

Section 1

The Nature of God



A Note to Parents

There is a good chance that you picked up this family worship guide with a degree of hesitation. You may have read the subject and wondered if this guide will exceed the ability of your children to understand.

After all, studying the nature of an infinite God presses far beyond the bounds of even the most brilliant minds. You may be tempted to wonder if this study would even be useful for your children. If you resonate with these thoughts, allow me to encourage you before beginning this study.

First, it is true that some of the content in this worship guide will be beyond the ability of your children (and you) to grasp. This reality is, in part, the point of these worship guides.

The guides will delve into some of the deepest waters concerning the nature of God and His works. But this depth is meant to demonstrate the glory of the God we worship. If God was a being that could be fully understood by the simplest of minds, what kind of God would He be?

As parents, we need to be careful of always bringing God down to the level of our children. This is appropriate at times, of course, but it is also important that your children see God as being far greater than they are.

They need a picture of God that is not always eye level, but one that is exalted as high as the heavens. They need to see that He is beyond fully comprehending. This will not discourage your children, but it will create an appropriate sense of awe and wonder as they consider a God who is far greater than they can understand.

Second, not only can your children not comprehend the nature of God, but neither can anyone else apart from the work of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:10–13). We are completely dependent upon the Spirit of God working in us to understand the things of God. No finite human mind is sufficient to comprehend the infinite God. Only God Himself can truly and fully know Himself. But again, this should not discourage us from studying these things ourselves and teaching them to our children. We

should not be discouraged because God sends His Spirit with His Word so that His people *can* know Him. We often fail to realize that our children's capacity to understand the things of God is not dependent upon their natural abilities.

Only the Holy Spirit can open the mind to understand, and the heart to joyfully receive, the things of God. He wants you and your children to know, love, and obey Him. This is why He gave us His Word and Spirit.

As you begin this study, you must trust that the Spirit of God is at work in your children to give them understanding of who God is. You must rejoice that you are giving your children a picture of God as He truly is—the one exalted above all else. Proceed in faith, believing that God has a beautiful purpose to accomplish through this study (Isa. 55:11).

The Unsearchable God

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

PSALM 145:1-3

Our Scripture today shows us two important things we must understand as we begin our study of the nature of God. First, the greatness of God is unsearchable. The greatness of God speaks about all that God is in both His being (what He is) and actions (what He does). When we think about what God is and what He has done, we are seeing His greatness.

God is not only great, but His greatness is unsearchable. Something unsearchable cannot be fully understood. Think about the universe with all its planets, stars, and galaxies. There is a lot we know about the universe, but there is so much more that we will never know. The universe is unsearchable; we will never know everything there is to know about it.

Since God is the Creator of the universe, how much more unsearchable must He be? There is so much that God has shown us about Himself, both in creation and in His word, but we must begin our study of God with understanding that we will never fully understand His greatness.

But this should not discourage us from seeking to know God more. Although we cannot fully understand God, He has given us His Word so that we can grow in our knowledge of Him.

Second, the Scripture makes clear that our study of God should lead us to love, praise, and obey Him. God hasn't shown us who He is simply to fill our minds with facts about Him.

God wants our hearts to be filled with love for Him. He wants our lips overflowing with praise for Him. He wants our lives to be fully committed to following Him. The way that God stirs up our hearts to all these things is by revealing to us who He is.

As we begin our study, we must accept that there are some things we can't know about Him because He is so great. Yet we must also realize that God wants to fill us with love for Him as we learn more about Him. Let us pray that God will grow our understanding of His greatness and our love for Him.



Prayer: Our great God, we praise You for showing us who You are. We thank You that we can know You through creation and through Your Word. We are grateful that You allow us to see a small glimpse of Your greatness. Please help us to admit that our understanding is imperfect and that we cannot know You fully. Please help us to grow in knowing You more so that we can love, praise, and obey You. Amen.

Song: *Our Great God* (SH 61)

Hymn: *Can Creatures to Perfection Find*, verse 2

'Tis high as heaven, 'tis deep as hell;
And what can mortals know or tell?
His glory spreads beyond the sky,
And all the shining worlds on high.

Theology Question 1: Why does God want us to know Him?

Answer: God wants us to know Him so that we will love, praise, and obey Him.

What Is God?

*God is spirit, and those who worship him
must worship in spirit and truth.*

JOHN 4:24

When we ask what something is, we are seeking to understand the most basic parts of the thing we are asking about. For example, we might ask, “What is a human?”

We would answer by saying things like, “A human is a physical being with bones, muscles, and organs, a heart, brain, and skin”; “A human being is a spiritual being. They have souls that will live forever.” All of these are part of what a human being is. They are part of the basic nature of humans.

“What is God?” When we ask this question, we are asking about the being or basic nature of God. If we were to ask our Scripture verse this question, it would give us the answer, “*God is spirit.*” God is a spiritual being. This means that God is not a physical being, made up of physical stuff like skin and bones.

The fact that God is spirit means that we cannot directly experience Him with our physical senses, unless He allows us to. We cannot see God. We cannot touch God. We cannot hear God. We cannot taste God. We cannot smell God. Although we cannot directly experience God in these ways, He is still a living being. There is more to the world than what we can see, touch, or hear.

Scripture also shows us that as a living, spiritual being, God thinks, acts, and has emotions. God has a mind, He makes choices, and He feels emotions like anger, joy, and love. God thinks, acts, and feels emotions differently than you or I do, but those aspects are a part of who He is as a spiritual being.

Because God is spirit, He is also a moral being. To be moral is to know the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. As humans who are imperfect and sinful, we know what is right and wrong and we often