

This midweek study will explore why it's important for students to recognize how God is distinct from and independent of His created world. Use the following outline and activity to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: God is Transcendent

God's transcendence refers to the fact that He is distinct from and independent of His created world. He is transcendent over us in regards to His greatness and power as well as His goodness and purity. The implication of this doctrine is that God is inherently superior to humanity; His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9). When God saves us, He restores us so we can fulfill our human purpose; this does not mean that we become God or that distinctions between God and humanity are obliterated. Understanding God's transcendence evokes awe and wonder at His goodness and power.



Scripture: *Psalm 106:1-5; Isaiah 55:8-9; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26; Romans 8:28*



Christ Connection: *God told Moses His name "I AM" as a revelation of His transcendent self-existence. Jesus is the eternal Son of God, the great "I AM," who came to us to save us from sin.*

1 God's power is supremely above ours. (Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26)

God is infinite in power. The term *omnipotence* combines two words: *omni*, meaning *all* and *potens*, meaning *powerful*. When used in reference to God, we mean to say He is all-powerful, and His power is supreme above all earthly powers. Jesus Christ affirmed this all throughout His ministry, such as when He said "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

2 God's goodness is supremely above ours. (Ps. 106:1-5)

When we say "God is good," we mean everything God is and does is worthy of approval, and He Himself is the final standard of determining what is worthy of approval. From the very beginning, Scripture has affirmed this understanding of His goodness (Gen. 1:31). This goodness is rooted in God's character. His good character leads Him to purpose good toward others and to act in accordance with His goodness.

3 God's thoughts and plans are supremely above ours. (Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 8:28)

Because God knows all things past, present, and future—knowing the end from the beginning—we are encouraged to hold on to the truth that the things in our lives do not go unnoticed by Him. We can trust Him to sovereignly work for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). While our vision sometimes seems narrowly focused, God sees and understands the big picture, having thoughts and plans supremely above our own.

Opening Activity

Provide an envelope for each student. Inside each envelope, place a note card with the name of another student in the room and distribute the envelopes to students. Should a student accidentally receive his or her own name, guide him or her to switch with another student. Lead students to write on the back of the note card what they would buy if they could buy anything for the person listed. Instruct students to place the note card back in the envelope and give their "gift" to the person whose name is listed on the card.

Briefly discuss with students what they received.

- Did you like the gift that was given to you? Why or why not?
- In what ways does your gift reflect how well the giver knows you?
- What does the gift you received say about the person who gave it to you?

Point out God knows what we need better than anyone, and His goodness can be seen in the love and plans He has for us.

This midweek study will explore why it's important for students to recognize how God is distinct from and independent of His created world. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: God Is Transcendent

God's transcendence refers to the fact that He is distinct from and independent of His created world. He is transcendent over us in regards to His greatness and power as well as His goodness and purity. The implication of this doctrine is that God is inherently superior to humanity; His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9). When God saves us, He restores us so we can fulfill our human purpose; this does not mean that we become God or that distinctions between God and humanity are obliterated. Understanding God's transcendence evokes awe and wonder at His goodness and power.

1 God's power is supremely above ours. (Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26)

Option: Place students into groups and challenge each group to list as many superheroes as they can. Award a small prize to the team that lists the most, then ask: *Who is the most powerful superhero? Where did their power come from?*

- *Do you consider superheroes to be "all-powerful"? Why or why not?*

God is more powerful than the most powerful superhero. By saying God is omnipotent, we declare He is all-powerful and His power is supremely above all earthly powers.

- *What are some examples of God's power in Scripture?*
- *When have you felt like you had a problem that was too difficult for God to handle? How can focusing on God's greatness help you gain a more accurate perspective on your problems?*

Emphasize how Jesus Christ affirmed God's greatness throughout His ministry, such as when He said "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

2 God's goodness is supremely above ours. (Ps. 106:1-5)

- *What would you say are your defining qualities? Would good be on the list? Explain.*

Read Psalm 106:1-5.

- *For what did the psalmist praise God?*
According to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, the psalmist praised God for His incomparable goodness, loyal love, and power.
- *What do we mean when we say that God is good (v. 1)?*
When we say "God is good," we mean everything God is and does is worthy of approval and He Himself is the final standard of determining what is worthy of approval.
- *Does it bring you comfort to know God's character is good? Explain.*

- *How would your life be different if you strived to make God's standard of goodness one of your defining qualities?*

3 God's thoughts and plans are supremely above ours. (Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 8:28)

Discuss some of the different ways people use Siri.

- *Does Siri have access to infinite information? Explain.*

Read Isaiah 55:8-9.

Siri knows some things, but God knows all things.

- *If God is higher than us, why do you think people keep trying to figure Him out?*

According to the *Bible Exposition Commentary*, we make God after our own image and conclude that He thinks and acts just as we do. However, this assumption is wrong.

Read Romans 8:28.

You may not understand what God is doing, but you can trust His purpose. Because God knows all things past, present, and future—knowing the end from the beginning—we are encouraged to hold on to the truth that the things in our lives do not go unnoticed by Him. We can trust Him to sovereignly work for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. While our vision sometimes seems narrowly focused, God sees and understands the big picture, having thoughts and plans that are supreme above our own.

WRAP IT UP

- *What kinds of distractions can keep us from recognizing God's power and goodness in the world today?*
- *How does knowing everything about God is superior to humanity help you to trust His purpose for your life?*