



GOD VIEWS

Review

INTRODUCTION

Session Topic

- 1 Finding A God Who Is Big Enough
- 2 Bony Shoulders

Potential Stumbling Block

Putting the head of an earthly parent on the shoulders of God

Being overly focused on our flaws and faults

NEGATIVE VIEWS OF GOD

Session Topic

- 3 Cosmic Sheriff
- 4 You Rang My God Bell?
- 5 Grand Old Man in the Sky
- 6 Party Host
- 7 Manic Mechanic
- 8 God-in-a-Box

Potential Stumbling Block

Exaggerating a truth in Scripture until it turns into heresy

Accepting the personal payoff (what is in it for us) in maintaining a false view

Being influenced by false philosophies

Attempting to ignore—instead of resist and conquer—the world, flesh, and devil

Trying too hard to be perfect

Wanting to confine God

POSITIVE VIEWS OF GOD

Session Topic

- 9 Return of the Prodigal
- 10 Bubba: On the Nature of God
- 11 God With Skin On
- 12 Twenty-four-hours-a-day live-in-counselor, or How to become an alien

Potential Stepping Stone

Accepting Love Beyond Reason

Hanging out with a God who loves to forgive us, adopt us, and lets us ride shotgun

Appreciating the ultimate

Saying “yes” to the Holy Spirit—now things really get exciting

SESSION
TWELVE:

TWENTY-FOUR-
HOURS-A-DAY
LIVE-IN COUN-
SELOR, OR
HOW TO
BECOME AN
ALIEN

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Discerning God's Voice

The following are some suggestions for practical discernment, that is, indications that we have heard from God through the Holy Spirit. Each is listed as a question.²

1

Does it sound like God?

Does it sound like something God would say? Is it consistent with God as you know Him through Scripture?

2

Is the nature of the approach consistent with the nature of God?

Does it sound more like the quiet, compassionate voice of a shepherd or the loud, urgent voice of cattle driver? Was the communication invited, or did it make an illegal entrance into your heart?

3

Does it sound like Jesus Christ?

Does it sound like something Jesus would say? Is it consistent with Jesus as you have encountered him in the pages of the Bible? Is the theme one of mercy and grace?

4

Does it harmonize with Scripture?

Was the communication in line with consistent scriptural principles? (Keep in mind, even Satan can proof text—as is demonstrated in the temptation of Christ. See Luke 4:1-13.)

5

Does it motivate you to love God and others more deeply?

See James 4:8.

6

Does it help you to be conformed to the image of Christ?

See 2 Corinthians 3:18.

² A debt of gratitude is owed here to lectures given by Peter Lord and Marty Goehring.



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7

Is it consistent with the development of the fruit of the Spirit in your life or the lives of others?

See Galatians 5:22.

8

If a suggestion for an improvement in your own life is made, did it feel more like specific correction or broad and general condemnation?

The Spirit counsels and corrects. The enemy of your soul condemns.

9

How relevant was the content?

Did the communication offer simple, practical advice concerning the here and now, or was it complicated, confused, and impractical?

10

How did you feel after the communication?

As a rule, God's voice brings you encouragement, hope, faith, peace, and a deep sense of being understood. The exception to this rule occurs when you are specifically being asked to face something about your relationship with Him that is painful. As a colleague likes to say, most of the time, if we are facing pain in our relationship with God, it is because we are in a process of growth related to the surrender of control of an area of our life.



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Bible Study

READ GALATIANS 5:16-25.

¹⁶So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ¹⁷For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

■ Activity

Instead of considering a list of questions, please read this passage several times, slowly, meditatively. If you feel so prompted, do a fearless moral inventory. Consider the past several weeks (or months) of your life and determine which (if any) of the “weeds” of the flesh have been found growing from your life (deed or thought). Then consider Paul’s list of the fruit of the Spirit. Ask yourself which of these have been found ripe and mature in your life. Call to mind specific examples. Then ask God to become an even more active gardener of your soul. Be aware of any hesitation in offering Him an invitation to uproot any “weeds” or nurture the “fruit” of His Spirit.

Note: If this activity is particularly difficult for you, it might be advisable to contact a trusted friend or minister for prayer and support.

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Transparency

Session Outline

I. INTRODUCTION



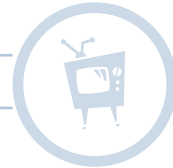
- Welcome
- Prayer

II. WARM-UP



- Exercise
- Retelling of the Lesson Synopsis
- Question/Discussion

III. CONTENT



- Video Vignette
- Class Response
- Discussion/ Exercise

IV. BIBLE STUDY



- Small Groups or All Together

V. SUMMARY



- Review

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