

Diary Devotions

Year 9

Term 1

Studies on the character and nature of God

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LOVE

The Good
Shepherd



PROVIDER

Food from
Creation

God is Love Week 1

God's love and goodness are what sets him apart from all other gods. The God of the Bible is the only God that can be described as "infinite, personal and loving".

The Scriptures teach that his love for us is:

Perfect faithful, everlasting, unfailing, great, enduring, and that it has height, depth, width and length.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.

Jeremiah 31:3 I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

Psalms 33: 18 But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love.

1 John 3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Psalms 118:4 Let those who fear the Lord say: "His love endures forever."

Ephesians 3:16-19 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Questions and activities

1. God is "infinite, personal and loving". How is this different to false gods of other faiths?
2. Give at least 6 adjectives that describe God's love.
3. When Jesus was on earth, who were the main types of people he showed love to?

God is Love Week 2

Evidence of God's love can be seen throughout the whole Bible.

His love for Israel was shown over and over as He led them, watched over them, and kept forgiving them:

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you, (the Israelites) to be his own special treasure. The Lord did not set his heart on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations! Rather, it was simply that the Lord loves you, and he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. (

That God's love that extends to all people of all nations is also evident throughout the Bible.

The Psalms speak of God's love:

Psalms 108: 3-5 I will thank you, Lord, among all the people. I will sing your praises among the nations. For your unfailing love is higher than the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Jesus commissioned the disciples to go to ALL nations:

Matthew 28:19-20a Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus expressed love throughout his life on earth and continues to do so by his death:

Jesus constantly showed loving kindness to the sick that he healed, downtrodden that he lifted, hungry that he fed, spiritually empty that he filled and sinners that he forgave and befriended. None deserved his love, but he was loving and kind because it is his nature.

He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. His prayer in John 17 expresses His love for the Father, for His disciples, and for us

John 17:20 "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message."

Questions and activities

1. Describe an example from the Old Testament where God showed his great loving kindness and forgiveness to the people of Israel.
2. What did Jesus ask his disciples (and us) to do, in order to share God's love.
3. How can we demonstrate that we love God?

God is Love Week 3

Paul tells us that nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Obedience and loving others, as God loves us, demonstrate that we love him:

John 14:23,24a All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me.

John 13:34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us.

1 John 3:16,18 Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

Psalms 103:11

For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.

1 Peter 4:8

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

1 John 4:9 God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Questions and activities

1. What is the new commandment that Jesus gave us?
2. What is the greatest act of love that anyone can ever do? John 15:13
3. Read Luke 10:25-37. Explain how this story is a demonstration of how love. What was required on the part of the one person who actually showed love?

God is Love Week 4

God is Merciful

The meanings of 'merciful' and "mercy" are:

- **merciful** – kind, compassionate, sympathetic, and sensitive; acting in this way to others.
- **mercy** – kindness, mercy, loving kindness; unfailing love; tenderness; faithfulness.

Mercy is an attribute of love. When a person who has done wrong is shown mercy, they are freed from the punishment they deserve. They are treated kindly instead.

God is perfectly just and merciful in all that He does.

God doesn't give us what we deserve, but looks on us with great compassion, and understands us. The greatest mercy ever shown was in Christ's death on the cross. He took the punishment that we deserved for our sin.

1 Timothy 1:15b,16b Paul says "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I am the worst of them all. But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners."

God wants us to extend mercy to others as he does.

Luke 6:36 Jesus says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

Matt.5:7 Blessed are the merciful.

James 2:13 There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.

God also showed mercy in the Old Testament:

Psalms 78:38 Yet he was merciful and forgave their sins and did not destroy them all. Many times, he held back his anger and did not unleash his fury! (Neh.9:17-20, Daniel 9:9)

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. (NIV)

Questions and activities

1. To have mercy on someone is to show kindness, instead of the punishment they deserve. How did God show mercy towards us through Jesus?
2. Give an example of how a judge could show mercy on a person today
3. Read and reflect on the parable of unmerciful servant (Matt.18:23-35). What is the message behind the parable of the unmerciful servant?

God is Love Week 5

God is Merciful

Psalm 116:1 "I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy."

Psalm 103:8 (NLT)

The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others

Daniel 9:8-9

O Lord, we and our kings, princes, and ancestors are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. But the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.

Ephesians 2:4

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead.

Nehemiah 9:16-18

But our ancestors were proud and stubborn, and they paid no attention to your commands. They refused to obey and did not remember the miracles you had done for them. Instead, they became stubborn and appointed a leader to take them back to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to become angry, and rich in unfailing love. You did not abandon them, even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf ... or when they committed awful blasphemies.

Titus 3:3-5a

Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But "When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."

Questions and activities

Give an example from the Old Testament where God showed mercy on the Israelites.

God is Provider Week 1

It is clear throughout scripture that God is a Father who provides for the needs of His people:

God provided for Jacob's family in famine, taking them to Egypt where He had put Joseph in place.

Genesis 45:11 God said: "I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come," God provided abundantly for the people of Egypt and surrounding nations: he provided grain during 7-year famine. Joseph willingly shared with his brothers and others,

He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call, (Psalm 147:9 and Psalm 111:5)

Questions and activities

1. How did God provide for Jacob's family during the 7-year drought in Egypt? (You can read the full story of Joseph and his brothers starting from Genesis chapter 37.)
2. What role does our generosity have in God's provision?

God is Provider Week 2

Matthew 6:31-33 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Philippians 4:19 And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

Psalms 34:9-10 Fear the Lord, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need. Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the Lord will lack no good thing.

Questions and activities

1. Write a Bible verse that shows that God provides for all of his creation.
2. In Matthew 6:31-33, what is the condition that God places on receiving the full benefit of his provision?

God is Provider Week 3

Genesis chapter 22 tells us about the challenge that God presented to Abraham – to sacrifice his son! Abraham had to walk with Isaac towards the top of Mt. Moriah and answer his son's question "where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" The swift answer came: "God will provide." (Gen.22:8)

After God's last-minute provision for Abraham, that place was given a new name - "Yahweh-Yireh, which means "God sees - the Lord will provide" v.14. It was not God's intention for Isaac to die, but he wanted to give us an illustration of the sacrifice that God himself would make in the future – the death of his own Son. God, in his great love and infinite wisdom at times, tests our faith and obedience, putting us in situations where we have to trust him, and him only, to be our provider. As He tested Abraham, the "father of faith" he will, in his love, test us to help us learn to walk by faith, becoming fully convinced that he is our provider and can be trusted.

1 Tim 6:17b God's provision is generous - He "richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment," Jesus abundantly (supernaturally!) provided for host at Cana wedding, (John 2:1-10).

Psalms 65:9-13 paints a picture of God's overflowing abundance in the land.

9 You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.

The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.

10 You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

11 You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.

12 The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness.

13 The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.

Questions and activities

1. Read Gen chapter 22. What did God provide for Abraham when he was asked by God to sacrifice his son?
2. What message was God giving to the world through Abraham's challenge?
3. Read the account of the wedding of Cana. How did he supernaturally provide?
4. What message can we get from reading Psalm 65:9-13?

God is Provider Week 4

We are designed to live a life of dependence on God as our provider - leaning on Him as the one responsible for providing for his plans for our lives to come to pass. When we don't trust him and try to provide out of our own resources or cleverness we get into trouble!

Deuteronomy speaks of God's promise to provide for Israel, but obedience was a condition. They were told that if they worshiped other gods the land would stop producing. Israel was also warned not to forget that God was their provider when in the future they would get to the promised land and prosper.

Deuteronomy 11:13-17 So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— 14 then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. 15 I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. 16 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. 17 Then the Lord's anger will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the Lord is giving you.

God did provide for the Israelites even when they were disobedient and disloyal in the desert.

Deuteronomy 2:7; 29:5 During these forty years, the Lord your God has been with you, and you have lacked nothing....your clothes and sandals did not wear out.

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Psalms 84:11 For the Lord God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.

Matthew 6:33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Hebrews 13:5 Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."

Questions and activities

1. What condition for provision did God place on the Israelites of the Old Testament?
2. How did he provide for them?
3. What conditions are there for us today in receiving God's blessings?

God is Provider Week 5

God not only provides for our physical needs but He provides everything we need for salvation through Jesus, all that we need to live for His glory, ()

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

We have the Holy Spirit to teach and help us.

John 14:16 - 21 “If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be[c] in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

God is pleased when His people are generous, gladly sharing provisions with others in need, Paul encouraged generous offerings for believers in need, (2 Co 9:6-8).

Matthew 6:31-33 (NLT)

So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NLT)

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

Questions and activities

1. What does God provide for us apart from our physical needs?
2. Give an example in the Bible where God provided supernaturally.
3. Write a response to “God is Provider”. How has God provided for you? What would you do if you were in need of God's provision? If God blesses you with abundant resources, what is your responsibility to him? What does the Bible say about thankfulness? (1 Chronicles 16:34; Philippians 4:6; Psalms 106:1).