

SESSION 17
GOD IS JUST (A)
Video Outline



1. God is absolutely just in all His _____.
 (Deuteronomy 32:4)

2. God is a _____ Judge.

3. God is just; He is _____ at sin.
 (Psalm 7:11; Psalm 90:8,9,11)

4. Sooner or later, all sin will be _____.
 (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Jeremiah 12:1)
 - God delays His judgment because He is patiently providing an opportunity for repentance. (Psalm 7:12; Psalm 32:6)
 - Sometimes we do not even recognize God's judgment because it occurs in a way that we did not expect. (Galatians 6:7,8)
 - God's acts of vengeance are another form of judgment. (Deuteronomy 32:35)
 - The final judgment event will occur at the end of time. (Romans 2:5–8)

5. God _____ righteousness and faithfulness.
 (Psalm 62:12; Matthew 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
 - Jesus will judge the words we have spoken. (Matthew 12:35,36)
 - Jesus will judge the deeds we have done. (1 Corinthians 3:12–15)
 - Jesus will judge our motives. (Colossians 3:23,24)
 - Jesus will judge our faithfulness. (Matthew 25:21; Galatians 6:9)

*Because God is just,
 He will always treat me fairly.*

RECOMMENDED READING
GOD: Discover His Character, Chapter 18 “God Is Just”

CULTIVATING A HEALTHY FEAR OF GOD

By Bill Bright



I grew up on my parents' ranch in Oklahoma where my father had a reputation of being the best horse rider in the county. He even taught me how to ride wild broncos. Although I learned to feel comfortable around those big, powerful horses, my father raised me to always have a healthy respect for them. I knew that if I was not careful around those animals, I could easily be hurt or even killed if I did something foolish.

Our magnificent God cannot be compared to a horse. He is the sovereign, all-powerful Creator and Ruler of our universe. He demands a healthy respect from us.

In His Word, He commands us to fear Him. When the Lord was giving the children of Israel the Ten Commandments, He spoke to them from the heart of the fire on Mount Sinai. The people were greatly frightened because they understood they were in the presence of their awesome Creator God.

The Lord told Moses: "Oh, that they would always have hearts like this, that they might fear Me and obey all My commands! If they did, they and their descendants would prosper forever" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

This is only one of many passages throughout the Bible where we are instructed to fear God. But what does that really mean?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FEAR GOD?

God is not some awful, hateful person who desires to do us harm. He is not reckless or foolish in the use of His great power and limitless abilities, so we will never become victims of His lack of control. And God is not a spooky, hideous creature who hides in the darkness to scare us when we least expect it.

These are some of the reasons we normally fear someone, but that is not the kind of fear God is talking about. Psalm 147:11 says, "The LORD delights in

those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love" (NIV). When the Bible tells us to fear God, it means we are to develop awe, reverence, and respect for who God is.

It is the same kind of attitude that is proper between little children and their parents. As a child, I was very aware that my parents were much bigger and stronger than I was. I knew that I was powerless against them if there were to be a struggle. I understood that my parents had great authority over me. They had the ability to give or take away privileges. Once they decided what needed to be done, I had to behave within those boundaries or face the consequences. I clearly understood that, as a child, my life and well-being were totally dependent upon my parents.

We are to approach God in the same way little children relate to their parents. We must approach Him with humility, submissiveness, and a sense of wonder, for He can accomplish what we cannot even imagine.

DO YOU HAVE A HEALTHY FEAR OF GOD?

Do others consider you to be a God-fearing person? A long time ago, to be called God-fearing was almost synonymous with being a Christian. What has happened to our Christian culture to make us lose our distinctives?

Over time we have developed a distorted view of who God is, and we have lost our sense of reverence, respect, awe, and fear of Him. Instead of seeing God as a sovereign Ruler, He is more commonly viewed as a buddy. Instead of recognizing Him as our Creator, we tend to relegate Him almost to the position of a peer.

In studying the character of our marvelous God, we have considered many of His attributes. Although our human limitations require us to examine each

attribute one at a time, we must remember that God displays all of His wonderful characteristics simultaneously. Whenever we elevate one or more of the attributes above others, we develop a distorted, unbalanced view of what He really is like. If we consider all of God's marvelous character qualities in proper balance, the result is a healthy sense of awe, reverence, and respect for Him.

Fearing God is based on a right understanding of who He is compared to who we are. But this attitude must be cultivated. Ask yourself these questions:

Do I have a reverential awe of God? Certainly, your heart soars as you gaze at the massive ceiling of a cathedral or stand at the foot of a snowcapped mountain. How much more should you be overcome by a sense of wonder when considering the God who created 100 billion galaxies by merely speaking them into existence? If the thought of your Creator does not move you to worship, then you still have not grasped the magnitude of who He is and how much He surpasses anything we could ever imagine with our finite minds.

Do I desire to please God more than people? If you do not, then you have lowered God to a human level. Proverbs 31:30 says, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised" (NIV). The world values appearance, wealth, and position. God values a heart that is right with Him. To whose voice are you listening? If what others think is more important to you than what God thinks, what does that say about the authority and importance He has in your life?

Do I have a hatred for sin and evil? God detests sin. He opposes all that is wicked in the universe. Proverbs 3:7,8 says, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones" (NIV). What is your attitude about wickedness, sin, and evil? Do you find yourself tolerating them? Do you view them as not too bad? God expects us to oppose those things He opposes.

WHY SHOULD WE FEAR GOD?

Psalm 111:10 states, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding" (NIV). Here are two rea-

sons we should fear God.

1. God is infinitely superior to us.

The ancient scribes who laboriously copied the Scriptures had a practice that illustrates their respect for God. When they were about to write the name of the Lord, they stopped their work and performed a ceremonial washing. Then with their clothes and body clean, they took up their writing utensil and carefully penned God's holy name.

Today, God's name has become a swear word. Even those of us who claim to serve Him often speak His name flippantly and without respect. Yet God's character demands our reverence, for His abilities eclipse anything we could ever do or think.

God is infinitely great, and we are so small. When standing on a beach and gazing out upon the ocean, who is not overcome with the vastness and power of the roaring waves? Those waves can easily overpower a swimmer with their undercurrents. They can destroy houses and anything else in their path. Yet God is infinitely greater than our greatest ocean. The contrast between God's greatness and our impotence is beyond our ability to even imagine.

God is infinitely perfect, and we are so imperfect. When you consider God's holiness, purity, and perfection, He is without any fault, blemish, or deficiency. Yet when we consider ourselves, we become all too aware of our shortcomings. Compare a newborn—unable to speak or sit up—to the physical prowess of a celebrated athlete. The distance between God's perfection and our imperfection is far greater still.

God is infinitely committed to us, while we are fickle in our commitment to Him and others. When we consider the depth of His love for us—the magnitude of the sacrifice He made for us, His plans and desires for our eternal future—and compare that with our self-centered tendencies, the contrast is beyond our understanding. When we recognize God's awesome superiority, we cannot help but have a healthy fear of Him.

2. God has supreme authority over us.

God's authority is revealed in His relationship to us.

God is our Creator. He designed us, and He gave us life. He is responsible for our very existence. He is the Potter, and we are the clay. As the prophet Isaiah states, “Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’” (Isaiah 45:9, NIV). As our Creator, God is totally justified in doing whatever He wishes with us.

God is our Judge. He will determine our eternal future. The final judgment is recorded in Revelation 20:11, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them” (NIV). Even the earth and sky fear our almighty God. He has the authority to condemn us to eternal damnation or to allow us to live in His glorious presence forever.

God is our Redeemer. He freed us from slavery. We have been purchased with a price, and now belong to Him who ransomed us out of the kingdom of darkness. First Corinthians 6:19,20 says, “You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.” He bought us with His blood, and now He has total authority over us just as a master does over his slaves. How can we help but have a healthy fear of a God who has this kind of authority over every

aspect of our being?

GOD BLESSES THOSE WHO REVERENCE HIM

Clearly, God is worthy of our reverence and awe simply because of who He is. When we fear Him, the Bible promises bountiful rewards. “He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure” (Isaiah 33:6, NIV). Proverbs 19:23 says, “Fear of the LORD gives life, security, and protection from harm.”

We will reap great rewards if we have a healthy reverence for our Creator. We are not cowering slaves, for we are children of God. But we dare not treat our all-powerful, infinite Maker as though He were our kid brother. God’s magnificence demands respect; His position demands honor; His holiness demands praise.

Spend time in God’s Word reading how Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, Mary, Paul, and others exhibited a healthy fear of God. And remember God’s promise: “As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:11, NIV).

SESSION 18
GOD IS JUST (B)
Bible Study



1. God withholds judgment of the wicked for the sake of the righteous.

Read Genesis 18:23–33.

a. What title did Abraham give to God? (v. 25)

b. What was Abraham's concern regarding God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah?

c. In what ways have you experienced God's longsuffering in your life?

2. God does not postpone judgment indefinitely.

Read Genesis 19:1–16.

a. What sins had the people of Sodom and Gomorrah committed to earn their destruction?

b. Why did God spare Lot and his family? What does this reveal about His character?

c. What does the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveal about God's justice?

Bible Study (continued)

d. How have you seen the justice of God meted out in your life?

3. God always judges fairly, without favoritism.

Read James 2:1–4.

a. What attitude and behavior is James denouncing in this passage?

b. How is this behavior unjust?

c. What does this passage reveal about God's character?

d. Have you ever erred in this way, or been on the receiving end of this behavior? How did it feel?

SESSION 18

GOD IS JUST (B)

Life Application



WRITE IT ON YOUR HEART

Memorize the following statement and verses. As you encounter situations during this week where you need to be reminded of God's justice, claim these promises by faith.

- Because God is just, He will always treat me fairly.
- Jeremiah 17:10 (NIV)—“I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”
- Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NIV)—“God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”

EXALT YOUR GOD

Praise our just God with the words of Moses:

Listen, O heavens, and I will speak! Hear, O earth, the words that I say! My teaching will fall on you like rain; my speech will settle like dew. My words will fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants. I will proclaim the name of the LORD; how glorious is our God! He is the Rock; His work is perfect. Everything He does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright He is! (Deuteronomy 32:1–4).

REFLECT HIS IMAGE

The Lord spoke through Isaiah, saying, “I, the LORD, love justice” (Isaiah 61:8). God wants His children to mirror His nature through the power of His Holy Spirit. Search your heart by answering the following questions:

- Does seeing injustice make me angry or sad?
- In what ways do I show that I love justice?
- Are my everyday actions consistent with my beliefs?
- Could those around me say that everything I do is just and fair?

Life Application (continued)

COUNT ON GOD

How have you been wronged at various times in your life? What was the outcome?

Childhood

High school

College

Professionally

By your spouse

By a neighbor

In your church

Other

The prophet Jeremiah stated, “The LORD is a God of retribution; He will repay in full” (Jeremiah 51:56, NIV). Trust our perfect God of justice to judge the person who wronged you. Tell Him about your anger and frustration and wait for Him to deal with the one who wronged you.

OBEY GOD

The Word of God states in Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows” (NIV).

In what ways are you sowing seeds of destruction?

How are you sowing seeds of mercy, justice, and goodness?

SHARE HIS MAJESTY

Think of someone who has been wronged and give that person the comforting news that God is the perfect Judge. Lovingly warn someone who has not acted justly that God judges those who do wrong.

RECOMMENDED READING

GOD: Discover His Character, Chapter 19 “God’s Justice Works for Our Good”

If you would like to download the entire GOD: Discover His Character Bible Study (which covers all the attributes) for free. You'll find it by visiting our Resources section

<http://DiscoverGod.com/resources>

