

Diary Devotions

Year 12

Term 1

Studies on the character and nature of God

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LOVE

The Good
Shepherd



PROVIDER

Food from
Creation

Introduction

Understanding God's Nature

The nature of God is His fundamental essence—what God is in Himself. It encompasses His eternal, unchanging, and self-existent qualities, such as immortality, omnipresence, omnipotence, and immutability. God's nature is independent of creation and cannot be altered; it is the foundation of His existence and the source of all His attributes. For example, God is spirit (John 4:24) and eternal (1 Timothy 1:17), which are aspects of His unchanging nature

Understanding God's Character

The character of God refers to His moral and ethical qualities—how His nature is expressed in action and relationships. It includes attributes such as love, justice, mercy, faithfulness, holiness, and truthfulness.

God's character is revealed in Scripture and through His interactions with humanity, demonstrating His ethical consistency and reliability. For instance, Exodus 34:6 highlights God's character as merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Key Distinction

Nature: Who God is in essence; His eternal, unchangeable being.

Character: How God expresses His nature through moral and ethical actions; it is relational and observable in His dealings with creation

Relationship Between Nature and Character

God's character flows from His nature. Because God is inherently holy, just, and loving in His nature, His character consistently reflects these qualities in action. Studying both allows believers to understand not only what God is but also how He interacts with the world, providing a foundation for trust, worship, and obedience

In summary, God's nature is His essence, eternal and unchanging, while His character is the expression of that nature, revealing His love, justice, and faithfulness to humanity.

GOD IS: Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent.

Only God can express these attributes. These are part of His nature.

GOD IS: Creator, Shepherd, Protector, Preserver, Provider, Father, Healer, Light, Servant

God has these attributes in full measure. God can also express these qualities through the lives of people who allow God to work fully in their lives.

GOD IS: Love, Joy, Peace, Good/righteous/Holy, Self Control, Grace, Justice, Patience, Mercy, Forgiveness, Resourcefulness, Kindness, Humility, Truth, Wisdom

These are fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's children. As we come to know Him and allow His character to be expressed in our daily life-experiences we grow these qualities to greater maturity.

God is Love Week 1

We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19)

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself (mark 12:30-31)

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

God's love is a forgiving love. His love heals hearts, spirits as well as bodies.

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

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

God knows how much we love Him by how much we obey Him. John 14: 23-24.

God puts His love in our hearts through His Holy Spirit. Rom. 5:5

God enables us to love as we yield to Him. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22

We know that God's Spirit lives in us, making us new, changing us, by the love we have for others. God's love banishes fear of punishment. 1 John 4:18.

God is Love Week 2

God is a Shepherd

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

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

In Bible times -

Caring involved

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

Leading involved

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

Protecting involved

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

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

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

God is Love Week 3

God is a Friend

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

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

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

The words of an old children's song describe Jesus as the perfect friend:

The perfect friend is one who knows the worst about you but loves you just the same.

There's only one who loves like that and Jesus is His name.

Jesus is a friend of children

"Let the little children come to Me." Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13-16

Jesus showed friendship to the outcasts (Luke 17:11-19; Matthew 8:1-4)

Jesus was a friend of publicans and sinners (Matt. 9:9-13)

The Good Samaritan moved out of his comfort zone in extending friendship (Luke 10:25-37)

Jesus is our friend. He calls us by name (John 1:43; Matt. 4:18-22; John 10:14-15)

Jesus helped his friends (John 11)

We can talk to Jesus as a friend (Matt. 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13)

God is Love Week 4

God is Patient and Kind

Patient

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

God is patient with us:

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

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

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

We need to have patience with others:

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

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

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

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

Patience is listening to God:

Luke 10:38 - Mary and Martha

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Numbers 22 - God spoke through Balaam's donkey.

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

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

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

John 1 - Jesus as God's Word.

Kind

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

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

Jesus expressed special kindness towards people in need:

- the traveler and the Good Samaritan - Luke 10: 25-37
- the sick - Mark 1: 29-34
- the weak and those unable to defend themselves against society
- little children - **Mark** 10 :13-16
- the woman taken in adultery - **John** 8:1-11
- the Samaritan woman at the well - **John** 4

Jesus taught kindness in attitudes to others:

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

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

God is Love Week 5

God is Forgiving

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

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

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

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

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

As God forgives us, so we should forgive others:

The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:12)

Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Luke 6:37)

The son who left home (Luke 15:11-32)

The parable of the king's servant (Matt. 18:23-35)

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

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

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

Be clean on the inside, and not just the outside (Matthew 23:13-27)

Make the right choices: e.g. the good Samaritan ((Luke 10)

A clean heart (1 Pet.1; 1 John 3)

Jesus forgives Zacchaeus (Luke 19)

Jesus forgives Peter (Matt. 26:69 & John 21:15)

Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Psalm 51:7 (KJV)

God is Provider Week 1

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

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

- Physical needs
- Emotional needs
- Spiritual needs

Physical needs:

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

Emotional needs:

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

Spiritual needs:

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

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

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

God is Provider Week 2

God is Faithful

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

God faithfully provides:

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

Ruth - God provided grain for Ruth and Naomi.

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

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

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

Matthew 6:25-34 - Do not worry about food or clothes.

1 Kings 17 - Miraculous provision for the widow when Elijah prays

2 Kings 4 - Miraculous provision when Elisha prays

Philippians 4:19 - My God shall supply all your needs.

Psalms 136:25 - He gives food to every living creature. His love continues forever.

God is Provider Week 3 /4

God is a Father

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

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

God cares for his children:

John 10 - The Good Shepherd; Our heavenly Father loves and cares for us.

2 Corinthians 6:8 I will be your Father and you shall be my sons and daughters.

1 John 3:1 - See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that He has called us His children.

God is a caring provider:

The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18)

The Lord is my Shepherd (Ps. 23)

God gives good gifts (Luke 11:11-13)

Don't worry about tomorrow (Matt. 6:25-34)

Jesus provided at the wedding (John 2:1-11)

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

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

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

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

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

Jesus is:

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

A father is

- a procreator
- provider

- protector

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

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

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

God the Father is patient with us:

The Prodigal son – Luke 15:11

The lost sheep – Luke 15:3

The lost coin – Luke 15: 8

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

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

God is Provider Week 5

God is Resourceful

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

God is resourceful:

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

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

- Isaiah 61:3 - He (God) gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning
- God is able to use people... young or old, weak or strong, in good circumstances or difficult.
- The key to His being able to use people is not their talents or abilities, but their attitude of heart towards Him... their willingness of heart to listen to Him and obey Him.
- God is pleased when we use our available resources and abilities for Him, as He directs.
- Hebrews 13:5 - Be content with such things as you have. God made us as we are. He has placed us in the circumstances in which we find ourselves; so we can be used in His purposes, just as we are, if we have been obedient to Him and have an open heart and mind towards Him.