

CampusDei Bible study Doctrine of God.

Week 1: The Existence and Knowability of God

Scripture Readings:

- **Psalm 19:1-4** "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun."
- **Romans 1:18-20** "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."
- **Acts 17:24-28** "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'"

Key Topics:

1. **Introduction to Theology Proper**
 - Definition: Theology proper is the study of the nature and attributes of God.
 - Significance: It forms the foundation of our understanding of who God is and how we relate to Him.
2. **The Existence of God**
 - Biblical Evidence: Scriptures affirm the existence of God through creation and revelation.
 - Classical Arguments:
 - **Cosmological Argument:** Everything that begins to exist has a cause; the universe began to exist; therefore, the universe has a cause (God).
 - **Teleological Argument:** The design and order of the universe imply a Designer.
 - **Moral Argument:** Objective moral values exist and are best explained by the existence of a moral lawgiver (God).
 - **Ontological Argument:** The concept of a maximally great being (God) implies that such a being exists in reality.

3. The Knowability of God

- **General Revelation:** Knowledge of God available to all people through nature, history, and human conscience.
- **Special Revelation:** Knowledge of God given through Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does creation reveal the existence of God?

- **Answer:** Creation reveals God's existence through the beauty, complexity, and order of the natural world. Psalm 19:1-4 and Romans 1:20 highlight that the heavens and the created world declare God's glory and make His eternal power and divine nature evident to all.

2. What are the limitations of human understanding in knowing God?

- **Answer:** Human understanding is limited by our finite nature and sinfulness. We can know God truly but not exhaustively. General revelation provides a basic knowledge of God's existence and attributes, while special revelation gives a fuller, clearer understanding of His nature and will, yet there are mysteries about God that our finite minds cannot fully comprehend.

3. How do general and special revelations complement each other?

- **Answer:** General revelation provides a universal testimony to God's existence and power, accessible to all people. Special revelation, however, provides specific truths about God's nature, character, and redemptive plan through Scripture and Jesus Christ. Together, they offer a comprehensive understanding of God, where general revelation points people towards God and special revelation provides the details necessary for salvation and a deeper relationship with Him.

Activities:

1. Group Discussion on Personal Experiences of Encountering God Through Creation:

- Share moments when nature or circumstances in life revealed something about God's character or presence. Reflect on how these experiences enhanced your understanding of God.

2. Reflective Journaling on Moments of Revelation in One's Spiritual Journey:

- Write about specific times when God made His presence known to you in a unique or powerful way. Consider how these moments impacted your faith and knowledge of God.

Homework:

1. Reflect on how God's existence is evident in your daily life:

- Write a paragraph or two describing how you see evidence of God's existence in your everyday experiences. Consider the natural world, relationships, and personal moments of insight or answered prayer.
2. **Prepare to share a testimony of how you have experienced God's revelation:**
- Reflect on a particular instance where you felt God revealed something significant to you. Be ready to share this testimony with the group next week, focusing on how this revelation affected your understanding of God and your relationship with Him.