

The following biblical theme studies were developed by Margaret McIntyre and provided the foundation for a school curriculum based on the character and nature of God. Character studies are in this order:

God is.. creator, a person, faithful, loving, Father, forgiving, good/righteous/holy, grace, healer, joy, kind, light, Lord and King, meek/humble, patient, peace, preserver, protector, provider, resourceful, servant, shepherd, truth, wisdom

God is Creator

Genesis ch. 1

In the beginning God created the whole universe.

He continues to create new things, animals, plants and human beings.

God can make every person a new being, having His character, when they trust in Jesus as their Saviour.

God can help me to create new things that will be a blessing to Him and to other people

God was orderly in the way He created everything:

- First He created **light** to work by.
- Next He needed space to work in. He made **a space** between the vapours above and the waters below.
- Third, He made **the dry land**, in preparation for the plants for food that would be created and **the vegetation** that would provide food, clothing and shelter for man who would soon be created.
- Fourth He created the **sun, moon and stars** to provide man with light by day and night.
- Fifth God made **the birds and sea creatures**. As God created the living creatures to inhabit the earth He made first those that could exist in water and in the air, nesting in the trees above the ground. Was this because the land was not sufficiently dried out to allow animals to survive?
- On the sixth day He created **animals and man**. God prepared for man's coming to the earth following an orderly plan. He prepared a place for man to live, then plants to provide food, clothing and shelter, then animals birds and fish over which to have dominion, and provide help with food and labour.
- On the seventh day God rested. He was pleased with His created world; He enjoyed doing it; He could rest after the job was done, and appreciate His handiwork.

In the same way that God created His world, we can be creative, making and doing things to bring joy and help to others around us.

God is a Person

God is a person who relates to His children as one person to another.
My personality develops in a balanced way as I relate in balance to God, others and myself.

Mark 12: 30, 31 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself

John 15: 1-17 Jesus here uses the allegory of the vine to illustrate the principles of authority in relationships between people at home, work, in the community where we live.

God the Father provides personally for His children.
Jesus lived in a family and had a special place in His home.

God is Faithful

The existence of the one-parent family is a common situation in these days, even amongst Christians. When we study the family unit, the children from the one-parent family feel different from those with two parents. Various forms of problem behaviour are manifested e.g. they become withdrawn, or antagonistic to the children of whole families

How can we deal with this? In the scriptures there are examples of how God looked after single parents with children:

The story of Ruth and Naomi illustrates how God provided for them in this situation.

1. He made provision for Naomi by giving her a faithful daughter-in-law, Ruth.
2. He provided Boaz, a God-fearing man, to look after them.
3. He provided for the whole family ultimately through Ruth's marriage to Boaz

In the story of Hosea and Gomer, there is first a prophecy for Israel, but also the story is an expression of the love of God for His wayward people. Children will respond to this example of how God loves and knows what it feels like for that love to be rejected.

Story: Hosea and Gomer

Hosea lived in the land of Israel many years before Jesus was born. He loved God and followed His ways in his life day by day. He listened to God and told the people what God had said. He wanted all the people to follow God's ways, because he knew God had promised, "If you obey My ways you will have a good

life, and I will give you the food, clothing and houses you need.” Hosea knew that if the people did not follow God’s ways they would bring trouble on their land.

Many people in Israel did not follow God’s ways and Hosea wondered how he could tell them clearly that God loved them and wanted them to obey Him.

Hosea was old enough to get married by this time and God told him one day which young woman he was to marry. God said, “I want you to marry Gomer. I want to teach the people something about Myself.”

Hosea married Gomer. She was a beautiful lady to look at and Hosea really loved her . They had a baby boy whom they called Jezreel. Both Hosea and Gomer loved Jezreel a lot. They watched him grow into a toddler three years old before they had another baby. This baby was a girl. Then Gomer began to think about other men. “I’m tired of being married to Hosea,” she thought, “I’ll look for some other man to be with.”

So when she went to the well in the village she looked around at some of the men on the way. They soon saw her eyes looking at them and they talked to her. Sometimes she stayed away from home for a long time and only returned late in the afternoon to prepare food for the family. After two more years she had another baby.

By this time Hosea knew that Gomer was visiting other men when she went to get water and food from the village. When their third baby was born, a little boy, they called him a name that means, “Not Mine”. Hosea knew that this baby had a different father. He felt broken-hearted about this, but he still loved Gomer and begged her not to go with other men, but to be faithful to her husband.

Gomer took no notice of Hosea, but instead she went away from home more and more, until one day the three children came in from playing with their friends and found Hosea getting their food ready.

“Where’s Mummy?” they asked.

Hosea replied, “She’s gone away.” His face was sad, but he tried to be brave in front of the children.

“When will Mummy be back?” asked Jezreel, thinking she had gone to visit her relatives. “Mummy says she will never come back, son, “ replied Hosea sadly.

The children ate their meal silently, each one wondering what it was going to be like without Mummy to look after them. Hosea put them to bed after tea, telling them a story about how God loved them and wanted them to follow His ways. Then he kissed them all goodnight and they settled down sadly to sleep.

Hosea then went to his bed, lay down and began to cry. He loved Gomer and he needed her to look after the home and the children. But Gomer was gone; she had left them and wasn’t coming back.

“Why did you let this happen, God,” he cried to the Lord.

Gently God spoke to him. "Do you remember when I told you Gomer was the one you were to marry? Well, I wanted you to learn something about Myself."

"What can I learn from this, Lord? This is a terrible thing that has happened."

"How do you feel about Gomer now, Hosea? God asked him.

"Of course I still love her. I'd do anything to get her back home. I feel terribly sad that she has gone. I want her to come back to me," replied Hosea.

"That's how I feel about My people of Israel, Hosea," the Lord said. "They have gone after other gods that are not true. They don't worship Me the way I asked them to. I want My people to come back to Me, just the same as you want Gomer to come back to you."

"Thank you Lord for showing me that," replied Hosea. I can go and tell the people that You still love them and want them to come back and worship You as You asked."

Hosea did that. He had to look after the children at home. Whenever they asked him about their mother, he told them, "She has done wrong but if she comes back and is truly sorry I'll forgive her. I still love her and want her back home, don't you?" "Yes" they replied. "We still love Mummy and we want her to come home. We forgive her for leaving us."

Hosea and the children prayed to God. They loved Him and followed in His ways. They believed that one day Gomer would come home, that she would be truly sorry for the wrong things she had done and that she would come back to follow God's ways and look after them at home once again.

God is Loving

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 for all people. He knows and understands at times when no one else does.

Jesus noticed and cared for the 'little people'. e.g.. Zacchaeus; the widow who gave all she had, Luke 19:1-10; Luke 21:1-3; Mark 12: 41-44

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's love is a sacrificial love. 1 John 3:16. He calls us to give ourselves as a sacrifice to others, by His spirit living in us. Rom 12:20

Jesus gives us gifts/abilities, by which His love can be given to people around us. Eph. 4:7-16.

If I don't have love the gifts of the Holy Spirit are wasted. 1 Cor. 13:1-3

God is a Father

Psalm 103 expresses much of the character qualities of God as Father to His children.

Especially verse 7. "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." Leads us into a study of the story of Moses, as the basis for the theme of God the Father.

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.

The idea of God as our Father is a New Testament concept, through the advent of God's Son, Jesus.

"Let the little children come to Me." (Jesus) also means "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, clothing

He protects His children, spiritually, physically.

Children resemble their parents in looks, habits, how they talk, what they like to do.

Parents sometimes do wrong things as well as good. God the Father only does good things. So even if human parents do bad things sometimes, because they are human, we can trust God our heavenly father to always do good.

Human parents might fail but God the Father never does.

The fact that human parents can be wrong must be paralleled with the truth that children still love their parents. After all, children will admit, they do wrong but the parents still love them. Children have a keen sense of justice and will accept this proposition more readily than adults. Children can then be trained to see that the character of God, as seen in Jesus, is the character children can safely seek to grow into. Parents can be encouraged to train the children at home to develop the same attitudes of parent/child as Jesus showed towards His Father.

God is Forgiving

Forgiveness is a three-way process.

“Matthew 6:9. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Involves my relationship with God and with 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, then he will freely forgive me.

If another person hurts me, my attitude towards him must be one of forgiveness, whether or not he has asked me to forgive him. When he asks for forgiveness I must express it in words, specifically and freely. If I hurt another person, I should waste no time in asking for forgiveness, and making whatever restitution is necessary.

To be sure the relationship has been restored it is always good and right to be specific when asking for forgiveness and to name the particular hurt in question E.g. “ I’m sorry Ben for speaking rudely to you, please forgive me.”

NOT just “Sorry Ben.”.

When a person responds with merely “Oh it’s OK.” Or some similar remark, it puts the one asking for forgiveness in confusion. For him, it was important enough to come and ask for forgiveness, if he’s told ‘It didn’t matter,’ it creates confusion in his mind.. Was it wrong of him to come and ask forgiveness? So, for the sake of the one who needed to ask forgiveness it is good to respect the attitude of heart and to respond to him in love and sincerity.

These attitudes can be worked out in the lives of our children in day to day situations. When any offence is noticed between children it can be lovingly used as a teaching point from which the whole group can learn..

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.

God is Good, Righteous and Holy

Psalm 145:17 God is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works.
Isaiah 6 is Isaiah's account of how he learned that God requires holiness in His people before they can be called into special work for Him.

Revelation 15:3 They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God and the song of the Lamb,

Saying, "Lord God almighty great and wonderful are your deeds! How right and true are your ways, O King of the ages. Who shall not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations shall come and worship you for your judgments have been revealed."

God is pleased when His people reflect His goodness, righteousness, holiness.

"Be holy for I am holy." Leviticus 19:2; Lev. 20:7; Lev: 44.

God has provided a way for His people to be good, righteous, holy through Jesus Christ:

Hebrews chs 9, 10; 2 Cor 5:21

Matt. 5:48 "Be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

1 Cor 6:19 Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God. And you are not your own, you are bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.

Genesis 27. In the story of Jacob and Esau, Jacob tried to do God's will the devil's way. When we do this we bring trouble on ourselves and on others, often upon family members.

God's holiness is expressed through His life in us, not in our striving to be good.

.Ishmael and Isaac. Abraham's idea of fulfilling God's promise to him was to have a son by Hagar. Considering his age this would be something of a miracle, but it was not God's BEST. The birth of Isaac to Rachel was God's full promise. We should be sure we do not allow the GOOD to prevent us from enjoying God's BEST, which is God's holiness in me by faith.

In the lives of these men and their families we see evidence of God fulfilling His plans and purposes for good despite their human weaknesses. This was because in their heart attitude towards God was a desire to please Him first of all.

God is Just, Merciful and Gracious

Although grace, mercy and justice are three distinct qualities, each one is incomplete without the other two.

God has established laws, principles, commandments for man to live by.

When a person breaks a law, God's justice (righteousness) would require that the sin is dealt with and the sinner should receive punishment

GOD IS JUST. HE GIVES US WHAT WE DESERVE

But God is merciful and therefore He has provided for man to be saved from His wrath and punishment. He sent Jesus to earth to be the Savior of man

1. to show people how God wants them to live on earth,
2. to take the punishment for man's sin (Hebrews 10:4-10)
3. to demonstrate God's power over sin and death by raising Jesus from death.

GOD IS MERCIFUL. HE DOESN'T GIVE US WHAT WE DESERVE

God is gracious. He gives us forgiveness, wholeness of body, mind and spirit. He gives the power of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

GOD IS GRACIOUS. HE GIVES US WHAT WE DON'T DESERVE

Our response:

God is pleased when we respond to His grace and mercy by being gracious and merciful in our dealings with others. God delights in mercy (Micah 7:18) and He is delighted when we delight in being merciful to others.

1 Cor 15:22. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. This is a concise expression of God's justice, mercy and grace

Psalm 103:8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger for ever. He is pleased when we reflect His mercy by following Romans 12:20,21... If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty give him a drink, For in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good

If this seems difficult or impossible James 4:6 is an encouragement. "He gives more grace; therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"

Jesus is the supreme expression of God's justice, mercy and grace.

God is Healer

God can heal my body, mind, will, emotions, spirit.

His desire is to restore wholeness to His creation. This includes both man and the created world. Romans 8:19-22

Man receives healing of body, mind, will, emotions for God's glory. E.g. John 9; the man born blind.

When people call upon God in repentance He will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14.

God can heal others through me when I am submitted to His will. Acts 9:36

In many cases repentance and subsequent forgiveness are prerequisites to the healing of body, mind and spirit

Jesus demonstrated God's power over all manner of ailments

Matt 4:23-25; Mark 6:53-56; Matt. 15:30-31; Matt 19:1-2; Luke 6:17-19; Mark 1: 32-34; Luke 4:40; John 2:23.

Healing of mind, will and emotions

When children manifest the need for healing in these areas there can be a hidden factor—fear of something or someone. Eg. Fear of the dark; a child fails to do a requested task because it involved him going into the dark; of fear of a new situation; won't go to or with certain people because they are new and different. It is necessary for a discerning person to find the hidden cause of the fear and deal with it lovingly.

God is Joy/God is Joyful

Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:21. Being such a gift we can be assured that if we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts we have joy in our lives irrespective of our life circumstances. Joy is not the same as happiness. If circumstances are difficult the inner joy we feel can be maintained in our hearts to gain for us the victory over the circumstances.

Jesus was faced with the cruel death on the cross; He knew His friends were all going to desert Him, yet He was able to encourage them at such a time with the words, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." That was an inner victory,

a call to inner joy in the face of the cruelest experience a human being had to endure. This is the victory that overcomes the trials of the world—our faith in the ultimate victory of Jesus. He went to the cross believing that His Father would raise Him from the dead. He did.

God is joy

God sent joy into the world when He sent Jesus. He gives us joy in families when they live to please Him. Jesus must have brought much joy into His family.

God is joyful. He rejoices when people repent and turn to follow His ways. E.g., Luke 15: the Lost Coin, the Lost sheep, the Lost Son. We please God when we follow His ways with joyful obedience at home, at school, at all other times. Matthew 25:14-30 Story of the talents, The Golden Rule Matt. 7: 12

Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that God has placed within all His children, those who have committed their lives to Him. Joy does not depend on our circumstances or feelings. God is able to turn difficult situations into joyful ones. We are encouraged to rejoice in the Lord **always**. The joy God has placed within us is expressed when we rejoice in all circumstances and situations because we know God is faithful and He knows the end of the circumstances far better than we do.

God is joyful. He gives joy as a fruit of the Spirit to His children. Joy expressed in music, in praise to God, brings glory to Him and also achieves victory (a) in individual lives, (b) in the nation.

Examples in scripture of music associated with victory for God's people: Miriam in Exodus; David brings back the ark; Joshua takes Jericho; Hezekiah re-consecrates the Temple; Nehemiah completes the re-building of the wall of Jerusalem..

God gives joy, peace, all the other fruits and gifts of the Spirit to those who are wholly committed to Him. The account of the Spirit's work is told in Acts, illustrating that God works in the lives of His committed people no matter what the circumstances. They grew in grace as they grew in obedience to God.

God is Kind and Gentle

The kindness and gentleness of God are fully expressed in His Son, Jesus Man had strayed away from God; God's justice would have required man's death as punishment for his sins. But God sent His Son, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' in order to condemn sin in man. Romans 8:3
What a merciful kindness!

The life of Jesus on earth expresses the Father's heart towards His people.

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 chided for her critical attitude. Mary commended for choosing to be in the presence of Jesus.
- **Mark 12:41-44.** He commended the widow who gave all she had
- **John 12:1-11.** He 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 Himself, and it will be His kindness in our hearts that will win others back to Him through us.

Jeremiah 31:3 I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.

There are times when the kindest act is to speak the truth, but that must be done gently, in love. Jesus spoke the truth to the woman at the well, but the bringing to light of the truth about herself was the means of her change of heart. John 4:16-18; 28-29

Like surgery, it may hurt at first, but when spoken gently, with a loving attitude, the truth will set a person free. Ephesians 4:15

Romans 13:14. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is Light

Light is associated with life, both in the physical realm and the spiritual.

In Him was life and the life was the light of men. John 1: 4.

God created light first, then life, because light is necessary to life.

Plant life

Light shining on the leaves of plants activates cells in the leaves to enable the plant to manufacture carbohydrates. The existing leaf substance is changed into another form to enable growth to occur (photosynthesis)

Life and light in the spirit of man

In the spirit , as the light of God's love is allowed to shine into our inner being, it changes what is there and transforms us first internally, in our inner self. As God's light works on us and in us, the change and transformation is evident externally. The light of the knowledge of God shines in our faces. This is the external evidence of internal, spiritual growth.

Light enables life to exist

New life in God is associated with light.

The life of Jesus

At His birth: Luke 2:8-14 - The shepherds saw the light from heaven, then the angel announced the birth of Jesus.

Luke 2:32 - elderly Simeon prophesies. "My eyes have seen your salvation.. a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of thy people Israel."

John 8:12 - Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

John 9:5 - "As long as I am in the world I am the Light of the world."

Jesus transfigured - Matt.: 1-5 The heavenly Father declares Jesus His only beloved Son.

Jesus face and clothing shone with supernatural light.

The resurrection Matt. 27:2-3 The angel appeared like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.

Matt. 27:45 - Light was removed from the earth temporarily from the earth when Jesus died.

The coming of the Holy Spirit_

Acts 2-3 -When the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles at Pentecost, tongues of fire settled on their heads.

Light shows the way and enables progress

God's Word

Psalm 119:105 -Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path

Psalm 119:130 - The entrance of your words gives light.

(GNB) The explanation of your teachings brings wisdom to the ignorant.

2 Cor 4:6 - God, who said "Let light shine out of darkness", has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (The knowledge of God.. knowing that He is Creator, Father, loving friend, all power, and all the other attributes... is what gives light to our inner- most being.)

New life for individuals

Acts 9 - Saul, confronted with the risen Lord, surrounded by a dazzling light, with a dramatic change in him, becomes Paul the Apostle.

Acts 13:47 - God had appointed Paul to be "a light to the Gentiles."

The Gospel is light for all believers

1 Peter 2:9 - You are God's own people...that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

Light reveals faults and enables us to be rid of faults

Walking in the Light

1 John 1:7 -If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

1 John 2:9-10 - He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still He who loves his brother abides in the light and in it there is no cause for stumbling. But he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Luke 8:16 - No-one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. Take heed then how you hear, for to him who has shall more be given, and from him who has not, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away.

Matt. 5:14-16 Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

As the light of the life of Jesus shines out through His people, others are attracted to Him

Ephes. 5:8 Now you are light in the Lord, walk as children of light

1 Thess 5:5 You are all children of the light and of the day.

Luke 11:34 Your eyes light up your inward being. A pure eye lets sunshine into your soul. A lustful eye shuts out the light and plunges you into darkness. If you are filled with light within, with no dark corners, then your face will be radiant too, as though a flood-light is beamed upon you. (LB)

Light for the Nations

Isaiah 49:6 I will give you as a light to the nations, that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples. But the Lord shall arise upon you and His glory shall be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising

Isaiah 60: 19 The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night. But the Lord shall be your everlasting light and your God shall be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down nor the moon withdraw itself; for the Lord Will be your everlasting light and your days of mourning shall be ended.

God is Lord and King

God says, "I am that I am".

He is lord of Lords and King of Kings. (Revelation 17:14)

"I the Lord make light and create darkness; I am the Lord and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:6-7)

God is holy, pure, eternal and infinite.

"I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13)

"You shall be holy for I the Lord am holy." (Leviticus 19:2)

"You must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

God made possible the forgiveness of man's sin by providing the Lamb of God, Jesus. Jesus was a willing sacrifice and a victorious saviour. His resurrection established for eternity His power and lordship over evil.

The Lamb of God = the Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5-6)

MAN'S RESPONSE: To know God's character is to live in reverent fear of Him.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, obey Me." To obey the commands of Jesus is to obey God. (John 14:15,23)

God requires His people to be holy, pure, righteous; therefore they go through difficulties that refine their character. (1 John 3: 1-3)

God gives His people eternal life. (John 3:16; 1 John 5:20)

God makes available His sacrifice for sins and His victory in our lives, to renew His people:

1. for the drawing in of others (John 12:32)
2. for the glory of God (John 17:1-5)

God is Meek and Humble

Jesus, the Son of God demonstrated His Father's meekness and humility by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. In Eastern countries the ass is the animal of peace and honour.

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. God is pleased when His children obey Him through obeying their parents, teachers and other leaders.

Jesus has a meek and humble spirit. He taught His disciples this by example and in parables.

Luke 14: 10. the parable of the marriage feast: "Come up higher, friend."

Victory over the world is found in exercising a meek and humble spirit: Matthew 21:1-11. King Jesus enters Jerusalem knowing He was riding to His death but also His victory over death.

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

The ass in the east is known for its intelligence, gentleness, meek submission and great power of endurance. It is the symbol of peace and honour, whereas the horse is the animal of war.

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

1 Peter 5:5-6. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time

Numbers 12:1-16. Moses was the meekest of men (v3) Other leaders criticized him but he left it to God to deal with him. Moses didn't have to defend himself. If we are sure we are doing what God wants we don't have to be concerned about what other people think of us. God will look after that for us.

God is Patient and Self-controlled

God is patient (ie He has an even temper) and self-controlled (He has self-restraint, continence) These are two sides of the same character quality. God has exercised infinite self-control in His patience with mankind ever since creation. He has exercised infinite patience to enable Him to have self control in not completely destroying mankind.

1 Peter 3:20: who in the days of Noah had refused to listen to God, though He had waited patiently for them while Noah was building the ark.

Genesis 9:8-17

God longs for man to fellowship with Him; to be at one in spirit, word and action with Him. Because of His infinitely deep love for man He has restrained Himself from destruction of mankind, despite man having continually broken God's laws and gone his own way.

God's patience with man is shown in the way in which He gives man the opportunity to repent. He constantly gives him another chance.

What wonderful patience and self-control from a holy God!

There are numerous examples of His patience and self-control in scripture.

- Genesis chs.6-9 Noah and the flood
- Exodus 15:22-26; Exodus 16:1-3 The Israelites constantly complained after God did great miracles to provide them with food and water, guidance and safety
- Exodus 15:22-26 Exodus 16: 4-21 They cross the Red Sea, then hanker after Egypt
- Exodus 16:4-21 Exodus 17:2-7 God provides food and water.
- Exodus 32:1-10 Whilst Moses is receiving the law from God for Israel to obey, Aaron is making a golden calf for them to worship.
- Exodus 32: 11-14 Moses pleads with God to spare Israel.
- Exodus 34:4-10 God's patience and forbearance with His people.
- Numbers 11:1-15 Complaints about food
- Numbers 11:31-33 Food provided, followed by sickness because they had too much
- Numbers 13:25-14::38 Return of the spies from Canaan. Their disbelief sends the Israelites into the desert for 40 years.
- Jonah - illustrates God's patience with an evil city. God gives the people another chance to repent and restrains His hand from destroying the city when they do repent. He shows His patience with an individual, Jonah disobeyed God at first. God didn't destroy him completely, but gave him a clear warning. Jonah sulks and is reproved by God, whose first desire is always that men repent and be saved from punishment.

Biblical patience is a God-given or God-exercised restraint in the face of opposition or oppression. It is not passivity. The initiative lies with God's love, or the Christian's in meeting wrong with patience exercised through an active love. In the Old Testament (Aramaic) the concept is "God is long/slow to anger.

In the New Testament (Greek) the word is equivalent to long-suffering/ a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to anger'

God exercises these character qualities constantly. He is pleased when His people allow His love to so live in our hearts that we can exercise infinite patience and self-control in our dealings with others.

Nehemiah showed patience and forbearance with opposition from within the ranks and outside.

Matthew 18"26-29 Parable of the unforgiving servant "Have patience with me."

1 Corinthians 13 Love suffers long and is kind

Ephesians 4:2 Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's failures, because of your love.

Galatians 5:22 The fruit of the Spirit is patience... self-control.

God is Peace

Peace is an attitude of heart and mind, irrespective of the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Peace is the result of a clear relationship between the individual and his God.

Psalm 23; Psalm 91. are two of many examples in scripture of this inner peace.

Isaiah 32: 17 The effect of righteousness shall be peace, and the result of righteousness , quietness and trust for ever.

It is good to apply this truth to the state of discipline in a classroom, school or home.

Galatians 5:22. Peace is the fruit of the fruit of the Spirit. If we have all the other fruits of the Spirit operating in our lives.. love, joy, patience, truth, goodness etc. etc. then we have peace within our inner spirits. Peace is the gift of God to His children.

John 14:27; John 16:33. Jesus **gives** His peace to us; we don't have to work for it.

Romans 5: 1. Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace is a characteristic of secure people. Secure children are children with an inner peace, because they know who they are—(children of God.)— why they are here—(to live for God)—and where they are going—(following Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life).

Jesus was a secure child. E.g. the 12 year old in the temple with the Pharisees.

People with peace in their hearts will be peacemakers with others.

As teachers we need to establish in children's minds an understanding of who they are in God first, what is their calling in Him, then they will readily accept all other truths about Him.

God is Preserver

Leviticus 2:13: You shall season all your offerings with salt.

In many near east countries the word for goodness is the same as the word for salt. Salt was used symbolically to represent goodness when God's people were making a covenant. Consider the different ways God preserves the lives of His people.

Psalm 97:10. God preserves the lives of His saints. He loves those who hate evil

Psalm 37:28 The righteous shall be preserved forever.

Psalm 31:23 The Lord preserves the faithful but abundantly requites those who act haughtily.

Psalm 145:20 The Lord preserves all those that love Him.

Psalm 116:6 The Lord preserves the simple

Psalm 86:2 Preserve my life for I am godly; save thy servant who trusts in thee.

Psalm 25:21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me

Psalm 61:6-7 Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations. May he be enthroned before God; Bid steadfast love and faithfulness watch over him. O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him

Proverbs 2:11 Discretion shall preserve you, understanding shall keep you..

Proverbs 4:6 (wisdom) Forsake her not and she shall preserve you.

Proverbs 22:12 The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge and He overthrows the words of the transgressor.

Goodness, holiness, purity of life are the qualities that preserve God's people.

'preserve' simply means being kept safe and whole physically, mentally, spiritually

A study of the above scriptures will reveal this truth.

2 Chron. 13:5 A covenant of salt was an unbreakable agreement between people.

Numbers 18:19

Ezra 6:9; Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:18. Offerings to God had always to have salt in them. They were to be good, pure offerings. Salt preserved the offering, both physically and spiritually

Mark 9:49 Salt symbolized purity, hospitality, durability. Jesus said, "Everyone shall be salted with fire and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt

Have salt in yourselves and have peace with one another.

Col:4-6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.

Ephesians 4:39 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying.

Mark 9:50 Jesus said, "Salt is good". Can we express this as "Salt is goodness"? Have goodness (salt) in yourselves and have peace with one another.

Try substituting the word 'good' for the word 'salt'.

God preserves our lives because He loves goodness in His people. He first makes

us clean when we ask Him to forgive our sin, then He preserves the goodness in us. He hates evil and does not wish to preserve it.

Matt 5:13 Jesus said to His disciples, "You are the salt of the earth" He wants us to be good people in the world so that it will be a place where God can be honoured.

Salt is a cleaning agent

God is Protector

God protects His people through:

- i. the blood of Jesus
- ii. the name of Jesus
- iii. the word of God

Through the blood of Jesus we have protection from the punishment for sin

- protection from enemy attack in the spirit world.
- protection from sickness and disease
- In the name of Jesus we have protection from sickness
- protection from physical danger
- protection from demonic attack

2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-20; Proverbs 18: 10; Mark 16:15-17

The word of God protects our **minds** from enemy attack.

Psalms 119:11 I have laid up thy word in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

As we learn / memorise God 's word /promises and treasure them in our minds they will be easily recalled in times of testing and become a great encouragement.

Psalm 34:19-20 The good man does not escape all troubles—he has them too. But the Lord delivers him out of them all; God even protects him from accidents. God protects the daily walk of His children, as they go in the faith that He is their protector.

Psalm 91: expresses the psalmist's faith in God's constant protection. Special mention is made in it of angels. It is good to remind ourselves and our students of the constant presence of angels.

God's protection is demonstrated in the story of Moses in Exodus

Moses was protected as a baby, a child specially chosen by God. The Israelites were protected from the death of the eldest child at the Passover time, by the sign of the blood of a lamb over their doorposts. This typifies the sacrifice of Jesus that protects those who believe in Him from eternal spiritual death.

The column of cloud in the day and fire in the cloud at night protected the Israelites from the Egyptians before they crossed the Red Sea.

God protected the Israelites from thirst and starvation by the provision of manna, quail meat and water from the rock

Ephesians 6:10—20 describes the spiritual armour which God has provided for

the protection of His people.

the breast-plate of righteousness. My heart is made righteous by my faith in the blood of Jesus, protecting me from punishment for past sin and from the temptations of present sin.

2 Cor 5:21 (see Living Bible for a simple version for children) 1 Cor 1:30

Loins girded with truth .. the word of God expressed through His people and in His written word.

Shoes of peace... peace with God through the blood of Jesus; peace in our own hearts because of His Spirit within us; peace with other people.

The shield of faith.. the invisible protection of the powerful blood of Jesus to forestall the enemy's attacks on the mind, body or spirit. The power of the name of Jesus.

The helmet of salvation... the protection particularly of the mind. Sin begins in the mind, in our thinking about an act until it becomes a reality

The sword of the Spirit.. the use of the word of God

God is Provider

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, 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.

God has provided all the things on earth for the use of all people. He makes the rain fall on both the just and the unjust. Matt 5:45

But, when individuals honour Him and live/do business/govern their country by His divine principles, His provision for them is over abundant.

Luke 6:38 Give and it shall be given unto you, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

When a nation honours God He prospers that nation.

The reverse is also true:

Zechariah 8:9-16; Isaiah 32:14-20; Joel 1:10; Jeremiah 23:10; Hosea 4:6

God is pleased when His people share the provision He has made for them with others

2 Corinthians 9:6-15: The principle of sowing that there may be reaping.

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 Resourceful

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.
- He is resourceful 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
- but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose
- what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and
- despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nought things that are. 1 Cor 1: 27
- 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.

God is a Servant

God has a servant heart for the people He created. His desire is that His creation should live in harmony and peace with Himself and His created world.

Deuteronomy 5:29. O that they had such a mind as this always, to fear Me and to keep My commandments, that it might go well with them and with their children for ever.

Therefore He desires us to grow into His character qualities the way He intended when we were created in His own image. There is no other way we can live fully to His glory in the world, except His way.

Jesus is the perfect example of God's perfect servant. He lived in absolute obedience, humility, patience, and all His Father's character qualities.

Consider the "Servant Chapters of Isaiah.. Chapters 41-45. also John 14:28
Philippians ch 2.

God calls His people to be His servants

1. to Himself
2. to others in the Christian family
3. to poor and needy people in the world.

God's servants in scripture:

- **Moses**. Numbers 12:7-8; Joshua 1: vs 2, 7, 13.
- **King David** . Psalm 18; Psalm 36, Psalm 143:12
- **Paul** Romans 1:1 ; 1 Cor 9:19
- **Samuel** 1 Samuel 3:9-11
- **Joshua** Joshua 24:29

Ministering to the Christian family: Romans 16:1 ; Luke 22:24-27; Mark 9:35

Ministering to the poor and needy in the world: Matthew 25:40-45. Isaiah 58: 6-12

The Holy Spirit is the servant of the Godhead. John 14:28. "The Father is greater than I."

PSALM 116:16. As we grow in the knowledge of God and His character we develop a heart attitude towards Him of desiring to be His servant.

Servant-hood must be total: Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13. No man can serve two masters. Everyone who commits sin is a servant of sin.

God is pleased when we are wholeheartedly committed to being His servants.

God is a Shepherd

Psalm 23 describes the Good Shepherd beautifully.

A shepherd in Eastern countries:

- cared for
- led
- protected the sheep

Caring for them involved:

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

Healing :healing wounds

Leading involved

- choosing the way they should go
- Keeping the flock together
- Keeping the sheep close to himself

- Knowing them all by name.

Protecting them

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

Scripture passages that present this picture of the shepherd are:

John 10. the Good Shepherd;

Ezekiel 34 The false shepherd then the good shepherd

Matthew 18:12-13; Luke 15:4-6

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..

David the Shepherd: 1 Samuel 17:31-40; Psalm 78: 70-72

God is Truth

“God is Truth” is an abstract statement, but as in all the teaching of Jesus, He related abstract statements of spiritual truths to examples from the living world, from experiences in everyday situations. In fact, according to Matthew 13:34, He said nothing to them without using a parable.

Psalm 78:2

Give ear, O My people, to my teaching! I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings from of old; things that we have heard and known; that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children

Isaiah 6: 9-10

And he said “Go, and say to this people.....

Everyone benefits from receiving information or explanation using clear illustrations, but this is particularly true of children.

Matthew chs. 5, 6, 7, contain many “how to live the Christian life” parables and other illustrations.

God is Wisdom

In our dictionaries wisdom is defined as “having knowledge of what is true or right, coupled with just judgment.”

God is the creator of all things. His word says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all those who practise it.” Therefore He has the complete knowledge of all things and how they are best put to use.

1 Corinthians 1-30 God is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

As God’s Holy Spirit lives in His people it is His wisdom we use in choosing: how to behave towards other people how and what we apply our minds/emotions to how to know God and to respond to His call on our lives.

John 14:6 (The Holy Spirit) will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance.

John 16:13 The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth.

That is:

1. the truth about God : who He is and what He has done is wisdom in the Spirit.
2. the truth in what /how we learn, and how we spend our leisure. He will give us a desire to learn and enjoy only those things that please Him and an aversion to those things He hates. We can have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16. We have the mind of Christ
3. the truth in living in good relationship with others. Jesus (all He taught regarding living in harmony with others) is made unto us wisdom. (1 Cor 1:30)

The fear of the Lord (the response of loving obedience to the Lord) is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. Job 28:28.

The law said, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as you love yourself.”

Jesus said “If you love Me, obey Me.) ie. Keep My commandments.

So we could quote the law, “You shall obey the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as you love yourself.”

We can only achieve this in the wisdom of God.. having His mind, His wisdom in us to give His light on what His choices are for us.

Luke 2:40 Jesus **was filled** with wisdom.

Luke 2:52 Jesus **increased** in wisdom.

We should continue to grow in wisdom and understanding of God and His ways. Even after our bodies cease to grow our spirits must continue to grow.

Parents can claim God’s blessing on little children, even before birth, that He will fill them with His wisdom. As the parents follow God’s wisdom in bringing up the

child, he/she will look more and more to Him and grow in his /her own spiritual wisdom.

Wisdom was the first creative act of God, according to **Proverbs 8:22**.

The Lord created me (wisdom) at the beginning of His work, the first of His acts of old. Each created thing was planned and brought forth in wisdom. **Proverbs 8:23-36**

God had a meaningful plan for each person/thing He created. When we are obedient to the principles expressed in His Word, ie we have the wisdom to fear the Lord, then all His creation will function with the perfection He originally intended.

WISDOM, UNDERSTANDING AND KNOWLEDGE

Wisdom and knowledge are not the same although they are often used as synonyms.

Wisdom has two applications, the wisdom of man , which can be labeled humanism, and the wisdom of God.

Job 28: 28 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

A man must have a heart attitude towards God that persistently desires to know what God wants him to do and the willingness of heart to do what He has directed

To seek God's wisdom is to seek to have an obedient heart towards Him.

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

The world's wisdom has an attitude of academic superiority

1 Cor 2:4 (Paul') When I came to you brothers I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God...

The world's wisdom prevents men from seeing God, i.e. having a knowledge of Him.

2 Cor. 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 Cor. 3:19, 20 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is

written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness." And again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

Psalm 94:11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man; He knows that they are futile.

1 Cor 1:27 God has chosen the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

The Sophists were not committed to truth necessarily, but to make their own point of view prevail. This was the basis of Greek philosophy which is still alive today.

1 Cor. 2:4 My message and preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power.

Man's wisdom based on human commands is futile.

Col. 2:23 Such regulations (the religious rules) have an appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Worldly wisdom produces strife and envy and selfish ambition.

James 3:14-15 But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition there you find disorder and every evil practice.

THE WISDOM OF GOD

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

A person who has a heart attitude to desire to know what God wants of him in all things and a willingness of heart to carry it out, is one who possesses the wisdom of God.

To have the wisdom of God is to be obedient to Him in all things.

GOD MAKES HIS WISDOM AVAILABLE TO US THROUGH THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

1 Cor 1:20-24 Jesus Christ Himself is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Cor 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the spirit, expressing spiritual truth in spiritual words

Col. 1:9 we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual will and understanding

God's wisdom in us is demonstrated by our obedience to Him

Deut. 4:6 Observe them (the law) carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations.

THE WISDOM OF GOD ENABLES US TO KNOW HIM BETTER

This is enriching to our spiritual growth / our lives.

Ephesians 1:17-18 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray also that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.

In His wisdom God lavishes on us all the riches of His grace.

Col. 2:3 In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

i.e. the knowledge of God which enriches our lives.

GOD'S WISDOM ENABLES US TO LIVE IN GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

James 3:13-18

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition there you will find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness

God's wisdom gives us grace to live lives holy and sincere before God and in good relationship with others.

2 Cor 1:12 Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so, not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.

GOD'S WISDOM IS AVAILABLE FOR THE ASKING

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault; and it will be given to him.

GOD'S WISDOM GENERATES CREATIVITY

Exodus 31:3 And I have filled him (Bezaleel) with the spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge and in all manner of craftsmanship (*to make the ornaments for the tabernacle*)

Exodus 28:3 Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given skill in such matters, that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as a priest.

Note: 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon wisdom at his request, but it became very much man's wisdom. He gained a great amount of information, untold material possessions, through his wisdom, but he grew away from God in the midst of it all.

1 Cor 8: 1. Knowledge (i.e. information) puffs, love builds up.

UNDERSTANDING

*When we have learned from God what He wants us to do (the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom) we will demonstrate that we **understand by doing** what He has said to do.*

UNDERSTANDING IS DOING GOD'S WILL

Psalm 119:34 Give me understanding and I shall keep your law and obey it with all my heart.

Psalm 119:73 Give me understanding to learn your commands.

Prov.3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.

Do what God wants, not what you want.

Prov 2:11 Discretion shall guard you, understanding shall protect you.

There is safety in right actions

Prov. 11:12 A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue.

Ex. 31:3 I have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom, (skill), in understanding and in knowledge of all kinds of craftsmanship. (*Amplified*)

THOSE WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING DO NOT DO WHAT GOD WANTS

Psalm 14:2,3 The Lord looks down from heaven to see if there be any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside; they have together become corrupt; there is no-one who does good, no, not even one
Isaiah 5:13 Therefore My people shall go into exile for lack of understanding.
i.e. they have not obeyed God.

UNDERSTANDING IMPLIES PROGRESS FORWARD, WALKING IN GOD'S WAY

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, all who follow His precepts have good understanding.

Prov. 9:6 Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.

Prov. 15:21 Folly delights a man who lacks judgment,; but a man of understanding keeps a straight course.

Jer. 3:15 Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

KNOWLEDGE

God's purpose for His people is that they should have a knowledge of Himself—who He is and what He has done in His world. All teaching presented to children must come from this premise. They are to grow up with a developing awareness of God in not only the spiritual sense of relationship with Him, but also in the broad sense of God as the Creator and Lord over the whole of His creation.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS THE BASIS FOR ALL TEACHING AND EXPERIENCE

Col 1:15-17 He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and things on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; All things were created by Him and for Him. (*So, whatever we teach about, God is the originator of it.*)

Col 1:9 For this reason we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. (*Living lives of obedience to God ie. In His wisdom, leads us into greater knowledge of Him in a personal relationship.*)

THERE IS A SCRIPTURAL SEQUENCE—WISDOM, UNDERSTANDING, KNOWLEDGE

Isaiah 11:1 The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of power, the spirit of knowledge

and of the fear of the Lord

Prov 1:7 The fear of the Lord (*ie. Wisdom*) is the beginning of knowledge.

Prov2:1-6 My son, if you will accept my words and store up my commands, turning your ear to wisdom, applying your heart to understanding.. then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth come understanding and knowledge.

Prov.9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Prov. 21:11 When a wise man is instructed he gets knowledge.

Ephes:1:17 I pray that God may give you a spirit of wisdom, and of revelation of Him so that you may know Him better

THE WAY TO KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER IS THROUGH THE SON AND THOSE TO WHOM THE SON WILL REVEAL HIM

Matt 11:27 All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No-one knows the Son except the Father, and no-one knows the Father except the Son and Those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.

2 Cor 4:6 For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness". Made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

GAINING A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IMPLIES CONTINUALLY LEARNING MORE ABOUT HIS CHARACTER

Jer 9:23-24 Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, or the strong man boast of his strength, or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord.

Hosea 4:1 There is no mercy, no love, no knowledge of God in the land..
This is the effect of not pursuing the knowledge of God.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge

Isaiah 11:11 By knowledge of Him shall my righteous servant justify many

Col. 1:9 For this reason we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the

Lord and may please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work,
growing in the knowledge of God
ie growing in the manner in which we live the fruits of the Spirit

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS THE MOST PRECIOUS OF TREASURE AND RICHES

Col. 2:2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Phil. 3:4-8 (*prefaced by Paul's credentials*) Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

Phil 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection

Rom 11:33 Oh! the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.

Prov. 24:3-4 By wisdom a house is built, through understanding it is established, and through knowledge the rooms are filled with all rare and beautiful treasures

Prov.8:8 Wisdom says, " All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is perverse or crooked." Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD WILL ONE DAY BE UNIVERSAL

Isaiah 11:6-9 The wolf will lie down with the lamb.... For the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea

Ephes. 4:11-13 He gave some to be apostles, some teachers, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service. So that the body of Christ may be built up until we reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God.

Jer.31:31-34 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel....I will put My laws into their minds and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be My people... for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.

Also Heb.8:10-12

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE OVER THE WORLD IS FOCUSED ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Satan's purpose is to prevent man knowing God. Thus the temptation in man to gain academic achievement (Gen. 3), and the humanistic premise that man can solve all his own problems and answer all his own questions outside of God.

2 Cor 10:3-6 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Luke 11:52 Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge
i.e. the true knowledge of God as distinct from legalism in rites and religious formalities

2 Cor 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God

Col. 2:8 See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ