

Diary Devotions

Year 11

Term 3

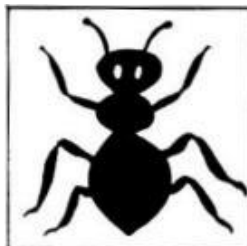
Studies on the character and nature of God

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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 All-Knowing

The word ‘omniscient’ means that God knows everything! But God is not a merely a gigantic source of data and information. He is not a mechanized computer system. He is a person and as such he has all the capacities of an extraordinary intellect. God thinks, imagines, plans, reasons, analyzes and remembers. In other words, God’s intellect is dynamic.

Isaiah 55:8-9 My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Thoughts are much more than just data. God thinks!

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Because God thinks and plans, we can talk to God through prayer.

Ezekiel 22:30-31 I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn’t have to destroy the land, but I found no one. So now I will pour out my fury on them...

In this passage, God wanted to communicate with someone who would pray to him, so that his plans of judgment could be changed to plans of mercy. How tragic that God did not find anyone to communicate with him on behalf of the nation.

With great passion, God reaches out to the people he has created, wanting them to communicate with him.

Micah 6:3 “O my people, what have I done to you? What have I done to make you tired of me? Answer me!”

Romans 11: 33-36 Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! For who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.

Isaiah 40:28 Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.

Questions and activities

1. What is the meaning of ‘omniscient’?
2. Read Psalm 139. How do we know that God knows everyone?

God is Creator Week 5

God is All-Knowing

Everywhere in creation there is evidence of God's intelligence.

Romans 1:20 He has chosen to give us revelation about himself in the things he has made.

Take note of the complexity of DNA, and the mathematical Fibonacci sequence of patterns, which are evident in the creation. This sequence of numbers is responsible for the existence of the spiral shell, flower petals, the musical scale and much more. It was discovered by an Italian mathematician, Fibonacci.

The Fibonacci Sequence is the series of numbers: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, ...
The next number is found by adding up the two numbers before it:
the 2 is found by adding the two numbers before it (1+1),
the 3 is found by adding the two numbers before it (1+2),
the 5 is (2+3), and so on!

What is the difference between human intelligence and God's intelligence?

Isaiah 29:14 The intelligence of the intelligent will disappear.

Isaiah 40:12-28 No one can measure the depths of his understanding.

Isaiah 2:17 The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

Romans 11: 33-36 Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!

God is not a machine that we have available to use when we want to, that we can turn God on and off at our convenience. God is genuinely a person, with thoughts and concerns, who is looking after us and wanting to interact with us.

Isaiah 40:28b The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

Questions and activities

1. What is the difference between human intelligence and God's intelligence?
2. Because God thinks and plans, we can enter into a dialogue with him through prayer. How is this different to the gods of other faiths?
3. Use the internet to research the Fibonacci sequence evident in the Creation.

God is Wise / God is Just Week 1

God's justice and wisdom assure believers of his righteous governance and perfect guidance in all things.

Our idea of 'just' is based on our behaving according to what is morally right and fair. Justice is the quality of being fair and reasonable.

Justice is an attribute of love.

A loving person will be just. Justice requires that the penalty of a crime be paid. In human terms justice is often the opposite of mercy. Only through the cross of Christ are both justice and mercy possible. Only through the cross is sin paid for while at the same time the sinner is forgiven.

Romans 3:25-26 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is!

Psalms 33:4-5 For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does. He loves whatever is just and good.

Psalms 11:7 For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.

Isaiah 30:18 Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore, he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for him!

Isaiah 61:8 For I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery and wrongdoing.

Questions and activities

1. What is the meaning of justice?
2. Choose and write a Bible verse that shows that God is just.
3. What does 'impartial' mean?
4. Choose and write a Bible verse that shows God's impartiality.

God is Wise / God is Just Week 2

To understand God's justice, we must understand his impartiality.

God shows no favoritism.

Proverbs 24:23 These also are sayings of the wise: To show partiality in judging is not good:

God's total impartiality assures us of his integrity and fairness of his every decision.

Psalms 145:17 The LORD is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings.

This means that he will never give anyone less than deserve (although he longs to give everyone better than they deserve).

Jeremiah 32:19 You see the conduct of all people, and you give them what they deserve.

No one will ever be able to accuse God of being dealt with unjustly; God's impartiality will stand forever unchallenged.

The justice of God is also demonstrated in His laws, which are designed to promote righteousness and equity among His people.

Leviticus 19:15 You must not pervert justice; you must not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the rich; you are to judge your neighbor fairly.

In the New Testament, God's justice is fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:25-26 God offered him, so that by his blood he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate that he is righteous. In the past he was patient and overlooked people's sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, in order to demonstrate his righteousness. In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus.

1 Tim 5:21 "I solemnly command you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and the highest angels to obey these instructions without taking sides or showing favoritism to anyone."

1. If God is impartial, what would he say to us about favoritism?
2. Give an example in this world, where people are, or have been, treated unjustly. (Think about people under Communist governments.)

God is Wise / God is Just Week 3

God cares about justice for the poor and oppressed, wanting his people to fight for justice.

Psalms 103:6 The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly.

Psalms 140:12 But I know the Lord will help those they persecute; he will give justice to the poor.

Zechariah 7: 9-10 Judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another. Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. And do not scheme against each other.

Proverbs 14:31 Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.

Questions and activities

What should the Christian response be to helping the poor, in cases where poverty is no fault of their own, but brought about by injustice? (Think about people who are victims of war.)

God is Wise / God is Just Week 4

God expects his people to decide justly as He does.

Deuteronomy 16:19 You must never twist justice or show partiality. Never accept a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly.

Deuteronomy 25:15 Always use honest weights and measures, so that you may enjoy a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

Proverbs 1:1-3 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalms 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants.

Questions and activities

God wants Christians to stand up for those who are treated unjustly. Give an example of how we could do this. (Think about people who have fewer privileges based on of their race, beliefs, their disability or their lack of voice - as in the case of the unborn.)

God is a Humble Servant Week 1

Matthew 20:20-23; 26

The mother of James and John, (two of Jesus disciples), came to Jesus with her sons, and kneeling down, asked a favour of him:

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." (She was talking about heaven).

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus replied. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" (Jesus was referring to his suffering.)

Jesus said, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave."

What does it mean to be great in God's kingdom?... a singer? a preacher?... a youth leader?...a helper of the poor? To God, all these jobs have equal importance. God regards us as great when we work for him without feeling that we are more important than someone else. A test of greatness is our willingness to do the unrecognized jobs.

Jesus, although a King, was a servant. He was born in a stable, lived without luxury and gave of himself without reward. He washed the disciples' feet, served at the last supper and died without reputation. As a follower, Jesus wants us to put others first and self last. For those who do, he will reward with eternal riches.

1 Peter 5:5-6 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Questions and Activities

1. What did the mother of James and John want for her two sons?
2. Why could Jesus not grant her this request?
3. If we want to be first in God's kingdom, what should we do?
4. Read Luke 18:9-14, (the parable of the rich man and the tax collector). Describe the attitude of the rich man. What did he think about himself. Why did he look down on the tax collector? Who was the most humble in this situation?

God is a Humble Servant Week 2

Jesus, the humble servant:

- Jesus was born in humble circumstances (Luke 2)
- Jesus, the Son of God demonstrated His Father's meekness and humility by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. (Matthew 21:1-11)
- Jesus was baptized by John – an act of humility (Matt. 3:13-17).

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

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

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said,

Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth".

The Biblical meaning of meek is gentleness of spirit, or humility. Paul told us to:

Ephesians 4:1–2 live a life worthy of the calling that we have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

Mark 10:43

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

Luke 13:30 Some who seem least important now will be the greatest then, and some who are the greatest now will be least important then.

Questions and Activities

1. Give two examples of how Jesus showed humility while on earth.
2. Read the parable of the wedding feast in Luke 14:15-23. Explain this parable in your own words.

God is a Humble Servant Week 3

Victory over the world is gained by having a meek and humble spirit:

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

Jesus taught that humility is being willing to be known for who you really are.

That means our lives are completely open before God and men. Humility is not wearing a mask, and not trying to pretend to be something we are not. Humility is accepting ourselves for who we are, and seeing ourselves as God sees us.

Humility is therefore NOT putting yourself down. It's NOT trying to make yourself look better in front of others. It's simply being thankful to God for the way he made you.

Jesus' teaching on humility:

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

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

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

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

Phillipians 2:5-11 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Questions and Activities

1. Putting yourself down in front of others are not showing humility. Why not?
2. Describe a person who is "wearing a mask"? Give an example of their behaviour.
3. In the story of Jesus and the children, what lesson was Jesus teaching the disciples?
4. In what way did Jesus humble himself?

God is a Humble Servant Week 4

The Cost of Following Jesus

Luke 9:57–58 As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go.” But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.”

Matthew 23:11-12 The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

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

1 Peter 5:5-6 God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.

Philippians 2:11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ who being in very nature, God, did not consider equality with God, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross

Matthew 16:24-26 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Questions and Activities

1. What is the opposite to humility?
2. Give an example of proud behaviour.
3. Read **Luke 14:25-33**. What is the cost of becoming a disciple of Jesus?