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**Lesson 2 | April 23rd, 2023 | “There Are Many Ways into God’s Presence”**

**Introduction & Aiken Ministry Updates**

**We Gather Together:** (*Selected verses from Ephesians 2 )*

Pastor: As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins

**Group: Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.**

P: But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5**made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions

**G: it is by grace you have been saved**

P: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

**G: not by works, so that no one can boast.**

P: For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,

**G: which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

**Opening Prayer**

**Schedule for Our Study | “10 Lies About God”**

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| April 23rd  | There are Many Ways into God’s Presence  |
| **April 30th**  | **I Don’t Need the Bible or Worship to Be Right With God** |
| May 7th  | God Helps Those Who Help Themselves |
| *May 14th*  | *Confirmation Sunday (Cake Reception)*  |
| *May 21st*  | *Congregational & Voter’s (CV) Meeting*  |
| May 28th  | God Has Made Death a Natural Part of Life  |
| June 4th  | God is Distant and Disinterested in What Happens  |
| *Break for Summer... August 20th Fall Kick-Off* |

**Introductory Activity**

**In Another World.** Imagine you live in a world exactly like our own but with one exception: the Bible doesn’t exist. Armed only with the natural knowledge of God (what is that?) , discuss what you could know about the following questions in such a world.

* What do I know about God?
* How does God view me?
* How do I get closer to God?
* What does God want me to do with my life?
* How do I get to heaven?

**Natural Knowledge of God**

1. The natural knowledge of God is not enough to give a person a relationship with God. As you read the following passages, identify what we learn from the natural knowledge of God.

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| **Psalm 19:1 –** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands **God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Romans 1:20 –** For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.  **God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Romans 2:14,15 –** Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. **15**They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)  **God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Matthew 5:45 –** He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.   **God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Acts 17:27 –** He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.  **Our natural knowledge of God is like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |

1. *Agree or disagree?* All people know that God exists.
2. *Break it down!*

*A Christian says:*

*An agnostic says:*

*An atheist says:*

**Revealed Knowledge of God**

To have a relationship with God, we can’t simply rely on our natural knowledge. We need revealed knowledge to tell us HOW to be saved and WHAT God did to do just that. That communication happens in God’s Word. We NEED the BIBLE.

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| **Romans 10:17 –** Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ**Matthew 4:4 –** Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. *What does Jesus mean by “living on the Word of God”?* **Isaiah 40:6-8 –** All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. **7**The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. **8**The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” *Who does the Word of God apply to?***Psalm 1:1-3 –** Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, **2**but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. **3**That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.*What does it mean to “meditate” on God’s Word?*  *“Yield it’s fruit in season” –*  *“Whose leaf does not wither –* **Hebrews 1:1,2 –** In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **2**but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” Imagine if your spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend only talked to you once a week, or month, or year. What would that do to you emotionally?  How does that relate to the topic of reading the Bible?  |

**The Blessing of Worship**

1. With a partner, finish this sentence in 3 ways: *In worship I....*

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| **1 Chronicles 16:23-25 -** Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. **24**Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. **25**For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. **God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Hebrews 10:24,25 -** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25**not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. **What are 3 ways we encourage one another (to worship) and (in worship)**(1 min. with a partner) Think of an example or two that demonstrate how God designed humankind to face life, not as a rugged individual but with the encouragement and assistance and community of others.  |

**Closing Discussions**

* Respond to this statement: “I know I haven’t been to church, but God and me—we’re good—I pray every night.”
* Imagine you’re visiting a church member who hasn’t been to worship in 6 months. They haven’t answered your calls/texts and you show up. What do you say?

**Closing Prayer**