

Week 1
Home Page Summaries, Days 2-5

Day 2

God's Identity

Knowing God by Name

How do you verify someone's existence? You can hear about the person, then actually meet him or her, and then develop a relationship. But getting to a first-name basis with the person is when you discover who they really are. Deuteronomy 3:24 (p. xxx) reveals the name that shows how Moses identified God after 40 years of knowing him.

Day 3

My Identity

Like the Swallows of Capistrano

Migratory birds have an instinctive desire to move to a different climate zone at certain times of the year. They do it by nature; it is part of who they are. While man doesn't share that characteristic with the animal kingdom, he does instinctively long to reach one destination. Ecclesiastes 3:11 (p. xxx) demonstrates how that destination is evidence for the existence of God.

Day 4

Impact

Choosing God

For the uninformed, choosing a god to worship could be as confusing as venturing into a modern shopping mall. But are all "gods" really the same? Do they all actually exist? 1 Chronicles 16:25-27 (p. xxx) reveals clearly that there is only one true God, and that he is above all other "gods." His strength and peace are revealed to those who choose him.

Day 5

Implication

How Do You Say "Eureka"?

How we react when we find a lost object speaks volumes about the value we place on it. 2 Kings 5:15 (p. xxx) tells of a man in the Old Testament who was so grateful to find his health that he was willing to offer gifts of fantastic wealth out of gratitude. What is our response to discovering the existence of God? There is only one gratitude-gift that God is interested in receiving.

Week 1, Day 1
Romans 1:18-20
349 words

The Promise: God Exists
Excuse My Unbelief

Romans 1:18-20 “No excuses!” How many times in your life have those case-closing words rung in your ears—or proceeded from your mouth? While the words are often spoken by parents, teachers, coaches, or judges with a finality that sounds irrefutable, there is probably always room for argument in the realm of human experience. Were the instructions really clear? Did my child truly understand? Is the law really without loopholes? Sometimes in life there may be a valid excuse even in the face of “No excuses!”

However, there is one place where excuses are not valid: the court room where the existence of God is on trial. The Bible promises that God has made His existence crystal clear to every person who has ever lived. So clear, in fact, that “men are without excuse” (v. 19).

How can we be sure that God exists? First of all, because God has made it plain. If it is so plain, we wonder, why doesn’t everyone simply see the evidence and believe? Without proposing all of the theological and philosophical answers to that question (and there are some good ones), the problem at its simplest may be one of looking for the wrong thing; not being able to see the forest for the trees. Do you remember the Russian cosmonauts who boldly announced their intention to solve the problem of the existence of God? They would simply look around heaven and see if He was there! Upon returning to earth, they said, “We looked, and there was no God.” In Biblical terms, that’s like saying, “We saw no forest; all we saw were thousands of trees.” They were so focused on seeing a “being” that, in the midst of one of the most spectacular showcases of God’s mighty power, they were blind to the evidence of His existence.

If you ever question God’s existence, simply look around. A star-studded sky, the dimpled cheek of a newborn, the complex design of a flower, the life-giving rain and sunshine—all these and more paint a plain picture of His presence and His power in our world.

God’s Promise to You: “Even in your darkest moments, My presence and My power are plainly seen in what I have made.”

Week 1, Day 2
Deuteronomy 3:24
356 words

God's Identity Knowing God by Name

Deuteronomy 3:24 On your next visit to a large shopping mall, see if one of the busiest kiosks is not the one selling genealogical information: family histories, coats of arms, and the derivation of names. People are fascinated with discovering their “true” identities. “Were our ancestors really ‘bakers?’” the Baker family asks. “Are we descended from blacksmiths and metal workers?” the Smith children ask their parents. A name can tell a lot about who we are—or were.

God takes naming seriously as well. Not only did he name the parts of his original creation (Genesis 1:3-10), but he named the stars as well (Isaiah 40:26). And to Adam he gave the task of naming the animals (Genesis 2:20) and Adam's children (Genesis 4:1,2,26). God's own names were one of the most important indicators of his identity. Not only did God name himself at times (Exodus 3:14), he also received the names which his chosen people gave to him as they came to know him personally. One of those names was “Sovereign Lord.”

This compound name of God is beautiful in that it reveals the two attributes of God most cherished by Israel: God's personal approachability and his mighty rule. Think of a father in a home who tenderly lavishes affection on his children yet firmly acts as the authority. Or think of a shepherd who binds the wounds of his sheep, yet uses his rod to drive away the ravenous wolves. Affection, yet authority. Tenderness, yet strength. Servant leadership, yet sovereign lordship.

“Sovereign” to the Israelite meant master or ruler; the one over whom no one else had power or authority. “Lord” (*Yahweh*) was the name God gave the Israelites to use in their personal relationship with him. “Sovereign Lord” is the name of the God who tenderly saved his infant nation from slavery, and totally destroyed her enemy in the Red Sea. Moses truly knew God as “Sovereign Lord.”

Do you know God like Moses did—as Sovereign Lord? One of the reasons God exists is to reveal himself to you—to show you his true identity—as the God who loves and protects his children.

God's Promise to You: “I will always love you and protect you.”

Week 1, Day 3
Ecclesiastes 3:11
396 words

My Identity Like the Swallows of Capistrano

Ecclesiastes 3:11 San Juan Capistrano, a small city in southern California, is famous for the swallows that arrive and depart every year with predictable consistency. Around March 19 they can be expected to arrive, and around October 23 (the day that Saint John of Capistrano died in 1456), they can be expected to depart. “Like swallows returning to Capistrano” is a proverbial way to speak of that which is done by nature or by instinct.

Fortunately, we do not cycle between the northern and southern hemispheres on an annual basis! Indeed, we are distinguished from the animal kingdom by our ability to choose our destinations—where, when, and with whom we will go. The ability to choose reflects the image of our Creator God, and contributes significantly to an identity which sets apart from everything else that has life. However, there is one destination which all of the earth’s peoples seek instinctively—one yearning which makes us like the swallows of Capistrano—and that is our “instinctive” yearning for eternity.

Don Richardson, a modern missionary-anthropologist, has studied human cultures in the most remote parts of the world. His book, *Eternity In Their Hearts*, shows how people all over the world—from the Stone Age tribes in New Guinea to the sophisticated secularists of the West—demonstrate a yearning for God. They may not know the true God, but they know he exists. Why is this so? Because God has “set eternity in the hearts of men.” If there is no God, why do peoples of all cultures seek him? They seek him because he made them. As Capistrano is inscribed in the genetic material of a swallow, so eternity is written deeply in the souls of all people. A longing for God is the one part of a person’s identity which cannot be “turned off.” It can be denied, resisted, even cursed—but it cannot be removed.

If you long for heaven, it is because the God who made you is there. But he is also here, confirming that part of who we are is a seeker after him.

God’s Promise to You: “Your longing for eternity is evidence that I exist and that you are my unique creation.”

Week 1, Day 4
1 Chronicles 16:25-27
346 words

Impact Choosing God

1 Chronicles 16:25-27 In the modern coffee bar, it takes folding money and a knowledge of foreign languages and flavors to buy “a cup of coffee.” Do you prefer latte or cappuccino? Brazilian or Colombian? A shot of this or a shot of that? Many people who love coffee have steered clear of these modern caffeinated carnivals, *though they would love to try them!* Why? Choice often breeds passivity.

Some people laugh off the notion of one true God when they see the millions of gods created by human worshippers (the Hindu pantheon alone contains 300 million gods). “Why bother?” they reason. And yet the choices reveal another truth. When man creates a god—an idol to worship—he is saying, “This is what I need in a god. If I empower it with my worship, perhaps it will meet my need.” Of course, figures of wood or stone or metal cannot be animated by human attention or desire, and so the need goes unmet. But lurking in that religious exercise in futility is a profound truth: the human need to worship can only be fulfilled in a god worthy enough to be worshipped. And the only god worthy enough to be worshipped is the one who can meet every need of every worshipper in every place and at every time.

The prophet Isaiah showed that using the limited glory of man as a pattern for a god can only have disappointing results (Isaiah 30:22; 40:19; 44:13). All the gold, silver, chains, and jewels in the world can not animate a column of stone and make it worthy or worship. But the writer of Chronicles reminds us that the true God, the God who created heaven and earth, does exist and is worthy of our praise. He is to be revered above all other “gods,” for they are but idols.

In the marketplace, it’s easy to be confused by the multitudes of choices. It’s even possible to grow passive and procrastinate. But with God, there is only one. We should never be passive about choosing the one true God.

God’s Promise to You: “Unlike idols of stone, I always hear when you call on Me.”

Week 1, Day 5
2 Kings 5:15
362 words

Implication How Do You Say “Eureka”?

2 Kings 5:15 Archimedes, a Greek mathematician, engineer, and physicist, was trying to figure out how to measure the volume of an irregular solid object and thereby determine the purity of a gold object. When he finally arrived at the solution, he supposedly exclaimed, “Eureka!”—or, “I found it!” (in Greek, of course).

What do you do when you find something for which you have been looking? Two things can be measured by your response: the value of the object of your search, and the gratitude you feel upon its discovery. For instance, what happens if you find the paper clip you dropped in your office? You don’t shout, “Eureka!” and tell your co-workers. You clip the papers and move on. And if you can’t find it, you instantly replace it with another one. Conclusion? An individual paper clip has little value in the workplace. It is cheap to begin with, easily replaced, and not worth the cost of the search.

But some things in life are more valuable than paper clips; they have infinite, immeasurable value. A pagan man in the Old Testament named Naaman had lost something that had great value to him: his health. Naaman and his king agreed to spend a considerable sum on gifts (750 pounds of silver and 150 pounds of gold, among other things) for the person who could heal his leprosy. When he was healed by the prophet Elisha, Naaman concluded that the world’s only true God was the God of Israel. Based on his confession and what he was willing to pay to regain his health (though Elisha refused the gifts), it was obvious that Naaman had found something of great value. In truth, he found more than health—he found life in the God of Israel (2 Kings 5:17-18).

Perhaps like Naaman, you have found that the world’s only true God does exist—the God revealed in creation and Scripture. If you have, there is only one gift that can express the value of what you have found; and it is the only gift God will accept—the gift of a heart devoted to Him. That’s how you say “Eureka!” in the kingdom of God.

God’s Promise to You: “Your heart is the most precious gift you can give to me.”