

A Journey into the Heart of God

Divine
vs.
Natural
Viewpoint

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A "Heart of God" Study Course

Divine vs. Natural Viewpoint is a result of the teaching ministry of Randy Gruber at the Potosi Correctional Center Prison Fellowship Bible Study in Missouri. His students have produced this course to pass on what they have learned to good and faithful men who will in turn be able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

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INSTRUCTIONS



How to Study

After all of your time, energy, and sincerity spent in Bible Study, it will be “*God who gives the increase*” (1 Corinthians 3:7). Therefore, ask God to help you understand what you read in the Bible. In addition, take the place of a child as you study (Matthew 18:3-4). To truly know God’s Word as we ought to, we must maintain a humble attitude of being dependent learners. Finally, be sure to act on what you study. Only as you walk in the light will more light be given. Read Psalm 119:100, 105, 130, 133 and Hebrews 5:12-14.

Key Principle and Key Memory Verses

The *Key Principle* on page 5 is the theme of this course. Understanding this principle is key to understanding the Scriptures as a whole. Therefore, it is a Basic Bible Doctrine.

Memorize the *Key Memory Verses* on page 5. This will make your study of the Scriptures more profitable. When sinful thoughts enter your mind, put them out by meditating on the *Key Memory Verses*. Do not underestimate the blessing which results from memorizing Scripture (Psalm 119:11).

Exam Questions

Read each lesson carefully at least twice. Read it once to get a general idea of its contents. Then read it again, slowly, answering the exam questions. As you read, *be sure to open your Bible to each referenced Scripture*. Carefully consider God’s Word. It is the most important aspect of each lesson.

The exam questions are numbered within each lesson. Lines are provided for your answers on pages E1-E8. There are two types of questions:

1) The questions which are accompanied by a Scripture reference are designed to find out if you understand the lesson material. Answer these questions according to what you learn in the lesson (especially the referenced

Words which are followed by an asterisk (*) are defined on page 55.

Scriptures). Your response *will be graded by whether it is consistent with the lesson material*. You will receive *one or zero* points for your response.

2) The questions which are *not accompanied by a Scripture reference* are designed for you to *state your own thoughts*. For example, in lesson one, only question 8 is this type of question. Your honest and open answers will help your instructor get to know you as an individual and encourage you in your studies. They will also help you and us evaluate the effectiveness of this course. You will receive one point for each of these questions you answer.

You may use any Bible version. However, we suggest that you use the *New King James Version* if possible. Please tell your instructor on page E1 what version you are using. This will help in the grading of your exams.

How Your Exams Will Be Graded

Each question is worth one point, and each lesson has eight questions. *You will receive four points for printing your complete name, address, and Bible version on page E1*. The total possible points for this course are one hundred. Your instructor will mark your grade in the blank beside each of your responses. Upon completing this course, you will be awarded a certificate.

Returning Your Exams for Grading

After completing the exam questions, check them carefully. Make sure you have followed the above directions for *Exam Questions*. Be sure you have neatly printed your name and address on page E1 as well as on the upper left corner of your return envelope. If necessary, put the correct postage on the envelope. Use the Business Reply envelope if one is provided. *Only mail pages E1-E8. Gently pull them out to mail them*. If you are studying this course through an associated ministry or organization, send pages E1-E8 to the individual or organization from whom you obtained the course. Otherwise, send them to the address below.



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INTRODUCTION



Key Principle:

There is a great difference between the way God thinks and acts and the way we naturally think and act.

Key Memory Verses:

*Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.
“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.”—Isaiah 55:6-9*

Beginning the Journey:

Our journey into the heart of God must begin with this all-important realization: *man and God do not think or act alike!* To say this is an understatement because God says that the great difference between the way we think and act and the way He thinks and acts is like the distance between us and the stars. Obviously, no man can travel across this distance.

This amazing truth cuts two ways. First, it is cause for rejoicing that God and man do not think or act alike! Man pursues his enemies to destroy them, but God pursues His enemies to have mercy on them and pardon them. In fact, it was while we were His enemies that He came from His high and holy place to die in order to reconcile us to Himself (Colossians 1:19-22). This truth is

good news from heaven to the heart that is willing to receive what God has to say and act upon it. There is *hope* for us because God does not think or act like we do. This hope will shine through in the pages to follow.

Woven in with this hope is the necessary realization that this amazing truth also delivers a crushing indictment upon the natural viewpoint of man. Carefully ponder Isaiah 59:2, 7-8, 12 and Romans 3:12, 17-18.

Man has departed from the perfect thoughts and ways of his Creator. Until we see this truth, we can not realize the promise of God’s blessings for us.

In light of this truth, at the start of our pursuit of God, we must realize that we will never understand Him if we are left to our own abilities and resources. He must initiate the contact. Thankfully, He has! This movement on His part is proof that the heart of God desires us to know Him intimately.

*For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity (lives forever), whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him who has a contrite (repentant*) and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”—Isaiah 57:15*

Notice the contrast between man’s way and God’s way: Man turns away, but the holy God who inhabits eternity desires to be with man. Amazing!

So then, if you are willing, let us journey on into the heart of this God.

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LESSON ONE



God Is Speaking to Us

We have good news to tell! There is one true God, and He has not remained silent. Just as it is the nature of light to shine, so it is the nature of God to reveal Himself (1 John 1:5). He delights in doing so because He does not want us to remain separated from Him. He wants us to know Him and be filled by Him with every spiritual blessing. But to know Him we must listen to Him.

1. Isaiah 55:3 says, “*Come to Me. _____ and your soul shall live.*”

So begin this study by preparing your heart to hear from God. Ask God to help you understand what He is saying to you in each lesson.

God Speaks Through His Creation

God speaks first to us through His creation in which we are privileged to live. God’s creation is a *revelation* of Himself to us. *Revelation* is information God gives us that we could not know any other way.

2. What can we learn or know about God by looking at what He has made? See Romans 1:20.

Do you think that you could find anyone who would believe that the parts of a watch came to exist as well as came together merely by *chance*? Of course not! When anyone sees a watch, he knows someone had to form the parts and then with skill precisely put them together so that the watch would function properly. We know there is a watchmaker even if we can not see him. What he has made is sure proof that he exists.

But some people want us to believe that the *well ordered* and seemingly endless universe we see today has formed merely by chance. This includes our very complex human bodies. This *unproven idea* is called Evolution.

But where there is order and design, there must be an intelligent designer, a maker. And from the smallest insect to the largest galaxy, we see a very obvious order and design which enables it to function. This is a sure sign to us

that everything has been created by a designer who has power and knowledge without limit and who is present everywhere.

Scientists have concluded that as far as we can tell there is no end to space. It contains over 300 billion galaxies with over 300 billion stars in each galaxy. And it was all created simply by God speaking (Psalm 33:6).

3. What do the heavens (space) tell us about God? See Psalm 19:1.

Our *Maker* is clearly speaking to us through the things He has made, instructing us about Himself. We have no excuse if we deny Him. Sadly though, not everyone responds to God's first contact with them through His creation with a desire to know Him better. Some people think that they can ignore the clear and countless signs in the creation of God's existence and not be held responsible for denying Him. But this is as foolish as ignoring all the speed limit signs and then telling the Judge when you get a ticket, "But Judge, if only I had seen the *maker* of the signs, I would not have ignored the signs."

4. There is no place on earth where men do not experience God's creation. Do we have any excuse if we deny our Creator and, therefore, do not give Him thanks and do not glorify* Him as God? See Romans 1:18-21.

God Speaks Through His Prophets

In verse 7 of Psalm 19 we learn that God also speaks to us through His Law: "Thus says the Lord . . ." and similar phrases appear in the Old Testament over 3,800 times. This is the result of God using men (called prophets) to speak and then write *His very words* to us (2 Peter 1:19-21). These men gave us God's written revelation of Himself and His purpose in the world.

From this revelation we learn that God not only *creates* but He also *redeems* His people. *Redeem* means that He delivers His people from bondage by paying a price, a ransom. For example, He redeemed Israel from bondage in Egypt (Psalm 106:7-10). Later, He redeemed them from captivity in Babylon by giving several nations as a ransom to Cyrus, king of Persia. God did this by making Cyrus victorious over these nations in battle (Isaiah 43:1-4; 45:1).

So far we have two sure proofs that God exists: first in *His creation* and second in the Bible's recorded history of *His redemptive purpose with Israel*. In both we find that God is very active in all that He has made.

God Speaks Through His Son

In His Law* we also learn that God promised that He would raise up a prophet from Israel. Through this prophet God would speak to and deliver His people. Read Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19. In this promise God says that He will hold responsible the person who does not listen to this Prophet. By this truth we learn (as we did in Romans 1:20-21) that we will be held responsible for what we do with God's revelation* of Himself to us.

5. Who did Moses write about in the above prophecy in Deuteronomy? Who is this one through whom God has finally spoken to us? See John 5:46, Acts 3:18-26, and Hebrews 1:1-2.

In John 1:1, 14, 18 God identified His Son as *the Word* who is God and who has taken on flesh to dwell among us in order to declare to us what God is like. By coming as *the Word made flesh*, God is telling us that His message and His person can not be separated. He has come in person to give us a revelation of Himself. Obviously, His message to us is very personal.

6. As the Son spoke, He showed us that the Law,* the Psalms, and the Prophets were actually speaking about whom? See Luke 24:25-27, 44 and Peter's testimony in Acts 10:34-43.

Jesus' actual words and life were recorded in the *New Testament*. Most of the writers were killed because of their witness of Him. Of course, no man *gives* his life if he *knows* he would be dying for a lie. And most of these writers were actually *eye-witnesses* to the things they wrote about Christ. So they *knew* that they were dying for the truth. They heard Him, saw Him, and touched Him before his crucifixion and after His resurrection (John 20:26-29; Acts 10:39-43). Then they wrote about Him (1 John 1:1-4). Hundreds of others were also eye-witnesses of Jesus after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

In addition to being eye-witnesses, their written record of Christ's words and life was inspired by God the Holy Spirit (John 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:13-15). *Inspired* simply means that God gave the writers *His exact Words* to write.

7. How long was Jesus seen on the earth by the apostles after His death, before they watched Him ascend into heaven? See Acts 1:1-3, 9-11.

The revelation Jesus brings to us is remarkably unique because He came to us from God the Father, out of heaven, onto the earth. He is an *eye-witness* of the place He came from (John 3:11-13, 31-36). He is also the Creator of

all things through which God initially speaks to all men. Therefore, it is all-important that we get to *hear* from *Him*.

When the Son came in the flesh to speak and to experience His own creation, He revealed more than His purpose to redeem us from the bondage of sin (1 Timothy 2:5-6). He also revealed His very heart, the heart of God. As God in human flesh, He lived, worked, played, prayed, suffered, cried, taught, and was even tempted right beside us. By doing so, Jesus shows us in a very unique and personal way *what God is like* (John 11:35-36; 13:1-17, 23). And by actually experiencing the trials of life *as a man*, He can sympathize with us and help us during *our* trials and temptations (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).

This is an amazing revelation that Jesus gives us. God did not simply want us to know Him as a great authority figure who has a right to direct our lives. No, He wanted to enter into a close love relationship with us. He wanted us to not only enjoy all that He had made but enjoy Him also. And there could be no better way for God to communicate this than to come in our likeness as a man and dwell right among us. *God truly wants us to know Him!*

8. How has God revealed Himself to you? Also, for what purpose has God revealed Himself to you?

God Truly Wants Us to Know Him

Up to this point we have learned that the one true God who creates and redeems has gone to great lengths to reveal Himself to us. He has done so because He wants us to personally know Him and be with Him. He is not hiding Himself. It is only when we close our eyes and ears to what He is saying to us that we begin to think He does not care or does not exist. Therefore, carefully consider this: God is speaking to us, revealing Himself to us through His creation, His prophets, and even in person by His Son as recorded in the Bible. Yet, we must *hear Him* to know Him. There is no other way! Consider the desire of His heart from Psalm 81:10b-13a:

Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. But My people would not heed My voice . . . So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels. Oh, that My people would listen to Me.

Divine vs. Natural Viewpoint

EXAM BOOKLET

AK '10 D-DVNV

Student's Information

___ Your Bible Version: _____

___ Name: _____

___ Address: _____

___ City, State, Zip: _____

Instructor: _____ Course Grade: _____

LESSON 1 EXAM

EXAM 1 POINTS: _____

- ___ 1. _____
- ___ 2. _____
- ___ 3. _____

- ___ 4. _____
- ___ 5. _____
- ___ 6. _____
- ___ 7. _____
- ___ 8. _____
- _____

LESSON 2 EXAM

EXAM 2 POINTS: _____

- ___ 1. _____
- ___ 2. _____
- _____
- _____
- ___ 3. _____
- ___ 4. _____
- _____

- ___ 5. _____

- ___ 6. _____
- _____
- _____

- ___ 7. _____
- ___ 8. _____