

Introducing Our Faith: The Living God

Worksheet for Week 8

The Nature of God

This week, we turn back to questions of God's nature. In this worksheet, we will take a peek at a few of the classical writings about God and meet a few great theologians and Christians along the way. This worksheet will also provide you with a structured set of daily Bible readings on the nature of God.

Gregory of Nazianzus on the Gradual Revelation of the Trinity

In the fourth century AD, Arius, a prominent Christian from Alexandria, began to teach that Jesus was not the eternal God. Gregory of Nazianzus was one of three theologians from the province of Cappadocia (in modern-day Turkey) who led the fight against Arianism. In this passage, written late in his life, Gregory reflects on the Trinity.

The Old Testament preached the Father openly and the Son more obscurely. The New Testament revealed the Son, and hinted at the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Now the Spirit dwells in us, and is revealed more clearly to us. It was not proper to preach the son openly, while the divinity of the Father had not yet been admitted. Nor was it proper to accept the Holy Spirit before [the divinity of] the Son had been acknowledged . . . Instead, by gradual advances and . . . partial ascents, we should move forward and increase in clarity, so that the light of the Trinity should shine.

Georgia Harkness on the Personal God

Georgia Harkness (1891-1979) was a pioneering woman theologian in the twentieth century and an important advocate for the ordination of women in the Methodist Church. Here, she writes on the personal God.

Though the Bible does not use the philosophical term "personal God," its assumption throughout is that God is personal. The God who not only creates but loves, rebukes, judges, redeems, delivers, guides, guards, and sustains His people; the God who sorrows for their sins and in mercy offers salvation; the God who is the basis of the Christian's faith and hope and love is meaningless unless conceived in personal terms. The Bible does not argue this position; it assumes it, for the Bible is not written as speculative philosophy but as the record of living religion. On this assumption the entire structure of the great drama of creation, judgment, and redemption rests.

C.S. Lewis on God the Creator

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) was an Oxford Don and a professor in medieval literature. He was an ardent defender of the faith and an extraordinarily gifted communicator.

Pantheists usually believe that . . . the universe almost is God, so that if it did not exist he would not exist either, and anything you find in the universe is a part of God . . . But, of course, if you think some things really bad, and God really good, then you cannot talk like that. You must believe that God is separate from the world and that some of the things we see in it are contrary to His will. . . . For Christianity is a fighting religion. It thinks God made all the world - that space and time, heat and cold, and all the colors and tastes, and all the animals and vegetables, are things God "made up out of his head" as a man makes up a story. But it also thinks that a great many things have gone wrong with the world that God made and that God insists very loudly, on our putting them right again.

Augustine on God's Touch

Augustine, one of the giants of the faith, lived about 1600 years ago. His theological writings have been an enormous influence on the church. Here, taken from his *Confessions*, he reflects on his own experience of the Living God.

Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new; late have I loved you . . . You were with me, and I was not with you. The lovely things kept me from you. You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. . . . You touched me and I am on fire to attain the peace which is yours.

Bible Readings for Week 8

This week, all the Bible passages are from the Psalms. I suggest you read them slowly, prayerfully contemplating the wonder of God and his boundless love.

<p>Day 1 Psalm 8 Praise to the Creator</p>	<p>Day 2 Psalm 23 A psalm of trust in the Good Shepherd</p>
<p>Day 3 Psalm 67 Seeking God's blessings in all creation</p>	<p>Day 4 Psalm 111 A celebration of God's faithfulness</p>
<p>Day 5 Psalm 145 Great is God's Kingdom!</p>	<p>Weekly Prayer Concerns</p>