

"Acquaint thyself with God."
— A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

Introduction to this Family Discipleship Kit

This Family Discipleship Kit challenges families to study and meditate on the attributes of God. This list of God's attributes was adapted for children from A. W. Tozer's *Knowledge of the Holy*, and though not intended to provide the most theologically complete definitions of each term, seeks to provide an accurate and balanced introduction to the person of God to children and even adults who may be new to the Bible.

Knowing God is the single most important pursuit of one's life. In God alone are we able to find our own identity, our purpose in life, and the calibration needed for every decision we encounter, both big and small! Since our knowledge of God is so essential, *we must dedicate ourselves to knowing the true and real God – not just the picture of him we have created in ourselves.*

An accurate picture of God is absolutely opposite to the inclination of our sinful hearts. Satan, our enemy, works continually to skew, distort, and disguise our understanding of the way God really is, so it shouldn't surprise us that our knowledge of what God is like is thin. *Knowing the true God will take study...and humility.*

We cannot expect to know God as he really is by merely reading a list of his attributes. Though we may say the right words with our mouths, our hearts will be far from the truth unless we are given the grace to understand through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

As the beatitudes in Matthew remind us, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." We need the gospel of Jesus to cleanse us from unrighteousness, and exchange our hearts of stones for hearts of flesh. *We need pure hearts so that we can see God as he really is. Only then will we be able to take these truths in our mouths and believe them with our hearts.*

To this end, the lessons in this Family Discipleship Kit defines a specific attribute of God, but also seeks to lead you in being reminded of the gospel – *and how much more glorious the gospel becomes in the light of the almighty transcendent God.*

Using this Discipleship Kit

This Family Discipleship Kit includes 21 lessons that cover 23 attributes of God. Each lesson includes a definition and explanation devotional, scripture references, discussion questions, prayer prompts, and a passage of scripture to memorize.

Families are encouraged to cover the material in the kit as fast or as slow as they desire. Families with older children may be able to complete one lesson a night, while families with younger children may look up just one or two verses a night, finishing a lesson each week. The pace is up to you.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Each lesson defines and explains an attribute of God. Read this portion as a family together, and work to define any vocabulary that is new or challenging.

If you are breaking the lesson into multiple days, it might be a good idea to always pair this section with the next (scripture reading) so that you are wrestling with the Bible, and not just the words of this study.

LOOK UP & READ

Each lesson includes 5-7 Bible passages to look up. The way we organized the kit, only one section “requires” you to read the Bible together. But your goal as a family should be to read God’s Word together every day. If you are new to all this, one day a week is a good place to start.

If you already have a habit of reading the Bible together, you will find these assignments very easy. They aren’t too long: a few verses at most. Feel free to repeat the readings more than one day or split the reading over a number of days. If Bible reading is brand new to your family, feel free to start with just a few verses at a time. Once you have started the habit, add more verses.

If you have very young children (4 and under), do not worry about them understanding about what is read. It is most important for these young ones to just see Mom or Dad with a Bible in their hands. You could read the passage aloud while they look at their own books right before bed. Or, you could give them their own New Testament to play with while you read your Bible after breakfast. You can even read the Bible to yourself while they are napping or watching TV, as a first step. Our main intent is habit creation.

For children who are 5 and older, try reading the a few verses after dinner or before bed. Don’t get frustrated if they act silly or bored. Right now, we are just trying to build the habit of Bible reading. Just make it through.

Try to connect Bible time with positive daily rhythms – like tickling or cuddling before bed, dessert after dinner, or just quality time with Mom and Dad. This is a happy thing we do – not a chore we hate!

As children mature, you can have higher expectations for their ability to listen, comprehend, and engage in the Discussion Questions. You might even challenge your older children to read the passage themselves, and then discuss it later together. If you personally struggle with a daily habit of Bible reading, challenge your older child to be your accountability partner. Your humility in asking for help is a beautiful illustration of the gospel in action: you’re showing your child, “We all need Jesus. Even adults.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Accompanying each Bible passage, there are 3-5 discussion questions that are intended to guide your family through understanding the attribute, and exploring what it means in different contexts.

Feel free to add or modify the questions as you desire. The atmosphere of discussion should not be like giving a pop quiz with negative feedback for children who supply wrong answers. This is a time to honestly engage with the scripture. Feel free to go back and read it again to think about answers, or to ask questions if you don't understand.

Before you close discussion, ask your child if he or she has any questions, and foster an atmosphere that "during Bible time, any question is okay." Sometimes a child will have something on his or her heart that they have been waiting an opportunity to ask. Now is the time to engage deeply on these questions, even if they have nothing to do with the lesson.

If you don't know the answer to a question, don't panic. It is not most important for your child to think *you* have all the answers – they just need to know that God does. Feel free to say "Hmm... that's a good question! Let's do some study and get back to you on that." Then, do the study! Show them how to look commentaries or go together to ask a Pastor. This models that godly humility and a high view of God's Word and gives your child the tools for studying the Bible on his or her own.

WORSHIP & PRAY

Once your family has spent some time discussing and studying each attribute of God, we encourage your family to spend time praying together, worshipping God for who he is. Prayer prompts included in each lesson can guide your prayers but we encourage you to model to your children how to adore and worship God in your own words as well.

If interested, this would be a great time to sing a hymn or praise song too. Our theme song, "The God of WOW!" is available on Sovereign Grace's album for children, "The Ology: Ancient Truths Ever New".

MEMORIZE

In addition to the scripture reading and discussion questions, this Discipleship Kit challenges your family to a scripture memory project. As we reflect on who the true God is, we want to hide his Word in our hearts so that we have the tools to remind ourselves of God's true character in weak moments.

The scripture passage we have chosen is Isaiah 40:25-31. This passage mentions many of God's attributes and the organization of this study has been dictated by the order presented in the scripture passage.

The lessons in this Discipleship Kit will guide your family through memorizing all 6 verses by adding a phrase each week. We recommend that as you learn each phrase, you go back and review the previous phrases. By the end of this study, you will have hidden this big chunk of scripture in your heart.

STICKER CHART

To track your progress on your Discipleship Kit, encourage the children to put one of the enclosed stickers on the sticker chart after each lesson. Hang your sticker chart in a prominent place so that you don't forget to study together!

WHY FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP KITS?

Parents, You Have an Important Job

A child's understanding of the world and of God (sometimes called a "worldview") is always being formed, whether we are intentionally fostering that process or not. A constant barrage of information from school, friends, the internet, and television is already perpetually forming your child's worldview. The important questions of life: "Who is God?" "What is He like?" "What is my place in the world?" are being answered all the time, and ***if children are not intentionally disciplined by their parents, they will become disciples of things far less important than Jesus.***

Children are so busy these days with school and extracurricular activities, and church can feel like one more "thing" for a child to be involved in. But knowing God and His word is so much more important than one hour a week! Fight the temptation to limit the discipleship of your child to the teaching they receive at church. ***As important as church, Sunday School, VBS, and summer camp are, most discipleship must come from you, the parents.*** Not only do you spend the most time with your child, but you know them the best, and they know you the best. God has given you a unique voice in your child's life. This is your opportunity to make them disciples for Jesus.

The task before you is urgent. It is much easier to build a worldview than it is to change one. After the age of 12, adolescents and adults *can* add to and alter their worldview, but the ideas cemented during childhood have lasting effect. Now, while your children are young, is the time to engage their hearts and minds to know God.

Redeeming Daily Rhythms

Engaging your child's heart for Jesus is important, but it's a really big job and life is really busy. Perhaps all this sounds intimidating – maybe even impossible! Don't be afraid. First off all, ***God has given you the grace for this task, and if you lean on him, he will give you the wisdom and ability to do it.*** Second, let's be clear about what we're talking about. God is not asking us to run a seminary in our living room. He's not even asking you to teach a Sunday School class. He is just challenging us to redeem everyday moments with our children. Read how God challenged the Israelites to internalize his commands in Deuteronomy 6:

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Notice how God highlighted everyday moments that are already happening: sitting at home, walking on the road, going to bed at night, getting up in the morning. God is saying, ***"live your life...but be intentional."***

Your child's Sunday School teacher gets to see them one hour a week, and that's a special time. But you get to put them to bed every night, and that can be a special time too. ***It is the daily rhythms of family life that are soaked in opportunity for conversations about God.***

The goal of a church's Children's Ministry is to come along beside parents in this project of building worldviews. We hope these Family Discipleship Kits are a tool to help you as you adopt Bible Study, prayer, and discussions about God into these daily rhythms.

Don't Let These Kits Be a Burden

This Family Discipleship Kit is a tool. But keep in mind that it is just a tool. These kits are not meant to feel like a burden. The gospel is about grace, not rules. Jesus has already *done* the work of salvation, so we don't have to *do* anything. So don't view this kit as a homework assignment.

If you find some of the activities or lessons too intensive, feel free to skip them. If you want to do just half of the weeks, that's fine. Want to do one section a day? Go for it! Want to do all the sections one afternoon? That's ok too. You might want to do the reading after dinner one night, the discussion questions on a lazy afternoon, and skip the sticker chart. It's all up to you. *You know your family and your schedule best.*

Along these same lines, don't punish yourself with guilt if you start out strong but fall off the wagon in the middle of the study. Just like all battles of self-discipline, expect a few false starts – but embrace the opportunity to start again fresh each week.

If don't end up using this Family Discipleship Kit at all, we invite you to reflect on what would be the best way to better incorporate God's Word into your family life. How could you pursue something that sounds like Deuteronomy 6:6-9?