



DISCOVER
GOD
BIBLE STUDY No. 1

Based on the book
DISCOVER GOD
by **Dr. Bill Bright**

Group
Loveland, Colorado
www.group.com

Discover God Bible Study No. 1

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FOREWORD

The key to the joyful Christian life is having a clear understanding of who God *really* is.

It's not about me. I cannot fix myself. No one else can fix me. (My wife will attest to that.) Only God can. Even my ability to have faith and believe God for great things is nothing more than a mere symptom of my view of God.

Too often our view of God is bent or incomplete, and we don't even know it. Sometimes we water down His sovereignty by unwittingly taking partial credit for what God did. Other times we focus on His love but forget that He is also holy, which blocks us from fully experiencing the incredible depth of His love.

My father, Bill Bright, said, "We can trace all of our human problems to our view of God." What we believe to be true about God's character affects *every* aspect of our lives. God, and God alone, is the issue.

I watched my dad build Campus Crusade for Christ into a worldwide organization of 26,000 full-time staff and 250,000 trained volunteers. With calm assurance he navigated monumental decisions that sometimes had life-and-death implications. I watched him cultivate a marriage that was strong, full of laughter, and deep with love. I saw him passionately pursue a vital relationship with the living God

up until his dying breath. I was there. And the key to it all was his radically expansive view of God.

That lesson was not lost on me, his son. This Bible study is the direct result of our prayer that this lesson will not be lost on you either.

Apart from death and taxes, there is one thing you can count on—your life will be powerfully transformed as you come to better understand who God *really* is.

Yours for making *God* the issue,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Bright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with large, rounded letters.

Brad Bright
National Director, Discover God
President & CEO, Bright Media Foundation

P.S. If you would like additional information about *Discover God*, please visit us at www.DiscoverGod.com.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 7 |
| Session 1 • God Is All-Powerful | 11 |
| Session 2 • God Is Holy | 21 |
| Session 3 • God Is Love | 31 |
| Session 4 • God Is Ever-Present | 41 |
| Session 5 • God Is Absolute Truth | 53 |
| Session 6 • God Is Merciful | 65 |

DISCOVER GOD SERIES, NO. 1

Just a few years before he died at age 81 from complications related to pulmonary fibrosis, a degenerative disease of the lungs, Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright published a remarkable book titled *God: Discover His Character* (now titled *Discover God*). This book was remarkable because it boldly attempted to help Christians understand and know who God is, what He's like, and why or how He does what he does. We often call these qualities the *attributes* of God. They describe His character and very nature.

The study you're holding now takes Bill Bright's exploration of six of God's attributes and helps you understand and experience them in your own life. But you might be wondering, "If those qualities belong to God, can I really experience any of His character in my life?"

Good question. And the answer is yes. God's ultimate plan is an intimate relationship with us. If we have the correct view of His character, we can more easily relate to Him—and that's exactly what He desires!

So, that's the goal of this study: to help you grasp a right view of God's character, to improve and grow your relationship with God, and to help you adopt God's character so that it emanates back out of your life.

Here's how this study works:

First, the study is meant to be done in a group setting—this might be a Sunday school class or a small group that meets in a home. Everyone in your group will participate in learning about God's attributes by taking part in hands-on activities.

At first, these activities might seem . . . well . . . different. Remember, though, that Jesus often used everyday items to make His message more real to His listeners. For example, His disciples were certainly uncomfortable and even a bit confused when He washed their feet (John 13:5-17). Jesus had to reassure them, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand” (verse 7, NIV). Yet this turned out to be a powerful lesson that stayed with them the rest of their lives. The goal is for your group to have a similar experience as you do the activities in these sessions. You’ll learn God’s eternal truth in brand-new ways—and have fun in the process!

Your group will also dig into relevant Bible passages and discuss thought-provoking questions that will help you understand how the attribute you’re examining applies to your own lives.

In addition, each session concludes with opportunities to help you live out that attribute of God in your own life. As you put the ideas into practice throughout each week, you’ll discover God deepening your understanding of His character in your relationship with Him, with yourself, and with others.

So, welcome to Discover God! The team who put together these books prays that you’ll find the studies and experiences both meaningful and memorable. As you do the sessions together, may your lives increasingly reflect and show the qualities and character of God.

—*Brad Lewis, Editor*

► **About the Sessions**

Each participant should have his or her own copy of the *Discover God Bible Study* for content that everyone will use. Throughout the sessions, you'll also find hints for leaders and subgroup leaders.

Briefly, here's how each session breaks down:

► **Warm Up and Tune In** (10 minutes)

You'll start by taking a few minutes to introduce yourselves to any new members in your class or group. In addition, you'll do an activity that helps you get to know each other better and helps you tune in to the attribute you'll be studying in the session.

At the end of this section of each session, you'll also find a helpful hint called "God Is Personal"—which provides you with insight on how you can make God's attribute a personal and intimate part of your life.

► **Dig and Discover** (40 minutes)

This is the central part of what your group will do together. You'll study some Bible passages related to the attribute you're learning about, as well as interact with each other as you talk through some challenging questions, read what Bill Bright and others have to say about the attribute, and participate in some sensory experiences to solidify the ways God's attribute applies to your life.

► **Reflect and Respond** (15 minutes)

Now you'll make things even more personal. You'll continue to wrestle with knowing more about God's character, and you'll consider how you might respond to God in the area of that attribute.

► **Making It Real** (25 minutes)

In this part of the session, you'll choose a weekly challenge that will help you make God's attribute a part of your life in a practical way. You'll also share prayer requests with your group, pray for each other, and make plans to connect with another group member before the next session, just to check in and encourage one another.

► **This Coming Week**

This final section provides some important reminders as you go throughout the coming week: It prompts you to check in with someone else in your group during the week, urges you to write down a response to God's attribute that you'll work on in the coming week, and provides you with a list of Bible passages for further study.

BECAUSE GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL,

He can help me with anything.

“He does not derive His power from any other source; all power has always been His and will continue to be His for eternity. Any power that we have comes ultimately from God.”

—Bill Bright, Discover God

► For this session, you’ll need...

- An uninflated balloon for each group member
- At least one straight-back or folding chair for each subgroup of three or four people

► Warm Up and Tune In (10 minutes)

If this is your first time together as a group, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves to one another.

Once you’ve gotten to know each other a little better, stand up and line up side by side, all facing the same direction. Make sure you have several feet of space in front of your line.

Leader: Give an uninflated balloon to each group member.

When your leader says “go,” throw the uninflated balloon as far as you can in front of you.

Pick up your balloon. This time, blow it up, but don’t tie

Sunday school teachers:

If you’re using this study for a class rather than a small group, consider starting with the “Dig and Discover” section (beginning on page 12) to help your class stay within its time limits. (If you choose to skip the “Warm Up and Tune In” section, you won’t need the uninflated balloons from the supply list above.)



it. Line up again with the other group members, and aim your balloon in front of you. Wait again for your leader to say “go,” and then let it go!

Find your balloon—if you can! Then sit back down and discuss the following questions:

- What were some differences between how the balloon traveled each time? What made the difference in each case?
- Can you see any ways that this is like the difference between trying to do things under our own power versus doing them by *God’s* power?
- Can you think of a time during the past week where *you* could have used a little more “inflating” to get by? How would it have helped?

GOD IS **PERSONAL: All-Powerful**

Just how powerful *is* God? Read Genesis 15:1-6 and 21:1-5 on your own time, and discover how God created life in a most improbable situation. God also brought joy into the lives of a husband and wife who waited a long time for the son God promised them.

For an even greater example of God’s power to create life—and of His love for each one of us—check out Luke 1:28-38!

“God is capable of doing anything—as long as it does not violate His other attributes. (For example, He cannot lie, change, deny himself or be tempted.) Otherwise, no task is too large or too difficult for Him. He never fails or gets tired.”

—Bill Bright, Discover God

► **Dig and Discover** (40 minutes)

- What do you think it means that God is all-powerful? Jeremiah 32:17 says, “O Sovereign Lord! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!” As you think about this verse, answer the following questions:
 - What do you think this verse reveals about God’s power?
 - Do you think most people really believe this is true? Why or why not?

Now read Ephesians 3:14–21, and answer the following questions:

- Look again at verses 14–16. What do these verses reveal about God and His power? What do they reveal about how God uses His power?
- How does Paul respond to God’s all-powerfulness here? In your life, how do you respond to God’s power?
- What does Paul pray for the Ephesians in this passage? How does understanding God’s love lead to life and power?
- Why do you think it’s important for God to “empower *you* with inner strength through his Spirit”? How would your life be changed if you had the kind of strength Paul prays for here?
- Have you experienced God’s power in your life like Paul did? If so, what did it look like and how did it affect your relationship with God? Yourself? Others?

Now, break into subgroups.

Leader: To help increase your group’s participation, break into smaller subgroups of three or four. Make sure each subgroup has at least one straight-back or folding chair. You can ask for volunteers to serve as subgroup leaders, or you can recruit individuals before your class or group meets.

Subgroup leaders: Find a place where your subgroup can talk with few distractions. Plan to come back together in 25 minutes.

► Activity

Break your subgroups into pairs. If you have two chairs for each subgroup, have one partner sit and the other stand; if not, let each pair take a turn doing this activity.

Instruct one partner to sit down with arms crossed across the chest, and then ask the seated partners to try to stand

Every small group is different. Your timing is different. The way you answer questions is different. Your group dynamic is different. All that to say, you’re going to go through this study in a different way than another group will. Which means—as the leader—it’s smart to read through the study ahead of time. Pick out questions that are relevant to your group. Hopefully, you’ll have time to get through all the questions, but you might want to linger on some and skip others...and that’s OK! Tailor the study as needed for your group time, and encourage your small group members to answer any skipped questions on their own during the week.

You really can experience God’s power in your life! To learn more, go to www.DiscoverGod.com.

“The sun, with all the planets revolving around it and depending on it can still ripen a bunch of grapes as though it had nothing else in the universe to do. Why then should I doubt His power?”

—Galileo Galilei

“I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength”

(Philippians 4:13)

up. Here’s the catch: Before the seated partner attempts to stand, the standing partner will place a finger on the seated partner’s forehead and push gently.

Have partners reverse positions. After everyone takes a turn sitting, discuss the following:

- What happened as each person attempted to stand? What was it like to be the seated person? The standing one?
- Think about a recent situation where you felt powerless. In what ways was it like the activity you just did? What was hardest about that situation?

Now, read Mark 4:35–41 in your subgroups, and discuss the following questions:

- What two questions do the disciples ask in this passage (see verses 38 and 41)? What do you think the first question says about the disciples’ relationship with Jesus? Why do you think they asked these questions?
- Have you ever been in a difficult or frightening situation and wondered if God cared about you? Describe that situation.
- Have you ever felt that someone or something had so much power over you that even God couldn’t help you?
- What do your answers to these questions tell you about your *own* ability to trust in God’s power? Explain.

To hear others discuss how they’ve experienced God’s power, go to www.DiscoverGod.com.

■ Look at the list to the right. Does one or more of those words (or others) represent a storm in your life right now where you need God's power? How would your attitude change in this situation if you could be completely confident of God's power?

Come back together as a larger group, and share any highlights or questions from your subgroup discussion.

"The worshiping man finds this knowledge a source of wonderful strength for his inner life. His faith rises to take the great leap upward into the fellowship of Him who can do whatever He wills to do, for whom nothing is hard or difficult because He possesses power absolute."

—A. W. Tozer

"Since nothing is too hard for God, we do not have a need too great for Him to meet nor a problem too complicated for Him to conquer. We can never pray a prayer too difficult for Him to answer."

—Bill Bright, Discover God

Addiction
Broken relationships
Hopelessness
Jealousy
Critical attitude
Poor self-image
Conflict
Depression
Failure
Bad habits
Unexpected illness
Financial troubles
Stress
Sexual temptations
Unemployment
Anxiety
Transitions
Apathy
Bitterness
Disappointment
Fear
Panic
Suffering
Tension
Dissatisfaction
Vulnerable
Worry
Anger
Hatred
Questioning God
Resentment
Self-centeredness
Trials
Unhappiness

► **Reflect and Respond** (15 minutes)

Read Matthew 7:7-11. Then discuss the following:

- What's one "fish"—a desire of your heart—that you're waiting for God to provide right now? On a scale from 1 to 10, how confident are you in God's power for that situation (10 being "There's a truckload of fish coming my way"; 1 being "I'll be lucky if I get a goldfish in a baggie")? Why?
- How would a deeper understanding that God really is all-powerful—and cares for you—change the way you're looking at, and responding to, that situation? Explain.

"If we really believe that God is all-powerful, we will no longer walk in fear and unbelief. We will place our faith in God—not necessarily great faith in God, but rather faith in a great God who is omnipotent. In turn, He will lead us into a life full of adventure and purpose. I have found no better way to live!"

— Bill Bright, Discover God



- What would help you to catch more of God’s power right now? What could your group do to help you know and trust more in the all-powerfulness of God?
- How would catching more of God’s power give you hope this week?

Sunday school teachers: *If you have time, break your class into pairs and ask them to do the “Making It Real” section that follows. As your class ends, encourage the pairs to pray together for each other. By doing this in class, the extra accountability will help participants follow through on the assignments they choose. Urge the pairs to touch base during the week—as a weekly challenge partner—to encourage each other and compare notes.*

If you’re out of time, assign this section to your class as homework. It’s an opportunity to make God’s power come alive in very real and practical ways.

► **Making It Real** (25 minutes)

Break into pairs.

The options below can help you make God’s power a part of your *own* life as you put the ideas into practice. Select the option you’d like to take on this week, and share your choice with your partner. Then make plans to connect sometime between now and the next session to check in and encourage each other.

- OPTION 1: Praise God.** Set aside a block of time this week (at least 30 minutes) to reflect on the completeness of God’s power and to praise Him simply for who He is. Read all of Psalm 19 or other Bible passages such as Psalm 104, Isaiah 40:28–31, or Philippians 4:12–13. Spend some time in prayer, inviting God to become more involved *in* your life and asking how He wants His power to shine *through* your life.
- OPTION 2: Let God work—and watch the results.** Is there an area of your life where you’ve been feeling powerless? Resolve to surrender that situation to God each day this week. Keep a journal during the week, reflecting on how God has worked in those circumstances and how He’s guided you through them. As

you begin to see victory in that area, talk to someone else about how God's power is working in your life.

- OPTION 3: Share the power.** Think about how God's power has already brought positive change in your life. Then ask God to bring to mind someone else who's facing similar circumstances. How can you share what God's power has done for you, as well as offer encouragement and support to that person? Commit to calling him or her this week and setting up a time to meet.
- OPTION 4: Have a "power out-age."** Who are the "powerless" in your community, those who really need to see God's power and love? Together, identify one such group and come up with a plan for helping them. Pray for God's guidance concerning how He wants you to get involved. Consider your passions, your availability, and your location. Work together to identify a practical, meaningful way you can help, and then get to it!
- OPTION 5: Find out what others think.** Ask two or three friends to join you for coffee or pizza this week. Ask a few questions about what they think of God's power. For example, do they think that God's power is infinite or limited and why? Have they ever experienced God's power in their life? Do they have an area in their life they struggle with—one where God's power could make a real difference? Be creative! But, of course, don't critique their opinions. Instead, you might want to relate an area where God's power has made a difference in your life or share something you learned from this session. Don't get preachy. The point is to get them to start asking themselves the right questions.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing"

(John 15:5).

► Prayer

Come back together as a group. Share your prayer requests. Before the leader prays, take a few moments to be silent and appreciate that God *is* all-powerful and that He wants to use His power in every area of your life. Spend time surrendering to God those areas of your life where you've been running on your own power so that instead, His power can shine through.

► This Coming Week

1. Fill in the following: My response to God's Mighty Power this week will be to:

2. Touch base sometime before the next session with your weekly challenge partner to compare notes on how you're both doing with the goals you've set.

3. To learn more about God's Mighty Power read the section in Bill Bright's *Discover God, on God Is All-Powerful*. If you don't have a copy of the book, you can find it online to download and print out for free. Just go to www.DiscoverGod.com.

4. If you'd like to discover and connect with God even more deeply each day throughout the coming week, visit www.DiscoverGod.com.

To discover more about God's Mighty Power,
start your journey on page 2141 of
the Discover God Bible.

