

1. The character and nature of God

Course: Hearing the Father's Voice
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Setting the Scene



- Throughout the Bible, God longs for an encounter with those He has created and redeemed. The initiative and energy for this is His. All we need to do, to encounter Him, is to keep looking in the right places.

A. Introductions

- We don't need an education, a degree of maturity, or a particular cultural background, to hear our Heavenly Father
- Exercise 1. Chat in twos or threes, & feed back:
- 'What are your expectations and hopes for this course?'

B. The nature of God

Who is God?

- Rom 8:15-17 He is our kind, adopted father, our 'Daddy'.

How does our relationship work?

- John 14:23 The intimate picture of the relationship with God available to any follower of Jesus
- Exercise 2: What do you think He might say? How might he 'say' something?

C. Encountering God

- Ex 33:11 **God's 'presence'** in the Bible is often a translation of the Hebrew word for 'face.'
- **'Hearing' God** can cover a vast range of experiences of receiving communication from Him
- Ez 1:28 In **worship** we encounter God, but an encounter with God fills our hearts with an attitude of worship – we are filled with reverence and awe.
- Ps 42:7 **God speaks** to deep parts of us
- Ex 20:18 **Intimacy with God** is linked with trust.

Exercise 3: Jot down & share ideas on God's character

D. What is God really like?

- He is REVEALED in Scripture
 - John 14:9 The New Testament revelation of Jesus
 - Rom 3: 10-18 Paul quotes the OT, which is like a mirror for us, showing us how we compare to God
- Jn 14:23 The outrageous goodness and immediacy of God towards us.

E. Three guidelines to God's Character

1. Names are important

- John 1:1 He speaks; Gen 1 He creates
- The importance of names in the Bible: e.g. Moses = 'drawn out', Hebrew= 'From beyond'
- El Roi The God who sees me
- Jehovah Shalom The Lord is peace
- El Shaddei The Lord Almighty
- Jehovah Shammah The Lord who is there
- Jehovah Rapha The Lord who heals
- Jehovah Nissi The Lord my banner
- Emmanuel God with us

F. God's Character

2. He 'checks us out'

- Gen 18:20 – 26. He is the God who 'checks us out', with a view to being merciful.
- Acts 5:1-11 He is the God who has taken up residence in every born-again believer. But He looks for us to be straight in our dealings with Him!

G. God's Character:

3. He is with us

- Isaiah 7: 14, John 14 He is Emmanuel, God with us.
- The concept of the Trinity came from history, scripture and experience:
 - Ex 3:14 'I am who I am', one God
 - John 20:28, Matt 16:16 Jews gradually realising Jesus was equal to God
 - Acts 4:30 etc The Holy Spirit was there – 'Jesus is still with us!'

H. Good Listening Principles

- Be righteous. Behave so He sees that you take Him seriously
- Be persistent. Luke 11:8-10
- Know that Jesus is exactly like the Father. Jn 14:9
- Know that God speaks to everyone. Only some spend time listening!
- 2 Chron 20. Know that Worship opens us to God
- Know Yahweh is both loving and holy. 1 Peter 1:16, 1 John 4:19
- Be humble.

'To get through the door of heaven, you have to go low and slow' – Heidi Baker

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