

Bible workbook

Year 11

Term 1

Attribute of God: God is...	Page	Number of weeks	Number of pages
Love	2	5	20
Provider	21	5	7

Total: 27

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Material in this workbook has been sourced from:

1. LIFE PAC Home Schooling Curriculum, Alpha & Omega Publications

<https://www.aop.com/curriculum/shop-lifepac?filter=GL12> (free download samples)

2. Counter Culture – Following Christ in an anti-Christian Age by David Platt
3. Focus on the Family <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/transgenderism-our-position/>
4. What Constitutes a “Race”? by Ken Ham, Answers In Genesis
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/25/modern-slavery-trafficking-persons-one-in-200>





God is Love

The value of human life

Because God loves every person that He has created, He is deeply grieved when human life is not respected and valued.

Psalm 139:13-18

13 For you created my inmost being;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you

when I was made in the secret place,

when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;

all the days ordained for me were written in your book

before one of them came to be.

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God!

How vast is the sum of them!

18 Were I to count them,

they would outnumber the grains of sand—

when I awake, I am still with you.

Abortion

Reference: *Counter Culture – Following Christ in an anti-Christian Age* by David Platt

Across the world, more than forty-two million abortions occur every year. That's 115,000 abortions every single day. And just as German Christians during WW2 should not have ignored the reality of what was happening in concentration camps across their country, Christians should not ignore the reality of what is happening in abortion clinics across the world.

A true story:

Abby was in her early twenties. She had grown up in a Christian home, attended a Christian school, and had even joined a church. But a relationship with Christ was far from a reality in Abby's life. Instead, she was consumed with her work and caught up in the pleasures and pursuits of the world. She met a man who captivated her thoughts and quickened her emotions, and before long they had given themselves to each other. Everything was going great.

Until Abby discovered that she was pregnant and he was gone. In an instant, it seemed as though the world had come crashing down around her. This can't be, she thought. I can't have a baby. My reputation will be ruined, my family will be shamed, and my career will be over. Enveloped by panic and gripped with fear, Abby saw a lone solution to her problem—only one way out of her predicament.

One Friday afternoon, Abby walked into an abortion clinic. Within a couple of hours, her problem was solved and her predicament taken care of (or so she thought). The following Monday morning, she returned to business as usual and life as normal, hiding the secret of what she'd done as if nothing had ever happened.

GOD AND THE UNBORN

As you read through the Bible, you won't find the word abortion anywhere. But that doesn't mean Scripture is silent about it, for the core truths we've already seen in the gospel concerning who God is, who we are, and what Christ has done speak directly to the issue of abortion.

Consider the way the Bible describes the relationship between God and an unborn baby. The psalmist writes to God:

You formed my inward parts;

you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance;

in your book were written, every one of them,

the days that were formed for me,

when as yet there was none of them.

PSALM 139:13-16

As we read these words, we're reminded of the core gospel truth that God is the Creator. He alone has the power and authority to give life. Elsewhere in the Bible, Job says, "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). He also says, "In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10).

God is not only the Giver of life; he is also the Taker of life. Again, Job confesses, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away" (Job 1:21).

God himself declares, "I put to death and I bring to life" (Deuteronomy 32:39, NIV).

This is why murder and suicide are both sins. It is God's prerogative alone, as Creator, to give and take innocent life. In light of these biblical realities, it becomes abundantly clear that abortion is an affront to God's sole and sovereign authority as the Giver and Taker of life. Abortion, like murder or suicide, asserts human beings as the ones who control life and death. But God the Creator alone has the right to determine when someone lives and dies, and abortion flies directly in the face of his authority.

Abortion is not only an affront to God's authority as Creator; it is also an assault on his work in creation. Did you hear the psalmist describe the beauty of the way God forms the "inward parts" of a baby in a "mother's womb"?

As the psalmist reflects on God's work in the womb, he responds in an outburst of worship: "I praise you! I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"

The way God creates people compels praise. These verses are all the more stunning when we realize that the psalmist came to his conclusions without knowing so many of the details that we know today concerning a baby's development. The psalmist didn't necessarily know how God takes an egg and a sperm and brings them together. How a few weeks later, often before a woman even realizes she is pregnant, a human heart is beating and circulating its own blood. Within a few more weeks, fingers are forming on hands and brain waves are detectable. Before long, these "inward parts" are moving. Kidneys are forming and functioning, followed by a gall bladder, and then by the twelfth week, all the organs of a baby boy or girl are functional, and he or she can cry. All of this occurs within three short months—only the first trimester! A heart, a brain, organs, sexuality, movement, reaction—and the Creator of the universe is orchestrating all of it! This work of creation evokes awe and amazement.

So then, imagine in this moment of creation inserting a tool, taking a pill, or undergoing an operation that takes the very life God is developing and destroys it. Most abortions occur between ten and fourteen weeks of gestation —what is described as the "optimal time" for dismemberment and removal.

Abortion is without question an assault on God's grand creation of a human life. There is no way around it.

THE KEY QUESTION

The key question that we all must answer—and the question that determines how we view abortion—is this: What is contained in the womb? Is it a person? Or is it merely an embryo, a fetus? Virtually every other question and every single argument in the abortion controversy comes back to this question: What, or who, is in the womb? And once this question is answered, everything else comes into perspective. As author Gregory Koukl points out, “If the unborn is not a human person, no justification for abortion is necessary.” And some people contend this. They will say that the unborn is not a person or that the unborn is merely a person who has the potential to become human (whatever that means). Again, if this is true, the argument is over; no justification for abortion is necessary.

However, as Koukl writes, “If the unborn is a human person, then no justification for abortion is adequate.” Many people say, “Abortion is such a complex issue, and there just aren’t any easy answers.” But if what is in the womb is a person, then even if someone is pro-abortion or pro-choice for any number of reasons, all of their reasoning falls apart. Regardless of where you currently stand on the abortion issue, imagine for a moment that the unborn is a person formed and created by God himself. If this is true, then think through the primary arguments for abortion.

“Women have a right to privacy with their doctors.” Without question, we all have a right to some measure of privacy. Yet our laws regularly override people’s privacy when another person’s life is in question. No woman or man has a right to a private conversation with a doctor to conspire how to end someone else’s life. If the unborn are people, then we must protect them, regardless of what that means for someone’s privacy.

“Women should have the right to choose.” Yet we all agree that no one should have unlimited rights to make choices. If toddlers or teenagers become burdensome or expensive, parents don’t have the right to eliminate them. Similarly, then, when it comes to abortion, the real question is not whether a woman has a choice, but whether that woman actually has a human being that God recognizes as a valuable person in her womb. If so, then a moral duty to honor life supersedes the personal hardship that might come due to pregnancy. Choosing to terminate innocent life is by definition choosing to murder.

Indeed, the primary issue in the debate over abortion is the identity of the unborn. Listen to Gregory Koukl describe a little girl named Rachel, a daughter of a family friend:

Rachel is two months old, but she is still six weeks away from being a full-term baby. She was born prematurely at 24 weeks, in the middle of her mother’s second trimester. On the day of her birth Rachel weighed one pound, nine ounces, but dropped to just under a pound soon after.

She was so small she could rest in the palm of her daddy’s hand. She was a tiny, living, human person. Heroic measures were taken to save this child’s life. Why? Because we have an obligation to protect, nurture, and care for other humans who would die without our help— especially little children. Rachel was a vulnerable and valuable human being. But get this . . . if a doctor came into the hospital room and, instead of caring for Rachel, took the life

of this little girl as she lay quietly nursing at her mother's breast, it would be homicide. However, if this same little girl—the very same Rachel—was inches away resting inside her mother's womb, she could be legally killed by abortion.

To any reasonable person, this makes absolutely no sense. Abortion is utterly ludicrous if this is a child in the womb. Everything—everything!—revolves around what is happening in a mother's womb, and Scripture is clear: that womb contains a person being formed in the image of God. Any distinction between the unborn and a person (or a human and a person, for that matter) is both artificial and unbiblical. God recognizes the unborn as a person and designs the unborn for life from the moment of conception. While our culture is continually pushing against this idea, it is not possible to believe the Bible and deny that the unborn are persons. And once followers of Christ accept this, we can no longer sit idly by while people are mercilessly murdered in their mothers' wombs.

WONDERFUL WORKS

Abortion not only assaults God's work in creation, it also attacks God's relationship with the unborn. One of the wonderful things about Psalm 139 is the glimpse we get into how God relates to a child in the womb. He is intimately involved in the life of that baby from the moment of conception— and even before that! God tells Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you" (Jeremiah 1:5, NKJV).

The psalmist says to God, "You are He who took Me out of the womb . . . from My mother's womb You have been My God" (Psalm 22:9-10, NKJV).

Scripture speaks about how God calls, names, and blesses children while they are still in the womb (see Galatians 1:15; Isaiah 49:1; Luke 1:15). The Bible even describes a baby leaping with joy in the womb (see Luke 1:39-44)! God reminds us in his Word that though an unborn baby is visibly hidden from us, he or she is not hidden from him. God sees children in wombs all across the world right now, and he is personally forming, fashioning, knitting, creating, nurturing, shaping, and crafting them in wonderful ways (see Job 31:15; 10:8-12).

With the advancement of medical technology that enables us to detect gender before birth, people in countries around the world now have the choice to abort children based on this revelation. China, for example, limits the number of children each family can have, and it's advantageous to have boys, which subsequently leads to the abortion of many girls. In India, it's much more expensive to have a girl (because a family will lose money on her dowry), so families who find out the child in the womb is a girl will often choose to discard her.

Do we believe this is right? Aren't all children, regardless of gender, wonderfully made in God's image? And if it's not right for people to discard girls in China or India for the sake of their convenience, then why is it right for us to discard children elsewhere in the world for our convenience?

This is not only an issue when it comes to the sex of a child but also when it comes to disability in children. It is possible for us to determine whether a baby in the womb is at risk for Down syndrome or other disabilities that will affect his or her life. So should abortion be

permissible in such circumstances? Again, not if we actually believe all of God's works are wonderful.

Consider the man born blind in John 9. Most of the Jews who knew this man would have considered his disability a sure sign of sin in either his life or his parents' lives. So the disciples ask Jesus, "Whose fault is this?" Jesus answers them, "This is not his or his parents' fault, but this happened so that the wonderful works of God might be revealed to and through him." Jesus reveals that this man was born blind so that one day he might see, know, declare, and delight in the glory of Christ.

We must not deny the wonderful work of God even (or especially) in disability. Even when we don't understand it, God has a design and a desire to use everything for our good and his glory (see Romans 8:28), and it is not only wrong but also foolish to play god in such situations by essentially saying that we know better than he does. Likewise, God's works are wonderful even (or especially) in the midst of difficulty.

God is not only the Judge of sin, but he is also the Savior of sinners. God is the Judge who loathes abortion and the King who loves even those who participate in it, so hear this good news. To anyone and everyone who has ever aborted a child, supported abortion, encouraged abortion, performed abortion, permitted abortion, or done nothing about abortion, may the following realities lodge deep within your soul.

God forgives entirely. "As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is [God's] mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11-12, NKJV).

God says, "I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The good news of the gospel is that when we turn from our sin and trust in Christ, we find that he has paid the price for any part we have ever played in abortion, and because of his cross, we are entirely forgiven.

God not only forgives entirely, but he also heals deeply. God does not desire for you or anyone else to live with the pain of regret. It is altogether right to hate sin in your history. The pain of past sin is often a powerful deterrent to future sin, but don't let it rob you of the peace God has designed for you in the present. Remember what Jesus said to a woman who had lived an immoral lifestyle: "Your sins are forgiven. . . . Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 7:48-50). God desires that peace to be yours today.

He forgives entirely, he heals deeply, and he restores completely. To all who trust in Christ, remember this: in Christ you are not guilty, and there is no condemnation for you. This is true whether you have had one abortion or five. This is true whether you have medically performed thousands of abortions or legally permitted millions. You do not walk around with a scarlet A on your chest, for God does not look at you and see the guilt of abortion. Instead, he looks at you and sees the righteousness of Christ. God restores, and he redeems.

Even as we saw earlier, God has a track record of working all things, including evil things, ultimately for good.

Remember Abby, at the beginning of this article For years she kept the secret of her abortion to herself. But on the weekend that her husband proposed to her, she decided she needed to tell him what she had done years before they met. He listened graciously, and they chose to keep it a secret between them for the next eight years. No one else knew. Until one day Abby and her husband were talking with some friends who told them about the freedom and forgiveness found in the gospel. Abby knew about Christ and had grown up in church, but the words of Isaiah 61 had never clicked in her mind and heart. In a passage that Jesus would later quote in reference to himself, the Bible says, “The LORD . . . has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound . . . to comfort all who mourn . . . to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

For the first time, Abby realized why Christ came and died on the cross. He came to heal the broken hearts of people just like her by freeing them from their bondage to sin and shame. For fifteen years Abby had done all she could to cover her past in order to have others’ approval. Now, for the first time, she knew that in Christ she had God’s approval, regardless of her past.

The freedom Abby has experienced now propels her to lead a ministry in the church that reaches out to women who have had abortions. She has received training on how to wisely, carefully, and compassionately come alongside these women to serve and support them. She puts this training into practice on a regular basis with groups of women in the city. In addition to leading other women in the church, Abby is actively involved in public efforts to minimize abortions in the city, specifically counseling pregnant women who are considering abortions, sharing her own story, and telling them there is another way to solve their “problem.” She does all of this together with her husband and two children—a beautiful daughter, and a wonderful son. It is a priceless picture to see this woman who once thought abortion had permanently stained her past and forever stolen her peace now transformed by the gospel, and to watch God use her quite literally to save countless children’s—and women’s—lives.

Activity:

You might see people holding up these kinds of signs in a pro-abortion march:

1. “My body, my choice”.
2. “Forced birth = violence.”
3. “Abortion is an essential human right.”

Counteract this statement by explaining God’s perspective, (the pro-life perspective) on these arguments.

Euthanasia

Life is a gift from God.

All life is God-given. Birth and death are part of the life processes which God has created, so we should respect them. Therefore, no human being has the authority to take the life of any innocent person, even if that person wants to die.

Human beings are valuable because they are made in God's image. Human life possesses an intrinsic dignity and value because it is created by God in his own image for the distinctive destiny of sharing in God's own life

Saying that God created humankind in his own image doesn't mean that people actually look like God, but that people have a unique capacity for rational existence that enables them to see what is good and to want what is good.

To propose euthanasia for an individual is to judge that the current life of that individual is not worthwhile. Such a judgement is incompatible with recognizing the worth and dignity of the person to be killed. Therefore, arguments based on the quality of life are completely irrelevant nor should anyone ask for euthanasia for themselves because no-one has the right to value anyone, even themselves, as worthless.

All human lives are equally valuable.

Christians believe that the intrinsic dignity and value of human lives means that the value of each human life is identical. They don't think that human dignity and value are measured by mobility, intelligence, or any achievements in life.

Valuing human beings as equal just because they are human beings has clear implications for thinking about euthanasia:

- Patients who are seriously ill or damaged, remain living human beings, and so their intrinsic value remains the same as anyone else's. Therefore, it would be wrong to treat their lives as worthless and to conclude that they 'would be better off dead'.
- Patients who are old or sick, and who are near the end of earthly life have the same value as any other human being.
- People who have mental or physical handicaps have the same value as any other human being.

End of life care

The Christian faith leads those who follow it to some clear-cut views about the way terminally ill patients should be treated:

- The community should care for people who are dying, and for those who are close to them.
- The community should provide the best possible palliative care. This means providing pain relief, even if the drugs used for pain relief may accelerate the onset of impending death.

- Christians should help the terminally ill to prepare for death.

Activity

How would you counsel a person who wanted to end their life because:

- a) they are depressed or suffer extreme emotional anxiety?
- b) They have a physical disability and are in pain

Transgenderism

Focus on the Family <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/transgenderism-our-position/>

Each of the two sexes is a glorious gift from God. Our sexuality is meant to be offered back to Him either in complementary unity with the opposite sex in the context of marriage for procreation and mutual delight or in celibacy for undivided devotion to Christ.

Not only do male and female together reflect the image of God, but their coming together in a marriage relationship to bring forth new life is used in Scripture as the deepest and most intimate analogy of God's relationship with His people. Throughout both Testaments, God and His people are portrayed as husband and wife or as a groom and bride. The creation account found in Genesis lays out this gender-based, matrimonial picture and sets the stage for the final, eternal union of God and His people – of Christ and His bride – described in Revelation.

God created humans, male and female, and that matters. In recent years, a revisionist transgender theology has been put forth in some theological circles that violates God's clearly articulated and intentional design for the two sexes. This distorts His image and His plan for sexuality, marriage, family and the just and proper ordering of society.

The Biblical position

The Bible affirms God's design for the two sexes – male and female – and marriage between one man and one woman as the place God established for sexual love to occur.

The Bible is opposed to gay and transgender theologies, which are contradictory to foundational Christian doctrine and the Judeo-Christian sexual ethic.

The true church should oppose the ordination of "transgender" and "transsexual" individuals into the clergy and the celebration of "transgenderism" as one of God's gifts.

The church must continue to proclaim the truth of God's intentional design for marriage and sexuality: The two sexes, male and female, are created in His image; and marriage is the union of one man and one woman.

The modern “transgender” movement is systematically working to dismantle the reality of two sexes – male and female – as the Bible and the world have always known this to be. If the transgender lobby succeeds, there will be striking consequences for individuals, marriage, family, children and society at large.

While God’s intent for sexuality and gender is being turned upside down, we must remember that those who struggle with their gender identity have lived lives of great pain, confusion and rejection. And, just as Jesus went out of his way to reach the outcasts of society, we’re called to humbly share His love embodied in the Gospel, to lift them up in prayer and to allow the Holy Spirit to bring about conviction, healing and transformation.

Scripture teaches that even in heaven believers will have gloriously redeemed physical bodies. In contrast, transgender revisionists hold to the pagan view that the body is a container that the spirit is poured into. They erroneously conclude that either God has mistakenly put an opposite-sex spirit into the wrong body or that the body is not the real person – that only the spirit is real. Christians believe that God can heal these disconnected, gnostic views and bring restoration and wholeness – where body, soul and spirit are in unity.

There has been a growing trend of parents raising their children without designating them male or female. A similar trend encourages parents of children who might not fit into typical social expressions of masculinity or femininity to raise them as the opposite sex. Instead, we encourage parents to lovingly help their children to embrace their bodily sexual reality. Christian parents can raise daughters who grow up to accept and enjoy their femininity, knowing deep down that being a girl is a good gift from God. Likewise, Christian families can raise sons to grow up to be healthy men who embrace their masculinity and see it as a good gift from God.

God calls us to proclaim the truth and beauty of His design and the redemption of sexual brokenness in our lives and culture through Jesus Christ. Like everyone else, “transgendered” individuals are desperately in need of God’s truth and deserve to know the love and compassion of Christ as shown through His people.

Activity

Use the guide on the next to pages for discussion and Bible study.

Is practicing homosexuality any worse than any other sexual sin, namely sex outside of marriage, adultery, polygamy or incest?

How would you aim to bring a homosexual/transgender person into a true relationship with Jesus?

Homosexuality: Truth and Compassion

I. OUR BATTLE IS AGAINST THE FALSE IDEAS OF THE CULTURE

- A. The culture holds mistaken beliefs about homosexuality, transgenderism, and what Scripture says about them.

II. WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS

- A. Both the Old and New Testament teach that homosexual *behavior* is a sin.

1. Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13
2. Romans 1:26 – 27, 1 Corinthians 6:9 – 10, 1 Timothy 1:8 – 11
3. The Romans passage is the most straightforward and defensible text.

- B. What scripture *doesn't* say about homosexuality:

1. Scripture doesn't say that homosexual behavior is the greatest sin.
2. Scripture doesn't say you can't continue in your relationship with an LGBT person in your life.

III. WHAT SCIENCE SAYS

- A. Are homosexuals born that way?

1. Secular (and LGBT-identified) researchers indicate people are *not* born that way.

- B. Do people choose to have same-sex attraction?

1. Most homosexuals never choose who they are attracted to.

- C. The transgender movement is at odds with the science of biology.

1. Humans are conceived either male or female.
2. Sex-reassignment surgery is problematic.

IV. SPEAK THE TRUTH WITH COMPASSION

A. For any context:

1. Avoid clichés that kill.
2. Don't make homosexuality out to be the worst sin.
3. Make a distinction between public policy concerns and personal interaction with homosexuals.
 - a. Follow the "Principle of consistency:" Treat a homosexual the same way you would treat a heterosexual in a morally comparable situation.

B. For the church:

1. Welcome self-identified gays and lesbians to church.
2. Church leadership is off limits to practicing homosexuals (it's off limits to *anyone* in ongoing, unrepentant sin).
3. For faithful Christians with same-sex attraction, treat them like other believers.
4. Don't make jokes about homosexuality.
5. Cultivate a *safe* and *loving* environment at your church for people who wrestle with their faith, sexuality, and gender.

C. For your friends and family:

1. Make it a high priority to maintain your relationship with them.
2. Don't confuse love with accepting behavior.
3. You don't have to decide between your faith and your friends/family who identify as LGBT.
4. Treat homosexuals as you would anyone else.
5. Don't make homosexuality *the* issue.
6. Strive to make a *long-term difference*, not a *short-term statement*.
7. Make Jesus the issue.

Self-acceptance

How much do you love yourself?

Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as **yourself**."

Love is choosing the very best for someone, including yourself.

How can you tell if you don't love yourself?

There is a part of you that you wish you could change; a part of you that you wish could be different.

Think about:

1. Is there anything you would like to change about yourself?
2. Is there a person you would like to be?
3. What gives you a sense of personal reward?

Be careful about hiding behind a super-spiritual front – saying you are OK when you are not.

Major symptoms of self-rejection:

- **Inability to trust God** – You think God has made a mistake in the way he has made you. You therefore can't trust Him for other things. Ephesians 2:10 – we are His workmanship.
- **Excessive shyness; fear of man.** We are afraid that others won't accept us. We can't be ourselves. We are always thinking about self – what do they think of me? Psalm 118:5,9
- **Problems making deep friendships and genuine relationships.** The beginning of any relationship is unselfishness
- **Concerned about your own needs** and not concerned about the needs of others. It leaves you with nothing to talk about.
- **Difficulty in loving others and receiving love from others.**
- **Excessive self-criticism** – "I can't" – Isaiah 45:9-10 NLT
"What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator.
Does a clay pot argue with its maker?
Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying,
'Stop, you're doing it wrong!'
Does the pot exclaim,
'How clumsy can you be?'
How terrible it would be if a newborn baby said to its father,
'Why was I born?'
or if it said to its mother,
'Why did you make me this way?'"
- **Attitude of superiority.** This reflects deep inferiority, covered up with a big noise and an over-reaction.

- **Self-consciousness** – always concerned about what others think. You think others are talking about you or laughing at you.
- **Fashion consciousness** – to draw attention to yourself; Over-emphasis on material things and how you look.
- **Self-conscious with those of the opposite sex.**

Self-acceptance is a process. Accept yourself, and others will follow in accepting you.

Insights concerning self-acceptance

1. God prescribed us before birth Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 45:9-10
2. God is not finished with us yet: Eph 2:10; Phil 1:6
3. The cause of inferiority is comparison – 2 Cor 10:12
4. Outward beauty is not related to inward happiness – Is 53:2
5. God has a universal inward ideal for all of us, (to be like Christ). Matt 5: 3-12
6. Our happiness and achievements are based on our ability to experience His inward ideal - Matt. 6:33
7. If necessary, God sacrifices outward beauty to develop inward character: 2 Cor 4:16

Why do we reject ourselves?

- Physical disability or abnormality
- Inner hurts from the past
- Deep hurts from relationships

Symptoms of people who have hurts:

- Fears – of water, heights, dark, spiders, people
- Resentment – hatred, bitterness, especially towards those who have hurt you.
- Jealousy, temper, anger – people will explode for no apparent reason
- Feelings of rejection
- Wanting to run away
- Attention seeking
- Perfectionism
- Anti-authority

How to gain release:

1. Accept the way God has made you. Psalm 139:13-16
2. The work is not finished. The Lord within you makes you more beautiful, like the honing of a rough diamond.
3. Stop comparing yourself with others, especially your physical appearance. Inward beauty is not related to outward appearance. Do not be influenced by advertising and the world. Happiness comes from thanking God for the way He made you.

Inner healing

Proverbs 20:30

God is interested in the entire person. Deep scars need healing.

Song of Solomon 1:3 – His name is as ointment.

God knows you

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Part of his creation is you. Because God made you, God knows you.

Read Psalm 139:1-18.

There are times in life when you wonder if anyone cares that you are here. Who notices me? How can I be in the middle of a group of people and feel like no one sees me? Do I matter?

Have you ever felt that way? Do you ever wonder if anyone would ever love you if they really knew what went on inside you?

God knows what people are like. He knows that we have these feelings. He knows about our habits and quirks. We don't need to pretend that we are perfect because God knows what we are really like. He loves us completely, including all of the not-so-perfect stuff inside us.

If God really knows us, all of us, how can he still love us? This is a great mystery. His love is unconditional! We don't have to wait until we are better or older or thinner or smarter to talk to God. God knows and loves you today.

Activity

Write out key verses from Psalm 139:1-18. Make this into a small decorated poster and place it on your bedroom wall.

Reflect on aspects of this study that may apply to you. Make notes in the form of a journal. Keep updating these notes as God helps you overcome areas in your life concerning your self-image. The right self-image is to see yourself as God sees you – not less, not more.

Racism and Slavery

What Constitutes a “Race”? by Ken Ham

The evolutionary view of races

In the 1800s, Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species* in which he introduced the idea of ‘Natural Selection’ or the ‘Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.’

Darwinian evolution was (and still is) inherently a racist philosophy, teaching that different groups or “races” of people evolved at different times and rates, so some groups are more like their apelike ancestors than others.

The Australian Aborigines, for instance, were considered the missing links between the apelike ancestor and the rest of mankind. This resulted in terrible prejudices and injustices towards the Australian Aborigines.

Racist attitudes fueled by evolutionary thinking were largely responsible for an African pygmy being displayed, along with an orangutan, in a cage in the Bronx Zoo. Indeed, Congo pygmies were once thought to be “small apelike, elfish creatures” that “exhibit many ape-like features in their bodies.”

As a result of Darwinian evolution, many people started thinking in terms of the different people groups around the world representing different “races,” but within the context of evolutionary philosophy. This has resulted in many people today, consciously or unconsciously, having ingrained prejudices against certain other groups of people.

However, all human beings in the world today are classified as *Homo sapiens*. Scientists today admit that, biologically, there really is only one race of humans.

The Bible does not mention the word ‘race’. All human beings are the descendants of Adam and Eve. Because of the influences of Darwinian evolution and the resulting prejudices, it would be far better to abandon the term “race(s).” We could refer instead to the different “people groups” around the world.

The Bible and “Race”

The Bible describes all human beings as being of “one blood” (Acts 17:26). This of course emphasizes that we are all related, as all humans are descendants of the first man, Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45),¹⁵ who was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27).¹⁶ The Last Adam, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45) also became a descendant of Adam. Any descendant of Adam can be saved because our mutual relative by blood (Jesus) died and rose again. This is why the gospel can (and should) be preached to all tribes and nations.

Can the Bible be used to justify racist attitudes?

The inevitable question arises, “If the Bible teaches all humans are the same, where was the church during the eras of slavery and segregation? Doesn’t the Bible actually condone the enslavement of a human being by another?”

Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible mention slaves and slavery. As with all other biblical passages, these must be understood in their grammatical-historical context.

Although the Bible does not condemn slavery, we must realize that the term ‘slavery’ in the Bible had a different meaning to today. Slaves in Biblical times chose to be slaves if they were in a state of poverty. They chose to place themselves under a master who would provide for them, and treat them well. The forced enslavement of another human being goes against the biblical teaching that all humans were created in the image of God and are of equal standing before Him, (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11).

Indeed, the most ardent abolitionists during the past centuries were Bible-believing Christians. John Wesley, Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., and Thomas Clarkson all preached against the evils of slavery and worked to bring about the abolition of the slave trade in England and North America. And of course, who can forget the change in the most famous of slave traders? John Newton, writer of “Amazing Grace,” eventually became an abolitionist after his conversion to Christianity, when he embraced the truth of Scripture.

“Racial” Differences

But some people think there must be different races of people because there appear to be major differences between various groups, such as skin color and eye shape.

The truth is that these so-called “racial characteristics” are only minor variations among people groups. The so-called “racial” differences are absolutely trivial— overall, there is more variation within any group than there is between one group and another.

Activities

1. Explain how Darwinism has fueled racism.
2. Write a report on the work of either John Newton or William Wilberforce in their work to abolish slavery.

Slavery today

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/25/modern-slavery-trafficking-persons-one-in-200>

How many slaves are there today, and who are they?

The word “slavery” conjures up images of shackles and transatlantic ships – depictions that seem relegated firmly to the past. But more people are enslaved today than at any other time in history. Experts have calculated that roughly 13 million people were captured and sold as slaves between the 15th and 19th centuries; today, an estimated 40.3 million people – more than three times the figure during the transatlantic slave trade – are living in some form of modern slavery, according to the latest figures published by the UN’s International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation.

Women and girls comprise 71% of all modern slavery victims. Children make up 25% and account for 10 million of all the slaves worldwide.

What are the slaves being forced to do?

A person today is considered enslaved if they are forced to work against their will; are owned or controlled by an exploiter or “employer”; have limited freedom of movement; or are dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as property, according to abolitionist group Anti-Slavery International.

Globally, more than half of the 40.3 million victims (24.9 million) are in forced labour, which means they are working against their will and under threat, intimidation or coercion. An additional 15.4 million people are estimated to be living in forced marriages.

Of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labour, the majority (16 million) work in the private sector. Slaves clean houses and flats; produce the clothes we wear; pick the fruit and vegetables we eat; trawl the seas for the shrimp on our restaurant plates; dig for the minerals used in our smartphones, makeup and electric cars; and work on construction jobs building infrastructure for the 2022 Qatar World Cup.

Another 4.8 million people working in forced labour are estimated to be sexually exploited, while roughly 4.1 million people are in state-sanctioned forced labour, which includes governmental abuse of military conscription and forced construction or agricultural work. In certain countries such as Mauritania, people are born into “hereditary” slavery if their mother was a slave.

Again, women and girls bear the brunt of these statistics, comprising 99% of all victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other sectors, according to the ILO.

Where is this happening?

Statistically, modern slavery is most prevalent in Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific, according to the Global Slavery Index, which publishes country-by-country rankings on modern slavery figures and government responses to tackle the issues.

More than 70% of the 4.8 million sex exploitation victims are in the Asia and Pacific region. Forced marriage is most prevalent in Africa. But there isn't a single country that isn't tainted by slavery: 1.5 million victims are living in developed countries, with an estimated 13,000 enslaved in the UK.

Why are there so many slaves today?

Slavery is big business. Globally, slavery generates as much as \$150bn in profits every year, more than one third of which (\$46.9bn) is generated in developed countries, including the EU. Whereas slave traders two centuries ago were forced to contend with costly journeys and high mortality rates, modern exploiters have lower overheads thanks to huge advances in technology and transportation. Modern migration flows also mean that a large supply of vulnerable, exploitable people can be tapped into for global supply chains in the agriculture, beauty, fashion and sex industries.

According to slavery expert Siddharth Kara, modern slave traders now earn up to 30 times more than their 18th and 19th century counterparts would have done. The one-off cost of a slave today is \$450. A forced labourer generates roughly \$8,000 in annual profit for their exploiter, while sex traffickers earn an average of \$36,000 per victim.

Activity

Find out where slavery is still alive and well today and write a report on a specific situation.

God is Provider



God provided a way through Abraham

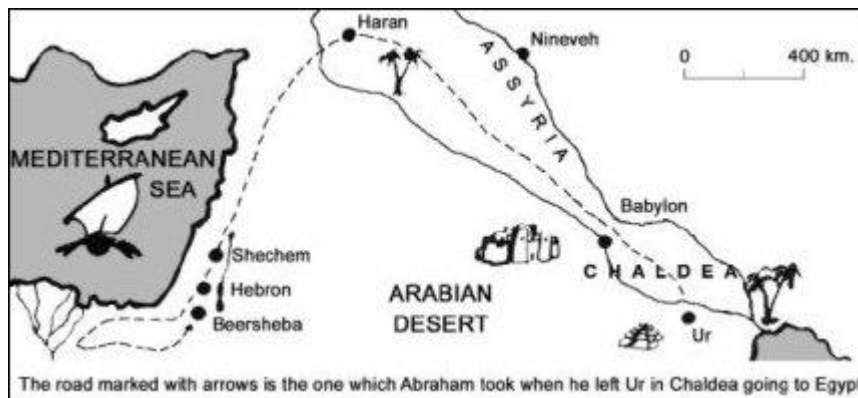
The Bible does not give us the exact date of Abraham; however, historians place him around 2000 B.C. Abraham was born and lived in Ur until God spoke to him concerning the important role that he was to play in the history of God’s dealings with his people—especially the chosen nation, Israel.

Like his father Terah, Abraham was a shepherd. From the Bible, we learn that Abraham was very rich. He owned large flocks and herds, much silver and gold, and many servants. In that day those possessions were the measure of a man’s wealth.

From this highly cultured, wealthy background, God called Abraham to be the head of His chosen people. To reveal Himself to the peoples of the earth, God chose a man; and His special favor would be extended to the chosen people. However, in return, God had a very special purpose and program for this new nation.

HIS CALL FROM GOD

Read Genesis 12: 1-8



Situated in southern Babylonia between two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, Ur of the Chaldees had many advantages for the development of commerce and civilization. Being the oldest and the most important city of the country, it was known as the seat of worship of the moon god Nannar. The huge temple to this moon god rose seventy feet (twenty-one meters) into the sky.

Most of the people in the land of Ur practiced idol worship, which included many forms of immorality. Even though these people were descendants of Shem (one of Noah’s sons), most of them had gone the way of the people in the days of Noah before the Flood.

God desired to reveal Himself, the true God, to the people. God looked for a man; He found Abraham ready and willing to obey Him. God spoke to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, (Genesis 12:1-3). Sometime after God called Abram, (his original name which means high father), God changed his name to Abraham, which means father of a great multitude.

Abraham's wife's name, Sarai, which means contentious, was later changed to Sarah, which means princess.

In response to God's original call, Abraham took his father Terah, his brother Nahor, and his nephew Lot and departed from Ur for the land of Canaan.

In His call to Abraham, God commanded: "...Get out of thy country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, and go to a land that I will show your." God also promised: "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

In obedience to God, Abraham accepted this covenant relationship thus becoming the father and founder of a new people group, who would receive the special blessings of God and in turn be a blessing to the rest of the world. Through this new group of people, God chose to reveal Himself, not only to them, but also to all the other nations of the earth.

After many years, through this family of Abraham came Jesus Christ, God's Son, to be the Savior of the world. This Savior was the essence and end of God's call and promise to Abraham. Abraham's call of God to become the founder and father of the Hebrew nation was evidently the most important spiritual event since man had sinned in the Garden of Eden. This event was another major step in God's redemptive plan for all men (see Genesis 3:15).

Every privilege has a responsibility; God's call to Abraham included both: a promise and a command (Genesis 12:1-3). Every special privilege and revelation this new nation would receive from God was to be passed on to all men of faith everywhere. When Abraham reached Shechem in Canaan, he erected an altar and worshiped God. Shechem means shoulder or ridge. Later at Shechem, God spoke to Abraham (Genesis 12:7).

After a brief stay at Shechem, Abraham moved southward to Bethel (or Luz). Bethel afforded excellent pastureland for a wealthy shepherd with flocks and herds. More importantly, however, Abraham erected an altar at Bethel "... and called upon the name of the Lord".(Genesis 12:8)

Activity

Complete these statements.

1. Sometime after God called Abram, which means high father, He changed Abram's name to _____, which means _____.

2. The name of Abram's wife Sarai, which means contentious, was later changed to _____, which means _____.

3. In response to God's call, Abraham left Ur with his father _____, his wife Sarah, his nephew _____ and his brother Nahor.

4. The group of people that God established through Abraham were God's chosen people, the _____.

HIS SOJOURN IN EGYPT

Because of a famine in Canaan, Abraham, Sarah, and Lot left Bethel and went to Egypt. Remember, God's promise to Abraham had included (a) a land, (b) a people, and (c) a blessing for all families of the earth (Genesis 12:2-3).

HIS SEPARATION FROM LOT

Read Genesis 13

After Abraham and Lot returned from Egypt with increased wealth, they were plagued by trouble among their herdsmen. Pastureland and watering places were at a premium. "And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle." (Genesis 13:7).

To Lot, God had promised nothing; to Abraham, He had promised all the land. Graciously, Abraham gave Lot his choice of the land.

Covetously, Lot looked toward the beautiful open country of the Jordan valley and claimed it. Lot chose the cities and the fertile plains of Jordan; Abraham kept the hill country. On those plains lay Sodom, a wicked city; and Lot took his family there. Seemingly, not one time did Lot recall God's promise to Abraham: "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it to you". (Genesis 13:17).

Abraham made his permanent home in Hebron, where he built an altar unto the Lord and worshiped there; and so did Isaac and Jacob after him.

HIS RECEPTION OF THE COVENANT

Read Genesis 15:4-6

God renewed His covenant with Abraham several times. In Genesis 15, God specifies that Abraham's seed of the covenant promised would be a son (Genesis 15:4). Abraham's descendants would be as innumerable as the stars—he would indeed become the father of a great multitude. God said to Abraham "... Unto your seed have I given this land..." (Genesis 15:18). Abraham "...believed in the LORD;" (Genesis 15:6)

Read Genesis 17

Possibly, Genesis 17, relates one of the most important meetings that God had with His servant Abraham. Not only did He renew the covenant, but he also added something to it or at least clarified something that Abraham and Sarah had not understood. As noted earlier, God changed Abram's name to Abraham: from exalted father to father of a great multitude.

He also changed Sarai's name to Sarah: from contentious to princess. Circumcision was given as a sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:10), and the son God promised would be born to Sarah.

God said, "...You shall call his name Isaac... ." (Genesis 17:19).

Sarah was childless until she was 90 years old. God promised Abraham that she would be "a mother of nations" (Genesis 17:16) and that she would conceive and bear a son, but Sarah did not believe. Isaac, born to Sarah and Abraham in their old age, was the fulfillment of God's promise to them. Gen. 17:15-20 God promised that Sarah would be the mother of Abraham's child, and that promise came to pass. We must not underestimate God! He can do wondrous and mighty things! It's a mistake to think that God can't do things, especially things He has promised to do!

After the birth of Isaac, Sarah lived to age 127 (Genesis 23 : 1); and Abraham to age 175 (Genesis 25 : 7)

Activity

Complete these statements.

1. In Genesis 15, God promised Abraham that his seed would be _____ and that his descendants would be as innumerable as _____. (Genesis 15:6)
2. Abraham believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for _____.

God provided a way through Ruth

Introduction

The book of Ruth is a wonderful story of love and loyalty, in which God shows his love and faithfulness to people who are faithful to his Covenant. It is set during the distressing era of the Judges, when the majority of the people turned away from God and His Covenant, and instead 'the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes' (Judges 21:25). In contrast, Ruth, Naomi and Boaz chose to act in faithfulness to each other and to God's Covenant.

Widows: Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi were widows. Widows were extremely vulnerable in the ancient world. Without a reliable source of income, they could find themselves homeless, poverty stricken and others within the community could take advantage of them. In the Covenant, God provided protection for widows in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. The closest male relative of the deceased husband would marry the widow to protect her and to provide children to carry on the family name.

Moabites: Ruth was a Moabite. The Moabites were descended from Lot's son, Moab and had been long term enemies of the Israelites. Their territory lay on the Eastern side of the Dead Sea. Moabites worshiped false gods.

Ruth chapter 1

This book introduces us to two vulnerable widows. Naomi had faced extreme hardship. She had moved away from Israel to a foreign country as a result of famine. She had lost her husband and her two sons. Her faith in God was at rock bottom. (See Ruth 1:13, 20-21).

The widow Ruth also had to make difficult choices. As a widow in Moab, she had few options: she could beg, sell herself as a slave, or hope for a second marriage. By travelling to Israel with Naomi she would have had the same few options, but also the stigma of being a despised foreigner in Israel.

Why do you think she chose to go with Naomi?

Ruth Chapter 2

When Ruth and Naomi arrive back in Bethlehem, Ruth pursues one of the few options available to her, gleaning. This practice was prescribed by the law as a method of providing for the poor in the land (Deuteronomy 24:19; Leviticus 19:9; 23:22).

Ruth was able to glean in the field belonging to Boaz because he was a relative of Naomi's, from the family of Elimelech.

What was Ruth's experience of gleaning? What could have gone wrong (Ruth 2:22)?

When Ruth gleans in Boaz's field, he gave beyond what the law required of him (see Deuteronomy 24:19) and showed kindness to Ruth.

Make a list of all the generous acts Boaz did for Ruth.

Ruth Chapter 3

Naomi was so happy that Boaz had shown favour to Ruth. It looked as if Boaz was showing more than kindness. Maybe he was in love with Ruth. For Boaz to marry Ruth would be exactly what Naomi wanted. Ruth would then no longer be a stranger in a new land. She would be a wife of a husband who could provide for herself and Naomi.

A month has passed since the end of Chapter 2 and the beginning of Chapter 3. Naomi is getting impatient. She thinks the romance between Boaz and Ruth is developing too slowly. Naomi makes a plan to speed things up.

She puts her plan into operation. Boaz is at the threshing floor by night. The threshing floor is the place where farmers gather to thresh their grain. This is the process of separating the grain from the straw that is attached to the grain. The stalks are beaten and then tossed into the air so that the wind carries away the lighter stalks, and the grain falls to the stone on the floor, where it is gathered up. This is a social place, as farmers gather together to do this work at night, and it is also a place where prostitutes often visit.

Naomi's plan was not a good one. She sends Ruth to Boaz at night, tells her to uncover his feet, (probably so that he will wake up from having cold feet!). This plan could have gone wrong for many reasons. But God was in charge and despite Naomi's dangerous plan, God used it to achieve His purposes.

Boaz did not take advantage of Ruth when she came to him at night. He continued to treat her with kindness. Ruth asks of Boaz: "spread the corner of your garment over me". In the culture of the day, this was a request for marriage. Ruth is asking Boaz to marry her. We now find out that Boaz is not in a position to marry Ruth, because there is another relative who has priority. However, once that was sorted out, Boaz agreed to be Ruth's husband, her redeemer.

Boaz redeemed Ruth, just as Christ redeemed us from the death penalty that falls on us when we sin. Ruth, being the bride, is a picture of the church, (or those who accept redemption of Jesus Christ.)

God not only provided for Ruth, but also for Naomi. Ruth, a Moabite, now knows the true God of Israel. Naomi, who had lost her faith, has had her faith restored.

Explain in your own words how Boaz is a picture of Jesus Christ to come.

Ruth Chapter 4

At the end of the book, a son is born to Ruth and Naomi cared for him. The women of the village recognised God at work in Naomi's life.

This child, Obed, later becomes the grandfather of King David. Jesus' mother Mary was a descendent of King David. You can read the genealogies in Matthew Chapter 1.

This suggests that God is working behind the scenes to achieve his plans and purposes.

**In what ways do you believe God wants to be active in your life to achieve his plans and purposes?
What might he require you to do?**

