



Prayer of Thanksgiving: that God is always faithful! **“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” (Ps 107:1 ESV)**

Please do not forget to pray for all the shut-ins and isolated brothers and sisters in our congregations Mrs. Jack and C. Campbell (Fredericton) and J. Steffes (Caribou, Me), Mr. Ross Bathurst, P. Ward (Saint John) and others.

**ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2019 (Please note some changes)**

Times of worship services: Moncton – 10:30 AM every Sunday.

**Time of services** in Saint John – Next services in Saint John will be August 25 at 2:30 p.m.

**Communion-** on the second and fourth Sunday of the month in Saint John and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Moncton.

Address: Moncton—70 King St. —Sage building;

Saint John—50 Newport Cres., Portland United church.

**Discipleship group** in Moncton will resume in September.

For other prayer request, please see [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) under for members only.

**Please pray for the many Christians living in very troubled areas** such as Venezuela and others where Christians have to deal with corruption in high places, lack of food, high inflation, high unemployment, etc. Please pray that they be strengthened by God the Father, in our Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

**Please pray for our brothers and sisters in the USA** where gun violence is on the increase.

Monthly GCI prayer guide is now posted in Featured Articles on our [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) website.

Should you have forgotten the password to enter “For members only” on the [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) website, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Vautour.

**God: An Introduction to God**  
**(from: <https://www.gci.org/articles/an-introduction-to-god/>)**

As Christians, our most basic religious belief is that God exists. By the capitalized word “God,” we mean the God described in the Bible: a good and powerful spirit being who created all things, who cares about us, who cares about what we do, who is involved in our lives, and who offers us an eternity with his goodness. Humans cannot understand God in totality, but we have been given a solid beginning point for understanding who God is and what God is doing in our lives. Let’s focus on the qualities of God that a new believer, for example, might find most helpful.

**God’s existence**

Many people, even long-time believers, want proof of God’s existence. But there is no way to “prove” God’s existence so that everyone is convinced. It is probably better to talk in terms of evidence, rather than proof. The evidence gives us confidence that God exists and is the sort of being the Bible describes. God “has not left himself without testimony,” Paul told the pagans ([Acts 14:17](#)). Well then, what is the evidence?

**Creation.** [Psalm 19:1](#) tells us, **“The heavens declare the glory of God.”** [Romans 1:20](#) tells us, **“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.”** Creation itself tells us something about God.

It is reasonable for us to believe that something caused the earth, sun and stars to be the way they are. Scientists say the universe began with a big bang, and it is reasonable for us to believe that something caused the bang. We believe it was caused by God.

**Design.** Creation shows signs of order, of laws of physics. If various properties of matter were different, then earth would not exist, or humans could not exist. If the size or orbit of earth were different, then conditions on this planet would not permit human life. Some people believe that this is a cosmic accident; others believe that the more reasonable explanation is that the solar system was designed by an intelligent Creator.

**Life.** Life is based on incredibly complex chemicals and reactions. Some people believe that life had an intelligent cause; others believe that it happened by chance. Some have faith that scientists will eventually demonstrate a non-god origin for life. But for many people, the existence of life is evidence of a Creator God.

**Humans.** Humans are self-conscious creatures who explore the universe, who ponder the meaning of life, who seek significance. Physical hunger suggests the existence of food; thirst suggests that there is something that can quench our thirst. Does our intellectual yearning for purpose suggest that there is in fact a meaning to be found? Many people claim to have found meaning in relationship with God.

**Morality.** Is right and wrong a matter of opinion, of majority rule, or is there some supra-human authority that defines good and evil? If there is no God, then humans have no basis for calling anything evil, no reason to condemn racism, genocide, torture or anything else. The existence of evil is, ironically, evidence of God. If there is no God, then there is no basis for authority except power. It is reasonable to believe in God.

### God's greatness

What sort of being is God? Bigger than we can imagine! If he created the universe, then he is bigger than the universe—and not limited by time, space or energy, for he existed before time, space, matter and energy did.

[2 Timothy 1:9](#) mentions something God did “before the beginning of time.” Time had a beginning, and God existed before that. He has a timeless existence that cannot be measured by years. He is eternal, of infinite age. Mathematics is too limited to describe God's existence.

Since God created matter, he existed before matter, and he is not made of matter. He is spirit—but he is not “made of spirit.” God is not made at all; he simply *is*; he exists as spirit. He defines existence—he defines both spirit and matter.

God existed before matter did, and the dimensions and properties of matter do not apply to him. He cannot be measured in miles or kilowatts. Solomon said that even the highest heavens could not contain God ([1 Kings 8:27](#)). He fills heaven and earth ([Jeremiah 23:23](#)); he is everywhere, or omnipresent. There is no place in the universe where he does not exist.

How powerful is God? If God can cause a big bang, design solar systems, create the codes in DNA and manage all these levels of power, then he must be unlimited in power, or omnipotent. **“With God all things are possible,”** [Luke 1:37](#) tells us. God can do whatever he wants to do.

God's creativity demonstrates an intelligence greater than we can understand. He controls the universe, and is the cause of its continued existence ([Hebrews 1:3](#)). He must know what is happening throughout the universe; he is unlimited in intelligence—he is omniscient. He knows whatever he wants to know.

God defines right and wrong, and he has the power and desire to always do right. **“God cannot be tempted with evil”** ([James 1:13](#)). He is consistently and perfectly righteous ([Psalm 11:7](#)). His standards are right, his decisions are right, and he judges the world in righteousness, for he is, in his very nature, good and right.

In all these ways, God is so different from us that we have special words that we use only for God. Only God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, eternal. We are matter; he is spirit. We are mortal; he is eternal. This great difference between us and God, this otherness, is called his *transcendence*. It means that he transcends us, is beyond us, is not like us.

Other ancient cultures believed in gods and goddesses who fought with one another, who acted selfishly, who could not be trusted. But the Bible reveals a God who is in complete control, who needs nothing

from anyone, who therefore acts only to help others. He is perfectly consistent, his behavior is perfectly righteous and completely trustworthy. When the Bible says that God is holy, it means that he is morally perfect.

This makes life much simpler. People do not have to try to please 20 different gods; there is only one. The Creator of all is the Ruler of all, and he will be the Judge of all. Our past, our present and our future are all determined by the one God, the All-knowing, All-powerful, Eternal One.

### God's goodness

If all we knew about God is that he had incredible power over us, we might obey him out of fear, with resentful heart. But God has revealed to us another aspect of his nature: The incredibly great God is also incredibly gentle and good.

One of Jesus' disciples asked him, "**Show us the Father**" ([John 14:8](#)). He wanted to know what God was like. He knew the stories of the burning bush, the pillar of cloud and fire at Mt. Sinai, the fantastic throne that Ezekiel saw, and the whisper that Elijah heard ([Exodus 3:4](#); [13:21](#); [1 Kings 19:12](#); [Ezekiel 1](#)). God can appear in all these ways, but what is he really like? Where should we look?

Jesus said, "**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father**" ([John 14:9](#)). If we want to know what God is like, we need to look at Jesus. We can learn a bit about God from nature; we can learn more from the way he revealed himself in the Old Testament, but we learn the most from the way that God has revealed himself in Jesus.

Jesus shows us what God is like. Jesus is called Immanuel, which means God with us ([Matthew 1:23](#)). He lived without sin, without selfishness. He is a person of compassion. He has feelings of love and joy, disappointment and anger. He cares about individuals. He calls for righteousness, and he forgives sin. He served others, even in his suffering and death. God is like that. He described himself to Moses in this way:

**The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished. ([Exodus 34:6-7](#))**

The God who is above all creation is also free to work within creation. This is his *immanence*, his being with us. Although God is larger than the universe and everywhere within the universe, he is with believers in a way that he is not with unbelievers. The great God is always close to us. He is near and far at the same time ([Jeremiah 23:23](#)).

In Jesus, God entered human history, space and time. He worked in human flesh, showing us what life ought to be like in the flesh, and showing us that God wants more for our lives than merely flesh. We are offered eternal life, life beyond the physical limits we know now. We are offered spirit life, as the Spirit of God comes into us to live in us and make us children of God ([Romans 8:11](#); [1 John 3:2](#)). God continues to be with us, working in space and time to help us.

The great and powerful God is also the gentle and gracious God; the perfectly righteous Judge is also the merciful and patient Savior. The God who is angry at sin also provides salvation from sin. He is mighty in mercy, great in gentleness. This is what we should expect from a Being who can create the codes in DNA, the colors in a rainbow and the delicate wisps on dandelion seeds. We would not exist at all, except for the fact that God is kind and gentle.

God describes his relationship to us in several ways. In one analogy, he is a father and we are his children. In another, he is the husband and all believers together are his wife. Or he is a king and we are his

From our [Statement of Beliefs](#):

God, by the testimony of Scripture, is one divine Being in three eternal, co-essential, yet distinct Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The One God may be known only in the Three and the Three may be known only as the one true God, good, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, and immutable in his covenant love for humanity. He is Creator of heaven and earth, Sustainer of the universe, and Author of human salvation. Though transcendent, God freely and in divine love, grace and goodness involves himself with humanity directly and personally in Jesus Christ, that humanity, by the Spirit, might share in his eternal life as his children. ([Mark 12:29](#); [Matthew 28:19](#); [John 14:9](#); [1 John 4:8](#); [Romans 5:8](#); [Titus 2:11](#); [Hebrews 1:2-3](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#); [Galatians 3:26](#))

subjects. He is a shepherd and we are the sheep. In all these analogies, God puts himself in a situation of responsibility to protect and provide for the needs of his people.

God knows how tiny we are. He could obliterate us in the snap of a finger, in the slightest miscalculation of cosmic forces. But in Jesus, God shows us how much he loves us, how much he cares for us. Jesus was humble, willing even to suffer, in order to help us. He knows the kind of pain we go through, because he has felt it. He knows the pain that evil causes, and he accepted it, showing us that we can trust God.

God has plans for us, for he has made us to be like himself ([Genesis 1:27](#)). He invites us to become more like himself—in goodness, not in power. In Jesus, God gives us an example to follow: an example of humility, selfless service, love and compassion, faith and hope.

**“God is love,”** John wrote ([1 John 4:8](#)). God demonstrated his love by sending Jesus to die for our sins, so barriers between us and God might be removed, so we might live with him in eternal joy. God’s love is not wishful thinking—it is action that helps us in our deepest need.

We learn more about God from the crucifixion of Jesus than from his resurrection. Jesus shows us that God is willing to suffer pain, even pain caused by the people who are being helped. His love invites us, encourages us. He does not force us to do his will.

God’s love for us, shown most clearly in Jesus Christ, is our example: **“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another”** ([1 John 4:10-11](#)). If we live in love, then eternal life will be a joy not only for us but also for those who live with us.

If we follow Jesus in life, we will also follow him in death, and then in resurrection. The same God who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise us and give us life eternal ([Romans 8:11](#)). But if we do not learn to love, then we will not enjoy everlasting life. God is teaching us to love, at a pace we can follow, giving us a perfect example, changing our hearts by the Holy Spirit working in us. The Power who controls the nuclear furnaces of the sun is working gently in our hearts, wooing us, winning our affection, winning our allegiance. God gives us meaning in life, direction for life, hope for life eternal. We can trust him, even when we suffer for doing good. God’s goodness is backed up by his power; his love is guided by his wisdom. He has all the forces of the universe at his control, and he is using them for our benefit. **“In all things God works for the good of those who love him”** ([Romans 8:28](#)).

### Our response

How do we respond to a God so great and gentle, so terrible and tender? We respond with worship: awe at his glory, praise for his works, reverence for his holiness, respect for his power, repentance in the presence of his perfection, obedience in the authority found in his truth and wisdom.

To his mercy, we respond with thankfulness; to his grace, with our allegiance; to his goodness, with our love. We admire him, we adore him, we give ourselves to him even as we wish we had more to give. Just as he has shown his love for us, we let him change us so that we love the people around us. We use all that we have, all that we are, all that he gives us, to serve others, just as Jesus did.

This is the God we pray to, knowing that he hears every word, that he knows every thought, that he knows what we need, that he cares about our feelings, that he wants to live with us forever, that he has the power to fulfill every request, and that he has the wisdom not to.

God has proven himself faithful in Jesus Christ. God exists to serve, not to be selfish. His power is always used in love. Our God is supreme in power, and supreme in love. We can trust him in absolutely everything.

### For further reading

Now that you’ve had an introduction to God, wouldn’t you like to know him better? We get to know God in several ways: through nature, through our experience with the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, through spiritual disciplines and through the words of other believers.

To learn more about God, read the Bible, especially the New Testament. Try a modern translation such as *The Message*, by Eugene Peterson, or *The New Living Translation*, published by Tyndale. For evidence of God’s existence, we recommend the following (easiest listed first):

- Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*
- C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*
- Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*
- Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*
- C. Stephen Evans, *Why Believe?*
- James Sire, *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything at All?*
- William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith*
- C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*
- Alister McGrath, *Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths*

**For discussions of the attributes of God:**

- Max Anders, *God: Knowing Our Creator*
- Paul Little, *Know What You Believe*, chapter 2
- Gilbert Bilezekian, *Christianity 101*, chapter 2
- J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*
- Millard Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, chapters 8–15
- Donald G. Bloesch, *God the Almighty*

**Footnote on creation:** The diversity of life is a separate question. Some people accept the theory of evolution; others reject it. Some people believe that the evolutionary theory describes the way that God produced biological diversity; others believe that God worked in some other way. The controversies about evolution are too complex to be resolved here; we simply note that they do not affect the question of how life originated in the first place. We should also note that few people have studied evolution well enough to make their own conclusions about it; for the most part, they simply accept the word of “experts.” That includes opponents as well as supporters of evolution. For further study, see *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, edited by J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds (Zondervan, 1999).

**Things to think about**

1. Do the evils in this world weaken our faith in God, or strengthen it?
2. If God is good, why did he make humans fallible, able to choose wrong?
3. What does God say about the way we use his creation?
4. How can God be distant to one person, but near to another?
5. Can we trust a God who has all power but isn't always good? Can we trust one who is always good but is limited in power?
6. In what way is God like Jesus, and in what way is he different?
7. Does God's mercy cause you to admire him, or to ignore him?

*Author: Michael Morrison*

*Devotional: **Nothing!** (from <http://www.daybyday.org.uk/>)*

***"Be anxious for NOTHING, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God; and the PEACE of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."***

**Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)**

How often have we read the scripture above but not really thought about it? The two key words are NOTHING and PEACE. The first part tells us be anxious for NOTHING. But why? Simply because we cast all our cares upon him, as we are told to do in **1 Peter 5.7**, and in the scripture above. Once we have done that, it is in God's hands and we can then have the PEACE of God.

But what is the PEACE of God? It is not the immediate resolution of whatever problem has brought us to our knees in the first place. Now, if you have spent ten years living without a budget, spending more than you earn, then prayer is not going to provide you with an overnight lottery win to pay off your debts! If you have spent years addicted to alcohol or drugs, those cravings are not going to disappear overnight! If your family relationships are a disaster, they will not magically become good overnight! But if we diligently and faithfully place our personal problems in Gods hands, with prayer, supplication and thanksgiving, the PEACE comes because God changes our attitude and approach to the problem. Remember the old saying, "If you would change the world, begin first with yourself!"

As a Christian facing up to our problems, whatever they are, taking them to God is the first step. The PEACE comes from knowing that we are no longer fighting the battles on our own. While there may be a situation in which God does provide an immediate answer, usually we have to struggle with the problem for some time to overcome it. The PEACE comes because we know we have the strength to be an overcomer.

In a world in which the media seems obsessed with how difficult life is, how we lack confidence, self-worth, face negative emotions at every turn, don't we need PEACE? But for Christians, taking our problems to God helps so we need be anxious for NOTHING and we can then enjoy His PEACE, which surpasses all understanding. This is the first step we need to take. Try it, you may be pleasantly surprised!

***Prayer Loving God, in a negative, stressful world, help us to be positive lights most of the time, knowing that we can place our entire life and future in your hands with complete confidence. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*** Study by Keith Hartrick

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—[www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org), [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca), [www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton](https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton); For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. *Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email—[evautour47@outlook.com](mailto:evautour47@outlook.com)*