

Diary Devotions

Year 9

Term 3

Studies on the character and nature of God

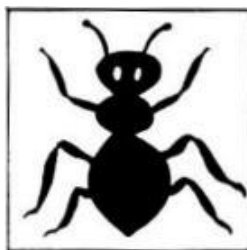
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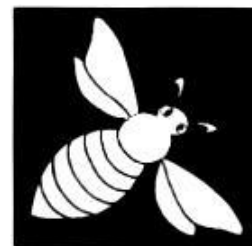
CREATOR

From the rising of the sun, to its setting, His name is to be praised.



WISE

The wisdom of the ant: Proverbs 6



SERVANT

Servant animals in the creation

God is Creator Week 4

God is the Life-Giver

John 17:3 Jesus declared, *“And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth”*.

Eternal life is not only a future experience of life after death. It is a life lived in close, intimate relationship with God. And it can begin even now. Jesus comes so that we may experience a rich and satisfying life.

John 10:7-10

So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a *rich and satisfying life*.

True life now, and on into eternity can only be found through Jesus:

Jesus was recognized as the *author of life*:

Acts 3:15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

His purpose is the opposite to that of his enemy, Satan: *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.* (See John 10:10)

John 3:36 And anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment.

John 5:26 The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.

The Holy Spirit is God’s life within us!

Questions and activities

1. How can we experience satisfying life on earth?
2. How can we experience eternal life?
3. What does Satan offer in contrast to life?

God is Creator Week 5

God is the Life-Giver

God is a life-giver and calls us to be life-givers too. Life is God's greatest gift and it is therefore to be treasured and protected. Nothing is to be done which harms or undermines life.

Exodus 6:13 "You must not murder" – why? Because life is valuable. You are not to take life away.

Our words can enhance life.

Proverbs 18:21 The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.

Jesus is "the Word" that gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

1 John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

John 14:6

Jesus told them "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

1 John 5:11-12

And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

Acts 17:24-25

He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need.

1. Which of the Ten Commandments speaks about our responsibility to value all human life?
2. What does valuing human life mean?
3. Read Romans 1:20. How could you explain to someone who believes in evolution, that God is the giver of life?

God is Wise Week 1

The meaning of wisdom in the Bible is:

‘the supreme intelligence, that belongs to God’

For the Christian, wisdom is seeing and responding to life’s situations from God’s perspective. That is, seeing things how God sees them.

Solomon, who was one of the wisest men to have ever lived, said:

Proverbs 9:10-11 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment. Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life.

God is Wise!

Romans 16:27 All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

Job 9:4a For God is so wise and so mighty. Who has ever challenged him successfully?

Revelation 7:12 All those around the throne were saying:

“Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength, be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

Psalms 104: 24 God created the earth and all that is on it with great wisdom, every part fitting together. Oh Lord, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures.

Psalms 147:4-5 He counts the stars and calls them all by name. How great is our Lord! His power is absolute! His understanding is beyond comprehension!

Proverbs 3:19 By wisdom the Lord founded the earth; by understanding he created the heavens.

Jeremiah 10:12 But God made the earth by his power, and he preserves it by his wisdom. With his own understanding he stretched out the heavens.

James 1:5, 3:17

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.

Questions and activities

1. What is wisdom according to the Bible?
2. Write one Bible verse that shows God’s wisdom.
3. How does a person show wisdom?
4. How can we gain wisdom?

God is Wise Week 2

God's wisdom is different from that of the world. It is not just being clever. It's knowing how to think, speak and act according to God's principles.

James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.

Psalms 104:24 O Lord, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures.

Proverbs 6:6-8 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Job 12:7-10 But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?

Jesus was filled with wisdom from childhood

Luke 2:40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

People were amazed at his wisdom.

Matt.13:54 Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?"

This following passage is prophetic - of Jesus who would come.

Isaiah 11:2-3 And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He will delight in obeying the Lord. He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay.

Questions and activities

1. Think of something in life that requires good judgment and wise decision making.
2. What wise actions can the ant teach us?
3. Why were people amazed at the wisdom of Jesus?
4. Read Mark 12:14-17 When asked by some Pharisees if it was right to pay taxes to Caesar or not. How did Jesus show wisdom in this situation?

God is Wise Week 3

God's Word instructs us in wisdom.

Psalms 19:7b The instructions of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

Psalms 119:98-99 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are my constant guide. Yes, I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws.

In the Old Testament, God instructed people wisely and gave wisdom (skill). The same word is used to describe wisdom given to leaders and wisdom given to those who did skilled work for the temple.

Deuteronomy 34:9 Now Joshua, son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him, doing just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Exodus 35:35 The Lord has given them special skills as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple, and scarlet thread on fine linen cloth, and weavers. They excel as craftsmen and as designers.

God gave Solomon very great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge as vast as the sands of the seashore. In fact, his wisdom exceeded that of all the wise men of the East and the wise men of Egypt.

Solomon's Wisdom: 1 Kings 4:29 - 34

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

Joseph's wisdom: Genesis ch.39-40

Joseph was given wisdom when captured and taken to Egypt. He was able to interpret the king's dreams and save the country from starvation during the famine.

Questions and activities

1. Name three Old Testament characters who demonstrated God's wisdom.
2. How can God's word give us wisdom today?

God is Wise Week 3

Gods wants us to be wise:

Eph. 5:15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise.

Proverbs 16:16 How much better to get wisdom than gold, and good judgment than silver!

The Holy Spirit gives wisdom and understanding.

Acts 10:19 Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him ...

The Spirit led Philip to a man who was reading Isaiah 53 and didn't understand it - Philip was able to bring understanding of Jesus. (Read the whole story **Acts 8:26-39!**)

Wisdom comes from knowing (fearing, listening, obeying) God and involves being teachable:

Psalms 111:10 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true wisdom. All who obey his commandments will grow in wisdom.

Matt.7:24-27 The story of the wise and foolish builders: Jesus said "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock."

It is wise to listen to and obey parents

Proverbs 13:1 A wise child pays attention to what his father teaches him. But anyone who makes fun of others doesn't listen to warnings. ()

God wants to give us wisdom, we are to ASK for it:

James 1:5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.

Proverbs 2:1-6 My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. ()

Wisdom is more than just knowledge, it requires character.

James 3:13 If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ()

Questions and activities

1. In Matthew 7: 24 – 27, what is the condition for being wise, stated by Jesus?
2. Think of a situation in life where you would need to ask God for wisdom.
3. What does God say he will do, if you ask for wisdom? (James 1:5)
4. What are some of the character qualities shown by a wise person?

God is a Servant Week 1

The ultimate expression of the servant-heartedness of God is in Jesus: his willingness to die on the cross for us.

Matthew 20:28 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Philippians 2:6-8 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

Matthew 12:18-19 Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my Beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public.

God's servant heart means that he loves all persons equally.

When we take on his servant heart there is no room for regarding another human being as better or worse in value. He shows no favouritism.

Romans 2:11 For God does not show favoritism.

Ephesians 6:9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

We are told we have the same attitude:

Questions and activities

1. What is the greatest example of a servant ever seen in the history of the world?
2. Read James 2:2-8. Describe what is happening here. Is the one favouring the person with the fine clothes and gold jewelry showing humility? Why not?
3. What is the difference between a household servant and a slave, in terms of income?
4. Do you think that Jesus meant that we should work for Him without the expectation of always being paid?

God is a Servant Week 2

Jesus was an obedient servant, relying on and trusting His Father throughout His life on earth.

Jesus was a humble servant:

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Jesus was born in humble circumstances into a poor Jewish family.

He made a humble entrance into Jerusalem on a donkey, and he suffered the humiliation of the cross. (Matt 21:1–17)

Philippians 2:6-7 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

Questions and activities

1. In dot points, make a list of the things about Jesus' birth, that show he was born in humble circumstances.
2. Read the account of Jesus entry into Jerusalem, (Matt 21:1-17.) List all the aspects of this account that showed the humility of Jesus in his actions here.
3. What did Jesus have to give up to come and live on earth?
4. From your knowledge of Jesus ministry on earth, make a list of ways in which he served people while on earth.

God is a Servant Week 3

We are to follow Jesus' example and serve others humbly.

Jesus performed the menial task of washing his disciples' feet then told them "I have set you an example that you should do what I have done." (John 13:15)

Jesus told his disciples:

Mark 10:43-44 Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Paul writes,

Philippians 2:3-5 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."

Peter teaches us to use our gifts to serve others and that we are to serve with God's strength, to glorify him:

1 Peter 4:8-11 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Proverbs 16:18-19 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

Questions and activities

1. Write two Bible verses that show that Jesus was a humble servant.
2. What is the opposite of humility?
3. How do we become a servant for Jesus? (Mark 10:43-45)

God is a Servant Week 4

Mark 9:35

He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

Matthew 12:15-21

Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. He warned them not to tell others about him. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my Beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public. He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally he will cause justice to be victorious. And his name will be the hope of all the world."

1 Peter 4:10-11

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Questions and activities

1. Make a list of ways in which the prophesy from Isaiah was fulfilled in Jesus' ministry on earth:
 - Justice to the nations
 - Didn't raise his voice
 - Didn't crush the weak
 - The hope of the world
2. What character qualities would you expect to find in someone who is a servant?
3. How can you be a servant in everyday life?
4. What gifts do you have, that could be used in service to God?