

God Series
“God Is”

For the week beginning 2.6.12

God...*need we say more?* Well, apparently we do because that name has been misinterpreted generation after generation and people tend not to know much about God. There are so many religions that use the term “God” to describe the god they worship. But then, if you look at the Christian faith alone, according to the World Christian Encyclopedia there are more than 33,830 denominations. Whew, talk about diversity! Unfortunately, that type of diversity can cause mass confusion and lead one to wonder, what should we believe? In fact, the word *denomination* is likely breaking God’s heart.

Craig Groeschel, in his book, “What is God Really Like?,” broke down the term denomination. He explained that the Latin origin of “de-” means “apart,” while *nominare* means “to name.” *Denomination* literally means “to separate by naming.” As far as the Scriptures are concerned, only one name should matter: Jesus!

That got Craig to thinking about the prayer Jesus prayed for his disciples... and for us in John 17:20-23. It reads “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one. Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world

know that you sent me and I have loved them even as you have loved me.” In response to reading that scripture and praying, Craig felt led to launch “One Prayer.com” in the spring of 2008 with a plea to churches to partner together, pray together, fast together, love together, all in an effort to be a part of the answer to Jesus’ prayer. In 2009, pastors from all around the world submitted messages describing different attributes of God found in the Bible: God is certain, incomparable, strong, in control, able, merciful, and that He wants to give His people a fresh start. Craig then compiled all of these messages into a book entitled “What is God Really Like?” Pastors such as Francis Chan, Andy Stanley, Perry Noble, Greg Surratt, Steven Furtick, John Burke, to name a few, describe in copious detail the omnipotent God that we should serve, every second of every day. We encourage you to pick up this book. We’ll reference the book in this study.

All this month we will get to know who God is. The hope is that learning who God is—through what His scriptures have to teach us—will lead you to want to know God, and not be satisfied just to know about Him. Jesus Christ died for us and for the world. Jesus is the hope of the world, and we are his body, commissioned to bring that hope to others. Each of us is just one small part. So today and all this week, delve into this Bible study and invite someone to this series—likely the most important of all: **God!**

God is **certain**
God is **incomparable**
God is **strong**
(so why aren’t his children?)
God is **in control**
(but anything can happen)
God is **able**
(to overcome the strongholds)
God is **for You** and He is **Faithful!**

**IN THIS WEEK’S STUDY WE WILL LEARN
ALL ABOUT WHO GOD IS!**

MONDAY — God is Incomparable

Big Point: *In the beginning, God created us in His image, but we've been creating God in our image ever since. Our human minds cannot fully comprehend who God is. There is no comparison ... even though we try.*

On August 6, 1945, the *Enola Gay* dropped the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima, Japan. It took forty-three seconds for that bomb to fall 31,000 feet. A barometric switch triggered the first subatomic reaction, and in a few millionths of a second, the heat at the core reached several million degrees Celsius. When the bomb exploded, four square miles of that city were devastated and 66,000 people lost their lives without even knowing what was coming. Buildings were leveled six miles away, glass was broken twelve miles away, and the glare from that blast was so powerful that it would have been visible from Jupiter, roughly 390 million miles away.

Those statistics are staggering, but here is what is almost inconceivable: the energy produced by that bomb was the byproduct of a subatomic reaction that used only one percent of two pounds of uranium; one third of an ounce of uranium was sucked out of existence, and it translated into an explosion two thousand times more powerful than the most powerful bomb in the history of warfare. This technology owed a lot to Albert Einstein's most recognizable equation, $E = mc^2$ (energy equals mass multiplied by the speed of light squared). This simply means that there is an awful lot of energy in a very small amount of matter. The amount of potential energy in every invisible atom is almost inconceivable.

If the amount of energy in every subatomic particle is virtually inconceivable, then how can we even begin to comprehend the potential energy of an omnipotent Creator who created all matter? We can't.

~story adapted from *What Is God Really Like?* By Craig Groeschel

READ and THINK...Find Answers in the Bible

1. What do the following scriptures tell us about our comprehension of God?

Isaiah 40:25 (New Living Translation)

²⁵ "To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.

Exodus 3:14 (New Living Translation)

¹⁴ God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."

Answer:

2. Paul combines two superlatives, "incomparable" and "great", to attempt to describe God's power. Knowing that God is beyond our comprehension, what words would you use to describe God?

Ephesians 1:18-19a (New International Version)

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Answer:

LIVE...What will you do now?

Do you suffer from anthropomorphism? Sounds serious doesn't it? That's where we think about God in human terms—the attribution of human characteristics to God. So do you make God a supersized version of yourself by thinking that God's power is slightly more powerful than the most powerful thing you can imagine? Take some time to really think about your view of God and write out your thoughts.

Every problem we experience is a byproduct of our small view of God. Once you understand God's incomparable nature, your problems lose their dominion over you. How does your view of God hold you back? What can you do to change your outlook on problems you are facing right now?

We can accept a life that is just a little better than it could be rather than expecting the riches of His glorious inheritance that Paul prayed for. Has your view of God prevented you from a more abundant life? How have you been settling for "just a little better" lately? Think big and describe how God, who is beyond our comprehension, has lavished you with His blessings.

It is difficult to grasp how big and inconceivable God really is. Does this change your expectations from Him? How will you pray differently?

PRAY...God, What do you want me to know & do?

Take the time right now to worship God and praise Him for how incomparably great His power is to our human standards. Pray that He makes you uncomfortable for settling for life that is "just a little better."

Reminder: You'll Find the Daily Bible Reading commentary for the Daily Bible Reading Plan by going to www.livingitout.tv and clicking on the appropriate commentary links that precede the reading for a particular day. The Daily Bible Reading will alternate from Old Testament to New Testament throughout 2012.

TUESDAY — Rest assured: God is in Control

Big Point: *We are not in control of our lives and the world around us but we can rest in the knowledge that God is and He has a perfect plan for our lives.*

As human beings we like to think and believe that we are in control of everything that happens in our lives. Greg Surratt, in chapter 10 of “What is God Really Like?” perfectly illustrates how little control we have when he speaks about an incident that happened on British Airways flight 2069.

On December 30, 2000, flight 2069 was bound for Nairobi, Kenya when an unstable passenger wrestled control of the airplane from the pilot and sent it plummeting, nose down toward the ocean. The downward force of the plane’s dive was so severe that it caused passengers to be knocked upward out of their seats, hitting their heads on the ceiling of the plane. One passenger described the plane’s rapid descent as a “wild roller coaster ride”.

Fortunately, the pilot regained control of the plane and the passengers arrived safely to Nairobi.

*While most of us have never been on an airplane plummeting nose down toward the ocean, we can relate to circumstances that have felt like our lives were spinning out of our control. The fact is that we are not in control, **God is in control**. Not only is God in control of the world and everything in it, He is also in control of our lives. Nothing unexpected happens with God. Whatever the situation is that you are going through, God has chosen you to experience it, and He has a perfect plan for you to get through it. Therefore, we can walk in faith knowing that whatever happens in our lives God can and will use it for our good and His great pleasure.*

Nothing unexpected happens with God.

READ and THINK...Find Answers in the Bible

1. In the scripture below God talks about how Jesus Christ has brought us into the family of God through adoption. Adoption is a very special kind of love felt toward the child being adopted and according to Roman law an adoptee had full rights just like a biological child. After reading the scripture below describe the pleasure that God has toward us and why He is willing to adopt us.

Ephesians 1:5 (New Living Translation)

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

Answer:

2. According to the scriptures below God is in control of our lives, determines the outcomes, and has a perfect plan for us. After reading and thinking about the scriptures below describe what God’s plan for your life may look like compared to your plans. Which one is preferable, yours or Gods?

Romans 8:28 (New Living Translation)

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Proverbs 16:33 (New Living Translation)

We may throw the dice, but the LORD determines how they fall.

Answer:

LIVE...What will you do now?

Look back over Ephesians 1:5. This scripture tells us that God's love for us was so great that we have been adopted into His own family and therefore have been made heirs. How should your life reflect the relationship you have with God because of Christ? What changes do you need to make in order to become closer to your Father?

Would you describe yourself as a "control freak?" Describe the things that you like to control.

Today's introductory reading tells about the incident on British flight 2069. It illustrates how the incident and outcome were beyond the passengers' control. They had to put their trust and faith in the Captain's ability to gain back control of the plane. Continuing to believe that God has a plan for us when our life appears out of control takes the same kind of faith. Describe your faith in God's ability to take care of you in all situations. What can you do to strengthen your faith and keep going when hardships come?

Think about your previous "out-of-control" moments where you thought, "This is crazy, I can't believe I am going through this." Now, looking back, describe how you now can see God using it for His good in your life today.

PRAY...God, What do you want me to know & do?

Go to a quiet place where you can be alone with God. Praise God for who He is. Thank Him for adopting you into His family and for having a perfect plan for your life. Ask Him to give you the strength and faith to trust Him when things in your life appear to be out of control.

WEDNESDAY — FYI ... God is Always For You

Big Point: *If you truly believe that God is always for you, you will know that nothing can ever stop you—nothing can stand against God’s will for your life!*

How can one really know that God is for them? Well, Jentezen Franklin, in the chapter, “God is Able,” used Joshua’s story in the Bible to basically hush any doubt that in fact, God is for us!

Joshua and his army defeated the five kings who were keeping God’s people from entering the promised land. First, they chased these kings until finally they hid in a cave. After Joshua and his army slaughtered the king’s forces, he brought the five kings out of the cave and here’s what happened next. Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said, unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, “Come near, put your feet upon the neck of these kings.” And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, “Fear not, nor be dismayed, be

strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all of your enemies against whom ye fight.” And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees. Joshua 10:24-26 KJV.

Whoa! Did you catch that? The King James Version uses the term dismayed; the literal translation means “to be made unable.” So Joshua was saying to his men “Don’t be made unable. Don’t fall apart. Don’t freak out. Even though you’re facing impossibility, a great opposition, don’t be afraid. But first you have to get victory over these five kings.” In our every day life, our senses (what we smell, see, feel, hear and taste) can get in the way of what God has for us, making us believe that God is not for us. Don’t be made unable by your senses. Use Joshua as an example and put your foot on the neck of your senses—subdue them and say “You’re not going to steal from me what I know God’s Word has promised me.”

**Put your foot on the neck of
your five senses:**

What you smell

What you feel

What you see

What you hear

What you taste

**So they won’t steal what God
has promised You!**

READ and THINK ... Find the Answers in the Bible

1. It seems God was pleased with David as He replaced Saul and chose David—David had something that Saul didn’t. Read Acts 13:22 and describe what God saw in David and what David was willing to do for God.

Acts 13:22 (New Living Translation)

But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.’

Answer:

2. Remember the story of the adulterous woman. Jesus drew a line and said, “If anyone hasn’t sinned, cast the first stone.” What does Jesus say to the woman in John 8:10-11 that shows how much God is for us?

John 8:10-11 (New Living Translation)

...“Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” “No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Answer:

3. Even before we were born, God had each and every one of us in mind—He calls us His masterpiece. That’s saying something. But in order to be God’s masterpiece, we had to be created anew. Ephesians 2:10 tells us how God made us His masterpiece and what He want to accomplish.

Ephesians 2:10 (New Living Translation)

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Answer:

4. What hope and assurance does Romans 8:31 give us that God always has “our back”?

Romans 8:31 (New Living Translation)

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

Answer:

LIVE...What will you do now?

Have you been burned in a relationship, a business deal or at a church because some preacher was a hypocrite or somebody hurt you? Do you feel now that you judge everyone the same way? After reading Acts 13:22 and John 8:10-11, what is God asking you to do so that you can know that He is for you and wants to use you? What do you need to do so that you stop smelling like you’ve been burnt?

Our lack of strength comes from our lack of certainty that we serve a God who can do anything. We become stronger when we fully understand how strong and powerful God is.
Francis Chan

Describe the actions in your life that show that you have been made “anew” in Christ and that unequivocally affirm that you are undoubtedly God’s masterpiece. Explain how your actions are affecting others and building up the Church.

Describe a recent incident where you put your foot on the neck of one of your senses and realized that God could help you fight your battle.

PRAY...God, What do you want me to know & do?

Ask God to help you sharpen your senses—to be able to see, smell, feel, hear, and taste what He wants to accomplish in your life and to know that he is always there for you!

THURSDAY — God Is Faithful

Big Point: Understanding God's faithfulness is essential in developing our relationship with God. God's faithfulness is the basis of our trust in Him.

Here we are—five weeks into 2012. Should we check in on those new year's resolutions? Isn't it strange how even the things we want to do, the things we know are good for us, even things we desire, we sometimes cannot follow through on? Trips to the gym? Food diary? Daily Bible reading? Prayer? Yet, what might be even more strange is that we are continually surprised by this phenomenon. You might be thinking, "Well, I'm faithful to my spouse." But as one LIO writer notes, "I might not be romantically involved with anyone else, but does that mean I faithfully love my husband? Pray for him? Encourage him? Respect him?"

Even the apostle Paul writes in Romans 7:18, "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." For people, being faithful to something is perhaps the hardest thing for us to do. It may very well be impossible, which is why it is hard for us to wrap our minds around the concept that God is faithful.

But in fact, He is faithful. God is faithful to His Word. He is faithful to his people. He is faithful in all circumstances. Faithfulness is an essential quality of our God. In his essay on the Faithfulness of God, A.W. Pink wrote, "Unfaithfulness is one of the most outstanding sins of these evil days...How refreshing then, how unspeakably blessed, to lift our eyes above the scene of ruin, and behold one who is faithful, faithful in all things, faithful at all times." Today spend some time contemplating the awesome faithfulness of God.

"Know this:
God, your God, is God
indeed, a God you can
depend upon."
Deuteronomy 7:9,
From *The Message*

READ and THINK...Find Answers in the Bible

1. In the verse below, what is the relationship of God's faithfulness to our faithfulness? How do we know that faithfulness is a fundamental part of God's character? Write your answers below:

2 Timothy 2:13 (New Living Translation)

If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.

Answer:

2. Often we shy away from using absolutes like we will *always* do this and we will *never* do that. What do the absolutes in the following verses tell us about God?

Romans 15:8 (New Living Translation)

Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors.

Hebrews 13:5 (New International Version)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Answer:

3. In each of the verses above, how important is our behavior in relation to God's faithfulness?

LIVE...What will you do now?

Do you believe that God is faithful? That He is true to His word? That He will never forsake you? If you do believe this, how do you know? How have you experienced God's faithfulness in your life or seen His faithfulness in the lives of others?

If you are unsure about the questions above, did anything in today's verses surprise or challenge you? Are there questions or doubts lingering in the back of your mind? Write down your questions to God right now.

Accepting this truth about God's character is the foundation of our trust in Him. When we believe that God is faithful to His word and promises, we can act on them. What is one word of God that He has given to you, calling you to step out in faith, and trusting in His faithfulness?

Do you ever feel like you don't have enough, that you are not good enough, that you will never be able to live the life that you dream of? Describe how content you are with what you have.

Now, describe how content you could be with your life if you truly know that God will never leave you or forsake you.

"We struggle, we climb, and we claw our way through the challenges that life throws at us. Sometimes we win; sometimes we lose. But the one constant that is always there is that God is always wanting to help. We don't need to go it alone and with God anything is possible."

**God's Whisper—
Bill Hybels**

PRAY...God, what do you want me to know & do?

Think about this word: faithful. Ask God to show you the enormity of this word and how He fulfills every ounce of it. God loves you. God is with you. God will never leave you. Thank Him for the sacrifice of His son in order to keep His promise. Trust in Him; rest in His steadfast love.

FRIDAY — God is—All of that and More!

Big Point: *From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea, creation reveals Your majesty! Indescribable, uncontainable, all-powerful, untamable—you are Amazing God!*

Wow, what a week! We hope that we provided a glimpse into who God is but even, alas, we know we did not do God justice. After a week like this, one can clearly understand why Chris Tomlin's song, "Indescribable" is so very popular and thought provoking. As we close out this week, take some time to read the lyrics to this song and answer a few more questions:

"From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea, creation's revealing your majesty. From the colors of fall to the fragrance of spring. Every creature unique in the song that it sings. All exclaiming...

Indescribable, uncontainable, you placed the stars in the sky and you know them by name. You are amazing God. All powerful, untamable, awestruck we fall to our knees and we humbly proclaim, You are amazing God.

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go, Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow? Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light, yet conceals it to give us the coolness of night?
None can fathom..."

You see the depths of my heart and You love me the same.
You are amazing God!

A low view of God is the cause of a hundred evils. A high view of God is the solution to 10,000 temporal problems.

A. W. Tozer, popular preacher and best selling author.

LIVE...What will you do now?

We encourage you to pick up the book, "What is God Really Like?" by Craig Groeschel that we have referenced throughout this entire Bible study. Each author respectively describes God as strong, here, incomparable, reconciler, certain, encouraging, for you, present, able, in control, merciful, close, big, not like me, more, and as our father. Take a moment and describe what you learned about God this week that you did not know before or that provided a reminder of who He is:

Ask yourself this question: When people think of you, do they describe you as powerful? If someone would describe you, is that a word they would use? Do you have that kind of confidence in your God? Are you that sure of what He's able to do through you? If not, explain why:

It's time to release your small view of God. Do you realize the strong, powerful and majestic God that we serve? It's time to stop being "wimpy, wimpy, wimpy" and start being "hefty, hefty, hefty." Describe two areas of your life where you will be the confident, bold, and strong individual that God has created you to be:

PRAY...God, What do you want me to know & do?

Thank God for revealing His majesty and His power. Thank and praise Him in advance for being strong and mighty in your life. Thank Him for being the person you know you can't be on your own!

Weekend Updates!

- **Did You Miss Commitment Day?** If you followed along with the Living it Out this past month, you likely completed all the work for Missional Membership. Did you follow through with making that final commitment? It's not too late. Simply go to cedarcreek.tv under the get connected tab and find Membership and complete the final steps of commitment. It's the Highest Level of Commitment at CedarCreek church.
- **Apprentice Conference Series:** Is your life reflective of the spirit of Jesus Christ - that is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? If not, are you interested in becoming that type of person? If so, The Apprentice Conference Series can help. On Thursday, March 1st from 6:30-9pm and Friday, March 2nd, 9-3pm at the Perrysburg Campus, nationally acclaimed Apprentice Series authors Jimmy Taylor and James Smith will be here to teach us how to develop Christ-Centered character, see God and find balance in our daily life, develop spiritual practices, and build community! The cost is only \$20.00 for both days and \$10.00 for one and includes the book and lunch (if you attend Friday). Childcare is available on Thursday only. Register at www.cedarcreek.tv under the "get connected" tab.
- **Interested in getting Baptized:** Baptisms will be held at New Community on Sunday, February 26 at 6pm at the West Toledo Campus. Attend one of the following Baptism classes: Sunday, Feb 12 and 10:45am and Feb 26 at 4pm at the West Toledo Campus ONLY. Then at ALL campuses on Sunday, Feb 19 at 10:45am.
- **Fabulous Conference:** Mark your calendars and register for Fabulous 2012 – this year's theme is "Fabulous.... It's Woman's Work!" The purpose of the Fabulous Conference is to inspire and encourage you to become the fabulous woman that God intends for you to be. This year's conference dates are Thursday, May 17 and Friday, May 18 at CedarCreek.tv Perrysburg Campus. Fabulous 2012 is open to all women (aged 16 and above) so invite your girlfriends for this event! Last year, 900 women participated in our first Fabulous Conference – it was amazing! This year's Fabulous Conference will be even better! Register now at cedarcreek.tv under the "get connected" tab.

Living It Out: February 2012

Revelation 1:8 (New Living Translation)

*“I am the **Alpha** and the **Omega**—the beginning and the end,” says the Lord God. “I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come —the **Almighty One**.”*

Living It Out

It is the dream of CedarCreek that everyone who calls this their church home will be reading and studying the same topics, both individually and in groups. Each week, join with thousands of others at CedarCreek Church in applying God’s Word, the Bible, into your daily life. Our hope is that while we learn and grow together, as individuals and as a church, we will collectively live out the weekend message.

Living It Out resources, such as the Daily Bible Study, Daily Bible Reading Plan, Discussion Questions and Scripture Memory Verses, are designed to help us embrace a missional mindset...a mindset that compels us to love Jesus, serve others and tell the world about Christ.

Living It Out: Daily Bible Study—Daily Bible study activities to reflect on the weekend message

Living It Out: Daily Bible Reading Plan—Read through the Bible in a year—Old and New Testament will alternate month to month

Living It Out: Discussion Questions...Weekly questions to discuss with others

Living It Out: Scripture Memory...Memorize one Bible verse per month

All of these resources are also available electronically at www.livingitout.tv, where you can subscribe to have any or all of them emailed to you as they are updated.

We Want Your Feedback!

Tell us about any questions or comments you have about this week’s Living It Out: Daily Bible Study. Forward them to dianap@cedarcreek.tv.

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RESOURCES:

“What is God Really Like”

By Craig Groeschel and several other authors

Living It Out: Daily Bible Reading Plan scriptures are listed for each day. By completing each of the daily readings, you will read the entire Bible in 1 year. These readings are separate from the Daily Bible Study and are located at www.livingout.tv.

This week’s Living It Out: Daily Bible Study written :
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