

Sound Words Bible Correspondence Course

The Character of God

Part 2

Welcome to part two of the Sound Words Bible Correspondence Course which examines the teaching of the Bible on the Character of God. You have already completed part one so are well on the way to earning the certificate that is awarded to all who complete the course. As with part one, it is essential for you to have your Bible with you so that you can look up each of the references linked with each question.

1) God Is Good.

The Bible teaches us that God does good because he is good.

1. How is this described in Psalm 100:5 and Psalm 34:8? Write out these verses in full.

2. What two things does Psalm 119:68 tell us about God's goodness?

3. The fact that God is good means that he will only ever approve of things which are good. In your own words, how should that help us to know what is good and what is not?

4. Because God is good he delights to do good. After reading the verses from the Psalms at the end of this question, list 6 of the different ways these verses tell us God does good. The verses are Psalm 36:6; 145:8-9; 145:6.

5. God is so good that he even gives good things to his enemies! What good things in particular are mentioned in Matthew 5:44-45 and Acts 14:17?

God's goodness is seen in his creation, in his dealings with sinners, and in his care for his people.

6. When God created the universe, how did he describe what he had done in Genesis 1:31?

7. God's goodness in creation is seen particularly in his kindness to man. As David considered his own body, how did he respond to God in Psalm 139:14?

8. In your own words describe how your hands, joints, fingers, feet, and tongue each demonstrate that God has been kind to you. It might help if you think what life would be like if you did not have any of these things.
9. Because everyone in the world is sinful (see Ps51:5; Rom 3:23), we all deserve to be punished by God for our disobedience to him. But God's goodness is seen in that he delays that punishment. Why is God so patient with men? How does 2 Peter 3:9 answer that question?
10. To bring sinners his forgiveness, God did something utterly amazing. He sent a Saviour into the world, Jesus, who would bear their punishment for them! Who was Jesus, and how is his work described in Galatians 4:4-5?
11. When Jesus was born, the angels of God were themselves so amazed at God's goodness to sinful men and women that they burst forth in praise to God. What did they say at that time (Luke 2:14)?
12. If God has been so good that he sent Jesus to be the Saviour, how should we respond to Jesus? Answer

- this in your own words after reading John 3:16 and John 1:12.
13. If God in his goodness sent Jesus to be the Saviour, why is it a great evil when people reject him and refuse to be his followers? Again write this in your own words.
 14. God's goodness and tenderness is seen in his gracious dealings with his people. In your own words describe what is said about this in Psalm 31:19-20.
 15. How should God's goodness to his people encourage us to live holy and godly lives? (See Psalm 84:11)
 16. If God is always good to his children, why do you think he sometimes says 'No' to our prayers?
 17. '*God only gives good gifts to men.*' Is that statement true or false, and how does James 1:17 help us?
 18. Since God has given Jesus to be the Saviour of those who will trust him, how does this help us to realise he is able to meet every other need we may have? See Romans 8:32.

19. Why is God's goodness displayed when he disciplines his children? (See Hebrews 12:10-11.)

A. W. Pink: *God is not only the Greatest of beings, but the Best.*

20. What should the goodness of God always lead us to do? (See Psalm 107:8; 1

Thessalonians 5:16-18.)

21. After reading Matthew 7:7-11, explain how God's goodness should encourage us to pray.

22. How should God's goodness help us in our trials? Give your answer after reading Nahum 1:7, Proverbs 18:10, and Romans 8:28.

23. Because God is good, he expects his people to be good also. How is this great responsibility to affect our behaviour towards the following groups of people?

a. Other people, especially Christian believers? (Galatians 6:10)

b. Our enemies? (Luke 6:27-28)

24. Why is reading the Bible going to help us to show goodness to others? (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

25. God's servant Asaph knew that God was always good. How did this affect the longings of his heart? (Psalm 73:25-26)

26. One of the indications that someone is a true child of God is that they will desire God more than anything or anyone else. How does Psalm 34:8 and Psalm 42:1-2 express this?

2) God Is Love.

We read in 1 John 4:8 that "...*God is love.*" His very nature is love. The term translated love in 1 John 4:8 means a self-giving love. This teaches us God eternally gives of himself to others.

1. Where does love come from? (1 John 4:7)

2. The Bible teaches us that there is only one God, and the one God is in three persons; God the Father, God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. Three persons in the one Godhead. Each person in the Godhead gives himself to the other persons in love, and has done so always, even before the beginning of time. How did Jesus, God the Son, express this love when he prayed to his Father in John 17:24?

3. We also see the Father expressing his love to his Son when Jesus was baptised, as his voice was heard from heaven. What did he say? (Matthew 3:17)

4. In Matthew 17:5 God the Father again expressed his love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and he added two other things. The first was something he felt towards his Son, and the other was about our response to Jesus. What were these two things?
 - i.
 - ii.

5. How did the Lord Jesus Christ express his love for his Father in John 14:31, and what did he do that showed his love for his Father was genuine?

6. How does Romans 5:5 teach we come to experience the love of God in our own lives?

The love that exists between each Person in the Godhead is beyond our full understanding because it is a perfect love, but we can at least appreciate that heaven must be full of love and joy and blessedness. This in turn makes the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this world all the more remarkable because he left the glory and splendour of heaven to become the Saviour of his people!

7. How is this amazing step which Jesus took, and the blessings it brings to all who follow and trust him, described in 2 Corinthians 8:9?

God's love is a love that saves sinful men.

8. Read John 3:16 carefully and answer this question. Did the coming of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, make it possible for God to love sinners or did he love sinners first and because of that he sent his Son?

9. Was it the sinner's love for God or God's love for the sinner that caused him to send Jesus? (1 John 4:10)

10. God's love for sinners was something that constantly amazed Paul. What in particular does he mention about this in Romans 5:8?

11. How does Paul show us that God's love is for the individual sinner, even though we are small, insignificant and unworthy, and that such love has been shown to us at great cost to God himself? Read Galatians 2:20 and then give the answer in your own words.

The love God shows to his people is something which he has freely and sovereignly given. He was not forced to love us, nor was there anything in us that made us worthy of his love. It is entirely his doing.

12. How did Moses show the people of Israel that God's love was given to them freely and sovereignly? (Deuteronomy 7:7-8)

13. How did John teach us that God's love for the Christian believer has been given by him freely and sovereignly? (1 John 4:19)

14. How long does God's love for his people last? (Jeremiah 31:3)

15. When did God's love for his people begin? (Ephesians 1:4-5)

16. If God's love for his people never ends, how should that affect the Christian believer's assurance of their salvation?

17. Paul teaches us that nothing can separate the believer from the love of Christ. What does he include in the list in Romans 8:37-39 and how should this comfort us now?

18. How should the believer respond to the love God has shown him? See Matthew 22:37, and answer in your own words.

19. If we genuinely love God, how will that be seen in our behaviour, and give some examples to illustrate your answer? See 1 John 5:3; John 14:15 and 14:23-24.

20.If we love God, how are we to react to the sinfulness we see in our world? (1 John 2:15-17)

A. W. Pink wrote: *“How good to know that when the world hates us, God loves us!”*

21.How does God himself respond when we truly love him? (See Isaiah 62:5 and Zephaniah 3:17)

22.The fact that God loves every believer means that we must not only love him, but also love others. According to Luke 10:27 who are those we are to love, and what story did Jesus tell in the verses that follow to show us what he meant?

23.Our love for others should be like God’s love for us. How does Paul describe this in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8?

24.Christian believers are to especially love their fellow believers (John 15:12). How will this

i. speak to unbelievers? (John 13:34-35)

ii. be seen in our relationships with other believers? (See Romans 13:10; Galatians 6:2 and 6:10; Hebrews 10:34.)

25.How is the believer to respond to his enemies? (Matthew 5:43-45)

26.God loved us when we were his enemies. How should that help us to love ours? (See Romans 5:8 and 1 John 3:16)

3) God Is Gracious.

In 1 Peter 5:10 we read that God is “...*the God of all grace.*” By ‘the grace of God’ the Bible means the expression of his love which he shows in pardoning sin.

1. If God in his grace pardons sins, to whom does that give hope? (See Romans 3:10, 3:23; James 4:17.)

God’s grace is never earned and its recipients are never ever worthy of it, because it is shown to the guilty.

2. How does John describe our sinfulness in 1 John 3:4, and how does that make us unattractive to God?

3. How does Paul write about the amazing nature of God's grace in forgiving sinners in Ephesians 1:6-7 and 2:7?
4. The Bible teaches us that God's grace is sovereign. He loves and forgives those whom he chooses to love. How is this declared in Exodus 33:19 and what does this mean?
5. Why can God never be accused of being unfair over the choice of those to whom he shows his grace? (Romans 9:14-16)
6. How do Jonah 2:9 and Ephesians 2:8-9 teach us God's grace is not something we can earn or merit by our efforts?
7. From what we have already seen about God's grace, in your own words explain why it is that when someone is forgiven by God they often say with amazement, 'Why me Lord?'
8. If the forgiveness of sins comes only by the grace of God, this is therefore his gift. Write out Romans

- 3:22-24 and 4:4-5 then explain how these Bible passages teach us that God's grace is his gift to sinners.
9. Although God's grace is a free gift to sinners, it was still something that cost him an enormous amount. Jesus had to die in his people's place on the cross of Calvary. In addition to the terrible pain such a death brought, for Jesus there was something else. What was that? (Matthew 27:46)
 10. How does Paul describe the cost of God's grace to sinners in Galatians 3:13-14?
 11. The Bible teaches us God's grace comes to us solely through the Lord Jesus Christ and by no other means. How does Romans 5:15, 17 and 21 make this clear?
 12. Because God's grace comes to sinners through Christ alone, why is it wrong to think that God's grace can come to us through other people, such as godly believers who have lived in the past? Also,

why is it wrong to attempt to pray to them instead of to Jesus?

13. What does Ephesians 1:7 tell us God's grace brings to the believer?

14. God's grace transforms the believer, producing holiness and likeness to Christ. How is this described in 2 Corinthians 5:17?

15. Read 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 and explain the change God's grace made in Paul's life.

16. God's grace brings us into the family of believers. How is this described in Ephesians 1:4-5, Galatians 4:4-7?

17. How does Galatians 6:10 teach us how believers should respond to other members of the family of God? Give an example of what this verse means from your own experience.

18. How does the grace of God help us in prayer? (See Hebrews 4:16 and 2 Corinthians 12:9.)

19. How does God's grace encourage believers to reach unbelievers with the good news about the Lord Jesus? (See Romans 5:20 and Acts 14:26)

20. How does God's grace help us to serve God, and when we are in need? (See 2 Corinthians 9:8 and 12:9)

21. God's grace gives the Christian believer a great future inheritance. How is that inheritance described in Colossians 1:12-14, and where is it according to 1 Peter 1:3-5?

4) God Is Merciful.

The mercy of God is very closely linked with his love and his grace and is sometimes translated using those words. It has been helpfully defined in these words: *'The mercy of God is the love whereby he relieves the misery of those who are bearing the consequences of sin. This is seen supremely by us in his dealings with*

believers, his own dear people, to whom he delights to show kindness and whom he determines to bless.'

1. What do Exodus 34:6 and Psalm 136:1 say about the mercy of God?
2. Describe in your own words how God was merciful to Israel in Old Testament days, and use Isaiah 63:9 as a basis for your answer.
3. How does the New Testament describe what God's mercy brings to the believer? Use 1 Peter 1:3 as the basis of your answer.
4. There is an aspect of God's mercy that is enjoyed by all of creation, men and even animals. How is this described in Psalm 145:9 and give two illustrations of how God is kind to all his creatures?
5. God is merciful to all mankind, even though many never acknowledge him or thank him. What is it that God gives to all men as described in Acts 17:25?
6. Why are the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to be merciful even to their enemies, according to Matthew 5:44-45?

7. The Bible teaches us that God's mercy to all mankind is only temporary. One day that mercy will be removed either by death or at the end of the world. What will happen to those who fail to respond to God's temporary mercies during their lives, and who do not thank him nor trust in his Son for the forgiveness of their sins? (See Romans 2:4-6 and Exodus 34:7.)
8. Everyone is warned in Luke 13:3 that "...*unless you repent, you too will perish.*" Therefore, what is the right response we should make to God's kindness to us as found in Luke 18:13?
9. This final judgement of unbelievers will actually be a mercy towards God's people. Those who receive God's kindness and yet reject him and persecute his people will do so no more. God's people will be finally delivered from all who oppose the Lord. How does Revelation 21:27, which describes the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth (see v1), help us to understand this?

God is merciful supremely to those he saves from their sin.

10. How does Genesis 3 describe the curse man is under because of our sinfulness?
11. Although we deserve to be under God's curse because of our sinfulness, wonderfully God responds to our plight in mercy. How does Mary describe this for us in Luke 1:54-55 and Paul in Romans 15:9?
12. How is our desperate and needy condition because of our sinfulness described in Ephesians 2:1-3?
13. For the believer, how has God responded to that sad condition in Ephesians 2:4-5?
14. Why was Paul so amazed at God's mercy to him?
(See 1 Timothy 1:16.)

15. Is God reluctant to show his mercy to sinners? Give the reasons for your answer after reading Micah 7:18.
16. When blind Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus for mercy, what did Jesus do for him? (See Mark 10:46-52)
17. How often do God's people experience his mercy according to Lamentations 3:22-23?
18. What is our particular need as sinners and what does God do to meet that need? (See Psalm 51 especially verse 1.)
19. How does God's mercy help us in our difficulties? Use 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 as the basis for your answer and give an example from your own life or from another Christian's life that you know about.
20. How should the fact that God is merciful encourage us to seek his mercy in prayer? What help can you find about this in Hebrews 4:14-16?

21. Does God have to be coaxed to be merciful to us, or does he freely show his mercy to his children?
Romans 9:15 and Titus 3:5 will help you answer this question.
22. Where will God's mercy eventually bring every Christian believer according to Jude 21, and how should this wonderful fact influence the way we live our lives?

5) God Is Patient.

The patience, longsuffering or forbearance of God is that aspect of his love whereby he bears with, or puts up with, the sinner who does not take any notice of either God's instructions or his warnings.

1. How did Paul exhort those who had failed to benefit from God's patience by repenting of their sins and who thought God would never punish them in Romans 2:4?
2. Sometimes Christian believers wonder why God does not punish the ungodly and destroy the world now. What answer did Peter give to those who think like this in 2 Peter 3:8-9, and v15? Write out these verses and explain them in your own words.

3. How does God's patience affect the outpouring of his anger, and why is God's response so different from ours very often when someone does wrong to us? (See Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Psalm 103:8)
4. Why do you think Jonah complained about this aspect of God's character and as a result asked to die in Jonah 4, and how did God challenge his thinking?
5. Saul of Tarsus, who later became known as Paul, is a good example of God's patience at work.
 - a. What kind of a man was Saul when we first meet him in the Bible in Acts 7:54- 8:1?
 - b. Write out Paul's own description of the Lord's mercy to him from 1 Timothy 1:15-16, and then explain how God was patient with him in your own words.

6. If God was not patient with us, why would that mean no one would be forgiven and saved by him?

7. Sometimes the followers of Jesus are very slow to learn from him, even when he has told us things clearly. This happens still today and it happened with his first disciples whose slowness is recorded in the Bible. One example of this was their slowness to learn that Jesus had to die on the cross and then rise again, even though he had told them about this often. On the evening of the day Jesus rose, how did he show his patience over this with two of his disciples? Read Luke 24, noting verses 25-27.

Christian believers are to imitate God by being patient themselves.

8. What does James tell us about this in James 1:19-20? Write out these verses then give a short explanation and an example of the patience James has written about.

In the Bible 'patience' is always exercised in the context of difficulty or provocation.

9. What does Hebrews 12:2-3 encourage us to do to help us exercise patience when we are facing suffering?

10. Sometimes the believer may work for someone or have a master who treats him or her unkindly. In your own words explain how Peter tells us we should respond to them in 1 Peter 2:18-23.

11. Why are believers to consider trials a cause for rejoicing according to James 1:2-4?

12. What encouragement do we find for being patient in suffering from Romans 8:18?

13. Christian believers are to exercise patience towards one another. What does this involve? Write out Ephesians 4:1-3 and then give a practical example that illustrates the teaching.

14. What incentive for believers to be patient with each other does James give in James 5:7-9?

God's patience must not be misused or abused.

15. The people in Noah's day thought that because God was patient that it meant he would never punish them and so they could carry on living a sinful life. Why were they misusing and abusing God's patience and what happened that solemnly revealed how wrong they were? Read Genesis chapters 6-7 and 2 Peter 2:5.

16. At present God is still exercising his patience with this wicked world we live in. But a day is coming when God will withdraw this and judge the world. In the light of this, how should we be living now? Read 2 Peter 3:10-13.

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