



WHO IS GOD?

A study on what the Bible
teaches about God.

Written by Luke Humphrey for Redeemer Al Ain, April 2022
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Introduction

Why study who God is?

The question “*Who is God*” is the most important question that a person can ever ask. This is because the way that we answer this question will determine how we think about reality itself. A. W. Tozer shows this in the first pages of his book *The Knowledge of the Holy*:

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.¹

If this is true—that the most important thing about us is how we think about God—then we need to make sure that our thinking about God is *true thinking* and not wishful thinking. We should want to think *rightly* about God, which means we must ground our thinking in what God has revealed to us about himself. This means that we should study what God says about himself in his Word. The danger of failing to do so is severe, as J. I. Packer reminds us:

Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul.²

God's Word—the Bible—helps us to know who God is. It serves as our steady guide leading us to the knowledge of God. And so we answer the question, “Who is God?” by looking at what God has said about himself.

¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, 1

² J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 19.

A study on what the Bible teaches about God?

This booklet is a brief study on what the Bible teaches about God. It is far from exhaustive and comprehensive—after all we should spend our whole lives looking to what the Bible says about God. But it does try to give a deeper look into who God is by looking at what he says about himself in his Word.

There are eight study sessions on eight different aspects related to who God is. Each session looks at three different passages of Scripture related to a particular topic and tries to synthesize them—to bring them together—to better understand what the whole Bible teaches. The sessions are broken into three different parts:

1. **Read:** Scripture passages related to a particular aspect of who God is.
2. **Observe:** Make observations and summary statements for each passage.
3. **Discuss:** Questions for further study and discussion with a friend, Bible study, or class.

Below are the topics for each study session:

Session 1: **The Holiness of God**

Session 5: **The Power of God**

Session 2: **The Goodness of God**

Session 6: **God the Father**

Session 3: **The Providence of God**

Session 7: **God the Son**

Session 4: **The Knowledge of God**

Session 8: **God the Spirit**

It is our hope that through this study God's people will think about and worship God *in truth*.

Session 1: The Holiness of God

Holiness:

God's holiness means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor.³

Read: Isaiah 6:1–7

1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2** Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. **3** And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" **4** And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. **5** And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" **6** Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. **7** And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **holiness**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 201

Read: Isaiah 57:15–16

15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. **16** For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life that I made.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **holiness**.

Observe out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: 1 Peter 1:14–19

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, **15** but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, **16** since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am

holy." **17** And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, **18** knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **holiness**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss:

1. What does it mean for God to be holy?
2. According to these three passages, how does God's holiness affect the way that he relates to human beings?
3. How should human beings respond to God's holiness? What makes the difference in how we respond?
4. In Isaiah 6, how does God respond to Isaiah? What does this teach us about the character of God?
5. In 1 Peter 1, how are we able to be holy as God is holy? What needs to happen first? How does this relate to Isaiah 6 and Isaiah 57?
6. In what ways does the holiness of God comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

Session 2: **The Goodness of God**

Goodness

The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.⁴

Read: Psalm 100:1–5

- 1** Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!
- 2** Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!
- 3** Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4** Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!
- 5** For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **goodness**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 197.

Read: Psalm 106:1-3

- 1** Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!
- 2** Who can utter the mighty deeds of the LORD, or declare all his praise?
- 3** Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **goodness**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Matthew 7:7-11

- 7** Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. **9** Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? **11** If you then, who are

evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **goodness**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss:

1. What does it mean to **be** good? What does it mean to **do** good?
2. What is the standard for goodness? How do we know whether something is good or not?
3. What other characteristics are linked with God's goodness in Psalm 100? How do these relate to goodness?
4. How does God's goodness compare with man's goodness in Matthew 7?
5. Why is it important to understand God's goodness as it relates to his other attributes (holiness, sovereignty, knowledge, power, etc.)?
6. In what ways does the goodness of God comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

Session 3: The Providence of God

Providence

The act of purposefully providing for, or sustaining and governing, the world.⁵

Read: Isaiah 45:5-9

5 I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, **6** that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. **7** I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things. **8** "Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the LORD have created it. **9** "Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'?"

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **activity in the world**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

⁵ John Piper, *Providence*, 30.

Read: Romans 8:28–30

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. **29** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **activity in the world**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Philippians 2:12–13

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **activity in the world**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss:

1. The Heidelberg Catechism defines God's providence below:

*The almighty, everywhere-present power of God, whereby, as it were by his hand, He still upholds heaven and earth with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.*⁶

How do the passages above confirm or challenge this definition?

2. In the passages above, what activities do we see God doing in the world?
3. How is God's providence connected to God's authority in Isaiah 45?
4. How does Romans 8 show us the good news of God's providence?
5. How does God's activity relate to our activity in Philippians 2? Whose activity is ultimate or decisive?
6. In what ways does the providence of God comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

⁶ Cited in John Piper, *Providence*, 33.

Session 4: The Knowledge of God

Knowledge:

Information, understanding, or awareness.

Read: Psalm 139:1–16

- 1** O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
- 2** You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.
- 3** You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4** Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
- 5** You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
- 6** Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.
- 7** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?
- 8** If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
- 9** If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 10** even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.
- 11** If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"
- 12** even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.
- 13** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
- 14** I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.
- 15** My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **knowledge**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Jeremiah 17:9–10

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? **10** "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **knowledge**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Matthew 6:5–8

5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **6** But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **7** “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **knowledge**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss:

1. What are the things that God knows in these passages? What does this say about the scope of God's knowledge?
2. How does God's knowledge relate to God's presence in Psalm 139? What does this tell us about the knowledge of God?
3. What does the psalmist think about God's knowledge in Psalm 139? How would you describe the way that he thinks or feels about it?
4. What is the difference between human knowledge and man's knowledge in Jeremiah 17? How should this inform where we place our trust?
5. Why would you say God's knowledge is a *good thing* for Christians?
6. In what ways does the knowledge of God comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

Session 5: The Power of God

Power:

The ability to do something or act in a particular way.⁷

Read: Jeremiah 32:17–19

17 'Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. **18** You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts, **19** great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **power**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

⁷ New Oxford American Dictionary

Read: Psalm 115:3-9

- 3** Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.
4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.
5 They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.
6 They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell.
7 They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat.
8 Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.
9 O Israel, trust in the LORD! He is their help and their shield.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **power**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Matthew 19:23-26

23 And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. **24** Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." **25** When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" **26** But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to God's **power**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss

1. How would you describe the power of God from the passages above?
2. What does it mean that "God does all that he pleases" (Ps. 115:3)? How does this set him apart from other "gods"?
3. How does God's power relate to the other attributes of God that we have seen so far?
4. According to these three passages, how does God *use* his power? What does he do with his power?
5. How is God's power displayed in the salvation of human beings?
6. In what ways does the power of God comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

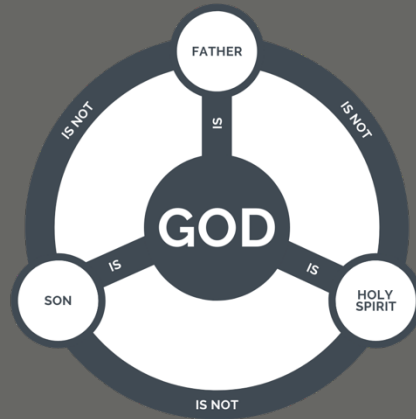
Explainer: The Trinity

The Bible teaches that there is one God who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. This is what Christians call *the Trinity*. Wayne Grudem writes:

*The word trinity is never found in the Bible, **though the idea represented by the word is taught in many places.** The word trinity means "tri-unity" or "three-in-oneness." It is used to summarize the teaching of Scripture that God is three persons yet one God.*⁸

In the Scriptures we clearly see that there is only one God who rules over all things (Deut. 6:4–5, Isaiah 45:22). And yet the Bible also teaches that there are three persons who are authoritative and worthy of worship—worship which the Bible clearly reserves for God (Matt. 28:19–20, Phil. 2:9–11).

These three persons are distinct from one another and yet they share in the same essence, which is shown in the diagram below.



To finish this study we are going to be looking at who God is as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 226.

Session 6: **God the Father**

Read: Ephesians 1:3–6

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Father**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: 1 Peter 1:3–5

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **5** who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Father**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Romans 8:28–32

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. **29** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Father**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss:

1. How would you summarize the work of God the Father from these passages? What things does the Father uniquely do?
2. In Ephesians 1 and Romans 8 we see that the Father *predestines* us to become Christians. What does this mean? How does this relate to God's other work in the world?
3. What does it mean that God the Father adopts us as sons (Ephesians 1:5)? How does this happen?
4. What does it mean that God the Father causes us to be born again to a living hope (1 Peter 1:3)?
5. In the passages above, how does God the Father grant us assurance of our future inheritance?
6. In what ways does what the Bible teaches about God the Father comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

Session 7: **God the Son**

Read: Hebrews 1:1–4

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Son**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—**13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. **16** And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. **17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. **20** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, **21** so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Son**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Ephesians 2:13–18

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility **15** by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, **16** and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. **17** And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. **18** For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Son**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss:

1. How would you summarize the work of God the Son (Jesus) from these passages? What things does Jesus uniquely do?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is the "radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Hebrews 1:3)?
3. What does it mean that Jesus made "purification for sins" (Hebrews 1:3)? Where do we see this taught Romans 5 and Ephesians 2?
4. According to Romans 5, why is it important that God the Son became a man?
5. According to Ephesians 2, How does God the Son bring us into relationship with God the Father?
6. In what ways does what the Bible teaches about God the Son comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

Session 8: **God the Spirit**

Read: 2 Peter 1:19–21

19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, **20** knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. **21** For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Spirit**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Romans 8:12–17

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" **16** The

Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Spirit**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Read: Galatians 5:16–26

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17** For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. **18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **19** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **21** envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live

by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Observe:

Write out your observations that stand out to you in this text, especially as it relates to **God the Spirit**.

Write out a one-sentence main point of the passage above.

Discuss:

1. How would you summarize the work of God the Spirit from these passages? What things does the Holy Spirit uniquely do?
2. According to 2 Peter 1, how does the Holy Spirit relate to the Bible?
3. What does it mean that we receive the "Spirit of adoption" (Romans 8:15)? How does this happen?
4. According to these three passages, how does the presence of the Holy Spirit affect the way that we live our lives?
5. What does it mean in Romans 8 and Galatians 5 when it says "live according to the flesh" and the "desires of the flesh"? How does this connect with the work of the Holy Spirit?
6. In what ways does what the Bible teaches about God the Spirit comfort, convict, or challenge you in the way that you live your life?

