

# Youth

My Relationship  
with God



Alive in Jesus



# Knowing God

Having a true, full picture of God's character is at the heart of growing in a relationship with Him. How can I pursue this with a God I can't see?



## LIFE VERSE

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD."

**Jeremiah 9:23, 24.**



## An Invisible God [to us]

Whether you grew up hearing about God, or whether you were introduced to Him more recently in your life, we are all faced with one reality: The most important relationship in the world is one we are invited to have with the invisible God of the Bible.

Have you ever come face-to-face with this God? Have you ever felt His presence and leading in your life in an undeniable way? Have you ever felt like you've almost heard Him audibly speak to you when you've read His Word? Have you ever stood in nature, speechless at the beauty and splendor of His creative hand?

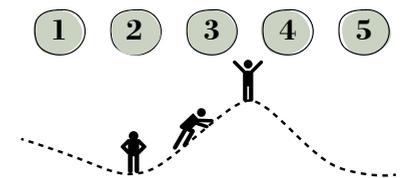
Perhaps you can say a resounding "Yes" to one or more of these questions, or perhaps your "No" response leaves you wondering what it might be like to know God and see Him in these ways. Consider too, what your relationship with Him is like right now, today. If you were to rate it out of 5 (1 being not strong at all, and 5 being very strong), how would you rate it at the moment, remembering that we all have mountaintop and valley moments?

**Pause for a moment to consider if or when you last encountered God. Where was it? How has this impacted your relationship with Him?**

### FAST FACTS

A recent global survey of more than 18,000 people showed that 51% of the people in the world believe in God. Only 18% don't, 17% are undecided, and others hold a mix of beliefs. According to the survey, "definitive belief in a God or Supreme Being" is highest in Indonesia (93 percent) and Turkey (91 percent), followed by Brazil (84 percent), South Africa (83 percent) and Mexico (78 percent). Those most likely to believe in "many Gods or Supreme Beings" live in India (24 percent), China (14 percent) and Russia (10 percent).<sup>1</sup> Barna's 2020 research showed that more Americans believe in Satan than believe in God.<sup>2</sup>

So many factors impact our worldview and how we see God: our family of origin, school, culture, popular culture and society, where we live, and whom we choose as friends. But in the end, we end up making up our own minds about what we think about God.




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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.christianpost.com/news/global-poll-most-believe-in-god-afterlife.html> (Accessed 29/10/2020)  
<sup>2</sup> <https://churchleaders.com/news/374625-barna-americans-satan-god.html> (Accessed 29/10/2020)

## God's Visible Qualities

Maybe you've longed to see or hear God in a tangible way. It would seem so much easier if He could be less invisible at times in our lives! Perhaps you've read some of the stories in the Bible and wondered what it was really like for the people who could see God and hear His voice.

When we look at some of our heroes from the Bible, we can see that God interacted differently with them, at different times. Take some time to slowly read these verses. What do you notice about these interactions?

Gen. 2:7; 3:8-10 \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 5:24 \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 6:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 12:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

Ex. 34:29 \_\_\_\_\_

Whether God physically walked with His children or whether He just talked with them, the truth is that He has always desired to be near to the people He created. Us!

Take your Bible, go outside and read Romans 1:20. Take a few moments to look for some examples of what the Bible talks about here. What does creation tell you about God? What does it tell you about yourself? Write or draw your thoughts here.



## A FEW THOUGHTS...

Now, speak what you've created above as a prayer of response to what God's Word has revealed about Him.

The reality is that regardless of who we are—whether Adam and Eve, Enoch, Noah, or Moses, or us today—although God is invisible, His attributes are clearly seen because of the things around us (His awesome creation and the ways He leads our lives). His eternal power and the Godhead itself are made manifest around us when we look for them—so much so, that we are actually without excuse for not knowing Him.

God's invisible qualities are all around you today. Will you look for them? Will you look for His leading in your life—through certain circumstances, other godly people, and His creative power in nature? Come back to these questions at the end of today and note below just how you've seen this invisible God become visible in your life. (Whenever you notice it, try instant messaging God your thanks to Him.)

## Knowing God

Do you know who you are? There are many factors that feed into our identity: our upbringing, our nationality, our culture, our

church, and the significant people in our lives (teachers, pastor, friends). All of these can contribute to what we believe about God. But one of the most important things we could ever do in life is to seek a true picture of God.

Consider some of the messages in this week's Life Verse - Jeremiah 9:23, 24

Being really smart

Glory-repeated 4X  
To be proud about something

A person who has great power or strength

A lot of people want to be rich

These are things people often strive for, then boast about!

Here's some advice... wait for it!

love + gentleness + thoughtfulness

God describes himself here. How beautiful! How insightful into His character

God takes great pleasure in the person who:  
1. understands His character || → the goal  
2. knows Him

“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,  
Let not the mighty man glory in his might,  
Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;  
But let him who glories glory in this,  
That he understands and knows Me, (the heart of the matter)  
That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness,  
judgment, and righteousness in the earth.  
For in these I delight,” says the LORD.

(does what is right & fair)

Knowing God—really knowing Him for ourselves, and growing in our relationship with Him—is what He invites us to do. This brings God delight!

Some people think God is like a strict policeman, ready to catch you when you do something wrong; Someone who sets strict rules for you to follow—or else! Others see God like Santa Claus, ready to give whatever we ask, when we want it, on our terms. But if you read the Bible, you'll see that the biblical picture of God is different from both of these views. As you study the Bible, God's wonderful character is gradually unwrapped.

Imagine what it would have been like for Moses, the man who wrote the first books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy: called the Pentateuch). He had no Scripture to reference, but rather he spoke directly with God and knew God from years of interactions with Him.

Have you ever wanted to describe something, but just couldn't find words that fit? Think about how Moses must have felt, trying to describe accurately the God of the universe with limited human words. How can you present Someone who is all-powerful, almighty, transcendent, the Creator of everything? Words can't do Him justice, because every word we use has limitations—and we can't limit God.

If you look carefully in your Bible, you'll see that Moses chose an interesting way to represent God's character to the world. He used different names of God and wrote about God's interactions with people in history to try to show us what God is like. We don't notice this in our usual Bible translations which just say, "God" in most cases. In the same way that your name identifies you, God's different names tell us so much about Him.

## JOURNAL

In your Bible study journal, finish these sentence starters. *What I'm thinking... wondering... wanting to know about so far is...* Ask a friend or another adult to share their thoughts to your questions. Then, in prayer, share these questions with God and ask Him to lead you to His answers. Don't rush out of this prayer time.

## God in Creation

You probably know from memory the first words in the Bible: "In the beginning, God..." In Hebrew, the word for God here is **Elohim**, which describes an almighty, all-powerful, transcendent God who is beyond our understanding but in control of everything. He is so powerful that He speaks just one word, and something is created—just from His voice.

But in the next chapter, Genesis 2, Moses chooses a different word for God: **Yahweh**. This name connects to **Elohim**, the same all-powerful, almighty God, but Yahweh represents the covenant God, in loving relation with His created people. Read **Genesis 2:7**. Then illustrate or draw the message of this verse using shades of color, stick figures, or a word picture.



## REFLECT

How often do you think about these two parts of God's character (the personal, and the almighty powerful God)? Do you think of Him one way more often? (If so, which one?) Why might it be important to think about God's character more broadly than we do?

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Here in Genesis 2:7, we see God kneel to form the first human being out of the ground with His own hands. This is a God who gets close—so close that He breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. This name, Yahweh, presents a very different picture of God, but Moses uses both names in the first two chapters of the Bible to describe these two aspects of God to us.

In the New Testament, when Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray (see Matt 6:9), He swaps Moses' order, saying, "Our Father [corresponding to the covenant God Yahweh] in heaven [the dwelling place of Elohim]." Again, we see these two characteristics of God in Jesus' description of Him: the personal God, and the almighty, powerful God.

## LISTEN, THEN CREATE

Listen to some of your favorite hymns or other Christian music, and notice what the lyrics tell you about God's character. How deep or meaningful are the words? What Bible verses are they based on? If you're musical, write a song about God, then post it on the Alive in Jesus website, and hear what others from around the world have created.



God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us.”  
Steps to Christ, p. 10.

With a friend or family member, read **Steps to Christ**, Chapter 1, or listen to it here: QR code and discuss together: What new insights about God's character, and Jesus, has this chapter challenged you with? So many people have distorted views of God, so who might you share your insights with?



## PRAY

Take some time to offer more than a quick prayer to God. Reread your reflections on Job 35-37 and God's message in these verses. Claim some of the words you've written down as part of your prayer, then share with God your: Praises, confessions, requests, thanksgiving . . . Your words will never weary Him, and God always draws near when you seek Him.

## God's Majesty

The Bible shares so many pictures of God, many of which we'll explore over the next few weeks.

Take a look at this powerful passage, below, from the book of Job. Before reading these verses, pray that God would broaden and deepen your understanding of Him. Then read, highlight, draw around, and journal your thoughts and responses to these select verses from **Job 35-37**, using this structure to help you:

**Underline** important ideas

**Circle** words that really stand out to you

**Draw** a star ✨ beside the words that tell you about God

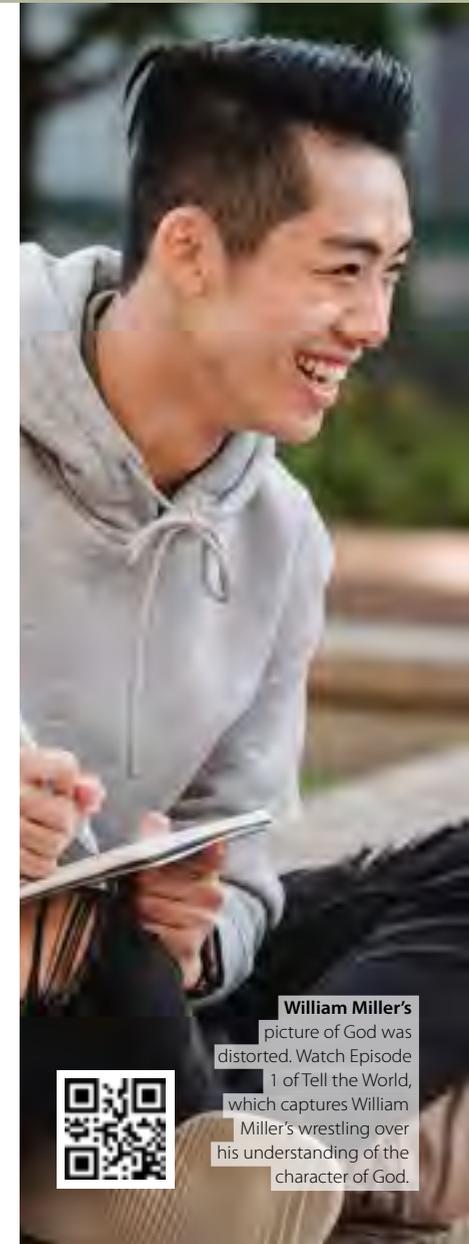
**Write** a prayer response to the things you've noticed. (You might like to try using one of the names for God that you've learned this week.)

(You may also want to read these three complete chapters in your Bible for a deeper study.)

## QUARTERLY MEMORY CHALLENGE

**Memorize Job 37.** Post a video on social media of you reciting this chapter, followed by a punchy description of what this tells you about God.

“Do you think this is right?  
Do you say,  
“My righteousness is more than God's”?...  
I will fetch my knowledge from afar;  
I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.  
For truly my words are not false;  
One who is perfect in knowledge  
is with you.  
Behold, God is mighty,  
but despises no one;  
He is mighty in strength  
of understanding...  
He does not withdraw  
His eyes from the righteous;  
But they are on the throne with kings,  
For He has seated them forever...  
He also opens their ear to instruction,  
And commands that they turn  
from iniquity.  
If they obey and serve Him,  
They shall spend their days in prosperity...  
Behold, God is great,  
and we do not know Him;  
Nor can the number of His years  
be Discovered...  
Hear attentively the thunder of His voice,  
And the rumbling that  
comes from His mouth.  
He sends it forth under the whole heaven,  
His lighting to the ends of the earth.  
After it a voice roars;  
He thunders with His majestic voice,  
And He does not restrain them  
when His voice is heard...  
He does great things which  
we cannot Comprehend...  
Stand still and consider the  
wondrous works of God.



**William Miller's** picture of God was distorted. Watch Episode 1 of Tell the World, which captures William Miller's wrestling over his understanding of the character of God.