah prays
2 Kings 4 - Miraculous provision when Elisha prays
Philippians 4:19 - My God shall supply all your needs.
Psalm 136:25 - He gives food to every living creature. His love continues forever.

Father

How many are your works O Lord! In wisdom you made them all: the earth is full of your creatures.

These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time (Psalm 104:24 &27).

God cares for his children:

John 10 - The Good Shepherd; Our heavenly Father loves and cares for us.
2 Corinthians 6:8 I will be your Father and you shall be my sons and daughters.
1 John 3:1 - See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that He has called us His children.

God is a caring provider:

The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18)
The Lord is my Shepherd (Ps. 23)
God gives good gifts (Luke 11:11-13)
Don't worry about tomorrow (Matt. 6:25-34)
Jesus provided at the wedding (John 2:1-11)

Resourceful

Declares the Lord: 'Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand' (Jeremiah 18:6)

God is resourceful:

- in His creation. He displays infinite variety in His design and planning. eg. He creates living creatures to live in His world, and He creates the necessary food and shelter to sustain them. Psalm 8, Psalm 9.
- in the way He works in people's lives. He takes the sinner and turns him into a saint. 1 Corinthians 3:18. We are changed from one degree of glory to another. 1 Cor. 1:27

God is resourceful in the way He can change us to fulfill His purposes

- Isaiah 61:3 - He (God) gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning
- God is able to use people... young or old, weak or strong, in good circumstances or difficult.
- The key to His being able to use people is not their talents or abilities, but their attitude of heart towards Him... their willingness of heart to listen to Him and obey Him.
- God is pleased when we use our available resources and abilities for Him, as He directs.

- Hebrews 13:5 - Be content with such things as you have. God made us as we are. He has placed us in the circumstances in which we find ourselves; so we can be used in His purposes, just as we are, if we have been obedient to Him and have an open heart and mind towards Him.

God is Peace

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

Peace is an attitude of heart and mind, irrespective of the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Peace is the result of a clear relationship between the individual and his God.

Psalms 23 and Psalm 91 are two of many examples in scripture of this inner peace.

Isaiah 32: 17 - The effect of righteousness shall be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever. It is good to apply this truth to the state of discipline in a classroom, school or home.

Galatians 5:22 - Peace is the fruit of the fruit of the Spirit. If we have all the other fruits of the Spirit operating in our lives: love, joy, patience, truth, goodness etc. then we have peace within our inner spirits. Peace is the gift of God to His children.

John 14:27; John 16:33 - Jesus *gives* His peace to us; we don't have to work for it.

Romans 5: 1. Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace is a characteristic of secure people. Secure children are children with an inner peace, because they know who they are— (children of God.)— why they are here— (to live for God)—and where they are going— (following Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life).

Jesus was a secure child. e.g. the 12-year-old in the temple with the Pharisees.

People with peace in their hearts will be peacemakers with others.

Subthemes:

Redeemer / Saviour

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled you...through His death (Colossian 1:21).

But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far away, have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier (Ephesians 2:13-14).

We have been reconciled to God through Christ's death (Col. 1:20 & 2 Cor. 5:17-20)
God has made us His friends (Rom. 5:10)
We are bought with a price (1 Cor. 7:23)
Christ broke down the barrier (Eph. 2:13-14)
We have peace with God through Jesus (Rom. 5:1)

Forgiving

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:32).

We have peace with God when we accept God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Be clean on the inside, and not just the outside (Matthew 23:13-27)
Make the right choices: e.g. the good Samaritan ((Luke 10)
A clean heart (1 Pet.1; 1 John 3)
Jesus forgives Zacchaeus (Luke 19)
Jesus forgives Peter (Matt. 26:69 & John 21:15)
Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Psalm 51:7 (KJV)

Protector

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone O Lord make me dwell in safety (Psalm 4:8).

We have peace knowing that God is a Father who protects His children:

Psalm 91
Protection of baby Jesus (Matt. 2)
Protection of baby Moses (Ex. 1-2)
Protection of David against Goliath (1 Sam. 17)

We have peace knowing that God protects His people when they are in danger:

God protected Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Dan. 3)
God protected Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 6)
Jesus protected the disciples during the storm (Luke 8:22-25)