

# **Bible Studies for Life for July 5: Getting to know the Father**

June 23, 2009

A favorite hymn of many is “Holy, Holy, Holy.” At the end of the first stanza, worshippers sing, “God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.” How can God be three persons in one, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? The study theme for the month of July explores the Trinity and its implications for Christian living. One of the foundations of the Christian faith is the truth of one God who exists as three persons.

The first lesson focuses on three questions about the heavenly Father: how we are able to know him, what he is like and what he desires for us.

## **How can we know the Father? (Exodus 33:18-23)**

When my 9-year-old son Ashton was younger, he would take my hand when we were walking anywhere he did not feel comfortable with his surroundings. We could be walking in a mall, and as we approached a large group of people, he would grab my hand. I never asked him to take my hand, he just did it. He wanted to know that I was with him in case he needed me.

Just like my son wanted to feel my presence, Moses wanted the assurance the heavenly Father was with him as well. As Moses was leading the Israelites, he implored God, “Now show me your glory” (Exodus 33:18).

What is God’s glory? It is the way God in his character and nature relates to his creation. God’s glory is seen as one experiences his mercy, grace, compassion, faithfulness, forgiveness and justice. God is seen through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

God answers Moses' request by saying: "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But, he said, 'you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live'" (Exodus 22:19-20).

God allowed Moses to see his glory but with restrictions. Our sinful nature keeps us from seeing God as he is.

God provided a way for Moses to see his glory and not be killed (Exodus 33:21-22). "Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen" (Exodus 33:23).

To see the back of God means we can only see where God has passed by. Man can only know God personally by what he does and how he acts. God is known by what he graciously chooses to reveal to us. He has chosen to send his son Jesus Christ to die for our sins so that we can experience him.

There always is more of God to know and experience. So, believers must continue to develop their personal relationships with Jesus so they can know God better.

### **What's the heavenly Father like? (Exodus 34:5-8)**

East Texas Baptist University has a new president. Dr. Dub Oliver began his tenure on June 1, 2009. Since I work at ETBU, I have been asked by some in the community, "What is Dr. Oliver like?" My response to them is that he is a very personable, easy to like, kind of individual. I have discovered this through personal interaction with Dr. Oliver.

If someone were to ask you, "What is the heavenly Father like?" how would you respond? Going to the Bible and examining how God reacted to the sinful Israelites, we can find an answer to our question. Following the experience of the golden calf, God began the restoration of the broken

covenant.

God describes to Moses what he is like as he passes him by. “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6-7).

God hates sin. But the good news is God is willing to forgive our sin when we repent. When we have experienced God because of his mercy, grace and forgiveness, there is only one proper response. “Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped” (Exodus 34:8). Worship is the correct response.

### **What does God the Father desire for us? (Micah 6:6-8; John 4:21-24)**

What does it take to please God? In Micah 6:6-7, we learn that people have tried many different ways to please God. Don't we do the same? We think if we attend three out of four worship services, we are good with God. If we just put something in the offering plate, God will be pleased.

The prophet explains, “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

“To act justly” means we must be honest and fair in our dealings with others. “To love mercy” means we love others the way God has loved us. To “walk humbly” with God means to walk modestly, yielding our will and our ways to his will and ways. God does not want our material things; he wants our hearts to be freely devoted to him.

Jesus said in John 4:23-24: “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his

worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Just going through the motions of worship, Bible study and prayer will not please God. Right attitudes and right living must accompany worship and service.

Getting to know the Father is accomplished by experiencing his nature in your personal life and understanding that his desire for you is to know him.