



There are three things regarding the nature of God the Father that are necessary to be known and understood: God's authority, his nature as the ultimate source of all things, and his plan for salvation, are essential to who we understand him to be. God is not partially in charge, he is 100% in charge and nothing is chaotic to him. God is the source of all creation and all things, nothing was before him, and he is forever. Looking into Genesis 3 and the first sacrifice made to cover mankind's shame is the first allusion to Christ's impending sacrifice. From this we know God the Father had redemption in mind before sin came into the picture.

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## DISCUSSION #1: God The Father's Authority

There are three things regarding the nature of God the Father that are necessary to be known and understood: God's authority, his nature as the ultimate source, and his plan for salvation are essential to who we understand him to be. God is not partially in charge, he is 100% in charge and nothing is chaotic to him. God is the source of all creation and all things, nothing was before him and he is forever. Looking into Genesis 3 and the first sacrifice made to cover mankind's shame is the first allusion to Christ's impending sacrifice. From this we know God the Father had redemption in mind before sin came into the picture.

This week's discussion will tackle God's ultimate and full authority.

### MY STORY | Starting Place

What has your experience been with trusting others who are put in charge of something that impacts you? Did the trust come easy, or ensue a certain level of anxiety?

### DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'* Genesis 2:15-17

What observations can you make about God's authority based on these verses?

What does God's command to Adam and Eve imply about his nature in comparison to them?

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.* John 1:1-2

In this passage, John's point of focus is the Word incarnate. However, he cannot begin to talk about Jesus without also talking about God the Father.

What does this tell us about God's pre-existence and authority? If Jesus has the level of authority John goes on to explain in John 1, why is it significant that John mentions the Father as well?

Take the next few minutes to read Matthew 22:23-33.

What do you think of Jesus' response to the Sadducees? Why do you think he says, "...you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?"

If the Sadducees had properly understood God's authority, do you think they would have asked Jesus the same question about resurrection?

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

What are some pivotal moments in your life in which you realized, or came to believe more fully, in the authority of God? Take some time to share your stories.

How is seeing the authority of God in God the Father different than simply believing in the sovereignty of God?

## **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Is there an area in your life with which you struggle to trust God? Find that spot in your life and reevaluate how believing in God's complete and full authority would impact that area.

## DISCUSSION #2: God the Father as Source

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This week's discussion will unpack how God the Father is the ultimate source and mastermind of all things.

### **MY STORY | Starting Place**

If a stranger were to approach you out of the blue and ask you how the world came to be, how would you answer that question on the spot?

### **DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application**

*God said to Moses, 'I AM who I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.' God also said to Moses, 'Say this to the people of Israel: The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.'* Exodus 3:14-15

How have you understood this "I AM" statement up to this point? What does it mean for God to say, "I AM?"

"*This is my name forever...*" What does "forever" mean? When you read that, do you think God is establishing his name from that moment forward, or does it imply that he has always been and will always be? What do you think the Scripture implies about that? What is the difference?

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* Genesis 1:1

After reading this verse, answer the following question: what was in the beginning? In other words, what was before anything else?

All of creation happens after this verse. What does that make clear about God's role in creation? Could creation "be" without him? Explain.

Is there anything that exists that came to be without him? Explain.

### **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

What is the most outstanding thing about creation to you? Have you had an encounter with or realization about creation that blew your mind, and increased your awe and wonder of God? Take a few moments to share.

### **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Take some time to worship God as though he truly were the mastermind of all things. What would it look like for your worship of him this week to be particularly impacted by this reality?

Take the time necessary to prepare your heart and mind through intentional meditation and prayer in order to engage this reality in your relationship with God, particularly through worship.



# DISCUSSION #3: The Father in Salvation

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This week's discussion will cover God (in perfect Triune unity) as the mastermind and primary mover of salvation.

## **MY STORY | Starting Place**

When you first heard the Gospel, or the salvation message, how was it pitched to you? What was it that made you say, "Yes, I need the work of Jesus Christ in my life!"?

## **DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application**

*And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.* Genesis 3:21

Without being given context or any background for this verse, what would you say the significance of it is?

To whose story does this verse contribute most? Is it Adam and Eve's story? Or a larger one concerning all of humanity?

What had to happen in order for "garments of skins" to be made for them? Where did God get those skins?

Gen. 3:21 is the first instance in Scripture of death, and this death becomes necessary in order for Adam and Eve to be covered for their impending exile. This informs our understanding that God knew what the consequences of sin would require before the choice was originally made.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* John 3:16

Here we are, the verse many people know by heart even before it's spoken. But let's think about it in the context of John's Gospel as a whole. John begins his Gospel with the beginning, who Jesus is because of who he was at the beginning. Now, in chapter 3, this is Jesus' declaration of himself as the Son of God. This is who Jesus has been from the beginning, the one who would be given to save mankind from perishment.

With this context in mind, how does that impact your view of the love of God? Have you ever heard before that the Father had a salvation plan before it was even needed?

What thoughts and/or feelings does that elicit in you?

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

Up to this point, what has your impression been of when and how God responded to the problem of sin? Take a few moments to share your backgrounds.

## **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Imagine talking with someone who is in a state of serious spiritual distress, and genuinely wants to know how to be reconciled with God. Create a simple presentation of the Gospel for this person, knowing that the Holy Spirit will use your words to bring him or her into the Kingdom. Include the point that God the Father has actually devised a plan and desires their salvation long before they saw their need for God...

