

Getting to Grips with

God

How our understanding of God changes everything

Part 1: Honouring the Father

Session #1 Who God is (and isn't!)

"... For this God is our God..." – Psalm 48v 14

Sladebrook Evangelical Church

www.sladebrook.org.uk

Introduction and Aim of this Teaching Series:

This series of Sunday morning talks introduces us to the magnificent doctrine of God. Often trivialised (and certainly simplified) Christian faith and maturity depends on an ever-increasing appreciation of who God is and what He has done. As well as “*getting to grips with God*” we will also attempt to loosen our grip on what God is not, dispelling some commonly held misunderstandings. It is hoped that with Scripture as our guide and with the Holy Spirit’s help, we will discover more about the God we worship and seek to apply this knowledge in our daily Christian walk and witness.

Subject in this series include:

- Honouring God the Father (September)
 - *Who God is (and isn't) – Reality, Trinity and revelation of God/unhelpful stereotypes*
 - *God in God's own words – biblical descriptions of God/Who He is/what He does*
 - *Finding the Father's Heart – understanding just how much God loves us, and how that should be experienced*

- Following God the Son (October)
 - *Why Jesus changes everything for everyone*
 - *Finding acceptance in Christ – what Jesus has brought us into: forgiveness/acceptance/purpose/unconditional love/grace*
 - *The current role/ future prospects of Jesus and His church*

- Welcoming God the Spirit (November)
 - *Who is the Holy Spirit? Confusions and clarifications regarding the Holy Spirit*
 - *What does He do? The ministries and manifestations of the Spirit*
 - *How should He work in me? The role of the Spirit in the life of the believer*

Getting to Grips with God: Who God is (and isn't!)

Do you believe in God and if so, why? Also, what kind of God do you choose to believe in? There are so Many! The spiritual supermarket offers up so many alternatives, how can you be sure what is true? **Is God merely a projection** of what we wish him to be? **Is God a power**, impersonal and unknowable, or **is God a person**? In which case what does He think of me?

Another thing to ponder: *how does your belief in God affect the way you live?* The implications of believing in the Divine are that we have to acknowledge not only God's existence, but also His requirements for all who seek to be in right relationship with Him.

Of course every reaction we have to the thought of God is influenced by the way we view the Almighty. The overly benevolent "god" who simply looks away every time we err, is little more than an incidental in our lives. Likewise an exacting angry God that some people present provokes fear and piety that can, quite literally, damage someone unnecessarily but irreversibly. Sugar coated images and milk toast messiahs are no better than the blazing hot fear fuelled images spawned from medieval mythology. Somehow we need to discover the God who is.

So what is God like and what have we got to go on in drawing our conclusions? In this series of Sunday morning studies, we are going to look quite simply at God. We will explore who God is and how, as a result, he calls us to follow Him. There are many preconceptions and stereotypes that pervade our society and even (especially?) our churches. As we attempt to cut through the undergrowth, hacking back to a trust worthy starting point, why not lay aside every preconception you might have and start again? However new or seasoned you think you are on your spiritual journey, the thrill of discovering God afresh is a wonderful prospect! Maybe you will reaffirm what you already know, but you may just find a few shock revelations along the way! *Let's start getting to grips with God!*

Read: Genesis Chapter 1 Verses 1-2 & Verse 26-27

(Also: Psalm 96; Acts 17v 24-31; 1 Corinthians. 8v4; James 2v 19 1 John 1v 5 & 1 John 4v 16; for some more descriptions about God)

Loosening our grip... on the “god” who isn’t

- **The old man with the long white beard:** *outdated, aloof, impossible to relate to. Hebrews 1v 11-12 shows that God is always up to date!*
- **Judge with a big stick – Exodus 34v 6** *reminds us that God is not waiting to punish us, but rather he is the loving Father we all need.*
- **Slot-machine genie** – *God is not dictated to by what we demand! He knows what we need, not just what we want! - **Philippians 4v 19***
- **Your Parents, but worse!** – *Remember how Jesus describes God? The prodigal Son had a Prodigal parent! - **1 John 3v 1***
- **The X-Factor judge** – *As judge and the judged, God acts on our behalf, so we can be freely forgiven - **Psalm 130v 4***

Learning to grasp the God who is!

- *As we embark on this series, start to gather the relevant information. Read the Bible references weigh the evidence and seek him for yourself!*

Honouring the Father:

- *The Apostle Paul says:
“I know who I have believed....” – **2 Timothy 1v 12***
- *Are you in relationship with God? Do you know about God, or do you know God? How, like Paul, can you “know”?*
- *This week as you live in the light of who God is, look at your life and ask yourself, how does it impact the way I choose to live?*

Meditate on this quote from C. S. Lewis:

- *“I do not want my image of God, I want God.”
To what extent is this true of you? How is this possible?*

Respond:

Dedicate some time this week to seek God for yourself. Pray. Go to the Bible, seek some solitude and be honest with yourself as you call out to Him in your heart and listen for His response.