



## 01. SEEING GOD CLEARLY

### HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

#### GOAL:

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students go deeper into checking our assumptions about God against Scripture.* It's critical to make sure that what we believe about God is actually true. Students will study Bible passages that will help them discover why our view of God so easily gets distorted and how to fix it. While we can never fully understand God while we're on this earth, we can seek to know more and more of him.
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students important truths about who God is.* That is why the Small Group Leader Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Small Group Leader Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
  - *a simple puzzle, about 50 pieces (adjust the number of pieces based on group size or, for a very large group, break into smaller groups and each group gets its own puzzle)*

#### TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your DNow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED: Small Group Leader Guide or Student Book

This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

| Lesson Elements<br>(and brief description)  | Included in Small<br>Group Leader Guide | Included in<br>Student Book | Approximate<br>Timeframe |
|---|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW<br/>W/OPENING QUESTIONS</b><br>Recap the teaching. Get discussion going by sharing answers from the end of the Large Group Talk. | ✓                                       | ✓                           | 3–5 minutes              |
| <b>A SECOND LOOK</b><br>A look at seeing clearly in current, everyday life—followed by discussion questions.  | ✓                                       | ✓                           | 10–15 minutes            |
| <b>A LITTLE DEEPER</b><br>Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.                     | ✓                                       | ✓                           | 10–15 minutes            |
| <b>LIVE IT OUT</b><br>An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson—followed by discussion questions.                      | ✓                                       |                             | 15–20 minutes            |
| <b>APPLY IT</b><br>A practical application for students to do this week.  | ✓                                       | ✓                           | 2–3 minutes              |
| <b>STUDENT DEVOTIONAL</b><br>A short devotional for students to do on their own.  |   | ✓                           |                          |

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## SMALL GROUP SESSION ONE: SEEING GOD CLEARLY

### THE FIRST MEETING

*Since this is the first small group meeting for this event, take the time to lay the foundation for the whole event.*

- *If your students don't know each other, cover introductions and consider an icebreaker (see [leadertreks.org/freebies](http://leadertreks.org/freebies) for several icebreaker and team-building activities).*
- *Make sure to cover the schedule and ground rules for the event, especially if you are staying at a host home.*
- *Tell students why you are here. You are probably sacrificing some time and comfort to be a small group leader and, chances are, it's worth it! Let students know why you care so much about them and why you want to invest in them to help them grow. Tell students why you think they're great and why it's worth it for you to be a small group leader this weekend!*

### LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW

Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group Talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 4** of the Student Book (see below). Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.

**Question 1:** If you were creating a social media profile for God, what character traits, interests, and favorite quotes would you use in the bio? Bonus: Where did you get this info about God (e.g., Scripture, songs, common knowledge, etc.)?

**Question 2:** How does knowing we are God's image-bearers affect the view you have of yourself and of others around you?

### A SECOND LOOK

*Read this story together and answer the following questions, found on **page 6** of the Student Book.*

Imagine you're watching TV, and a preacher is on saying something like, "God wants you to be happy! He blesses those who have the faith to believe! No matter your illness or trouble, God will shower you with blessing if you just have enough faith!" These are key teachings of the Prosperity Gospel—believe hard enough and life will be a breeze. This might sound good and seem true, but is it actually? Joyce Meyer, who is well-known for writing and speaking about the Prosperity Gospel, recently commented, "There's nowhere in the Bible where we're promised that we'll never have any trouble. I don't care how much faith you've got, you're not gonna avoid ever having trouble in your life."<sup>1</sup> Meyer took a step back from the assumptions she'd made about God and his character and filtered the message through the truth of Scripture.

#### Discuss:

- Why is it important to cross-check ideas or assumptions about God with the Bible?
- How well do you currently filter what you hear about God through Scripture?
- What are some assumptions you have held or currently hold about God, and how does that affect the way you feel about him?
- How does the way you currently view God affect the way you view yourself?

## A LITTLE DEEPER

We know how important it is to have a clear view of God through the Scriptures. Now, let's look at why our view of God is naturally distorted or incomplete and how to fix it.

**Read each Bible passage and answer the questions, found in the Student Book on pages 7 and 8:**

### 1 CORINTHIANS 13:11–12

"When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."

**Background Note:** Paul is writing to the Corinthian church to address issues of division, leadership, and genuine Christian love. They were not seeing things clearly. God knows our limitations as humans—we aren't perfect, nor do we live in a perfect world. Until we're made perfect in heaven, we will always be prone to having a distorted view of God.

#### Discuss:

- What are some examples of childish behavior?
- Spiritually speaking, in what ways are we childish, and how do we "grow up"?
- What are our limitations as humans, and how will that change when we are in heaven?

### MATTHEW 13:15

"For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them."

**Background Note:** Jesus is referencing Isaiah 6 in this passage, describing how God's people stopped seeking God and looked to other religions instead. They were so caught up in idolatry that it eventually landed them in exile and captivity. The people Jesus was talking to were just as bad as the Israelites—they were not seeing God clearly. Sometimes our unbelieving hearts get in the way of really knowing who God is. Our hearts need healing, and the only way to be healed is through Christ. When you know your need and see the ability of God to heal you, you only have to ask sincerely, believing that Christ can heal your heart.

#### Discuss:

- How would you describe your heart when it comes to spiritual things? Dull or full of understanding, and why?
- How does your heart get in the way when it comes to viewing God clearly?

### 2 CORINTHIANS 3:16–18A

"But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."

**Background Note:** In Exodus, after Moses went to Mount Sinai to speak with God, his face shined bright with God's glory. Because the people had hardened hearts, Moses would wear a veil over his face so they couldn't see the glory. But each time Moses went back to talk with God, he would remove the veil. Without it, he was able to see God clearly. It's a wonderful truth that God does not leave us to our own devices as we try to figure him out. When we turn to him in faith and repentance, he helps us see him clearly through the Scriptures and bit by bit makes us more like Christ!

**Discuss:**

- What do you think it means that "the veil is removed"?
- How does the glory of God change us?
- What image are we being transformed into, and how does this encourage you?

**LIVE IT OUT: A Puzzling Experience**

**What you'll need:** a simple puzzle, about 50 pieces (adjust the number of pieces based on group size or, for a very large group, break into smaller groups and each group gets its own puzzle)

**Say Something Like:** As we've discovered, knowing God clearly and fully takes time and patience. We can't see or understand God completely right now (not until heaven!), and that's ok. What's important is that we do our best to understand who God is based on Scripture instead of assuming wrong things based on what we've heard or experienced.

**Instructions:**

1. Before the activity, take out a handful of puzzle pieces to make sure students don't know they're missing.
2. Spread the puzzle out on a table and let the students piece it together as a team without showing them the box cover (so they don't know what the end picture should be).
3. **Say something like:** The journey to understanding God throughout your life is like a puzzle. All the pieces will fit together and slowly make more sense as you complete more of the picture.
4. Let them work for several minutes, and when they realize they may be missing pieces, give them the hidden ones. **Say something like:** We won't know the full picture of who God is until we get to heaven, but when we get there, we will see his full glory and be able to complete the "picture" of God.
5. Allow them a few more minutes to finish the puzzle.

**Debrief:**

- How easy was it to complete a picture when you didn't know the end goal? Did you find yourself trying to guess the end result?
- Why do you think God doesn't reveal his full self to us while we're still here on earth?
- Just like you tried to fill in the gaps of the puzzle with what you thought it should look like, we sometimes assume things about God. How can you prevent yourself from making assumptions about God?

**APPLY IT**

What is one thing you're going to commit to this week to get a clearer picture of who God is?

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

**Leader's Note:** Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**Schedule:** Let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

**Student Devotional:** The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Remember to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 35**.

<sup>1</sup>Russell S. Woodbridge, "Prayer Request: More Negative Prosperity-Gospel Stories," *The Gospel Coalition*, May 31, 2019, accessed September 1, 2019, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/pray-negative-prosperity-gospel-stories/>.