**Learn in Community**

Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Who is God the Father?**

*“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.” (*[*Isaiah 55:8*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is55.8)*)*

*Since people first sinned in* [*Genesis 3*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge3)*, every generation has had to connect with our invisible God for themselves. The question is: Where do we go to do this? One of the best ways to understand God the Father is to search His Scriptures. The Bible does three things—at least!—remarkably well. It reveals who God is, who we are, and how together we can have relationship.*

*Ultimately, it’s in the person of Jesus that we see the Father most clearly. But the Father also chose to reveal who He is throughout His Word. The fullest picture of our Father comes from the array of His interactions with men and women, through which He chose to explain himself to us. We would like to have answers to so many questions about this awesome God of creation. Perhaps one of the questions at the top of the list is: How is God in control?*

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| *First time leading* Learn *for Adults? Check out the* [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

*To access session content and videos on a computer, visit:*

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**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What types of behavior indicates someone might be a “control freak”? |

The truth is we all want to be in control. The feeling of being in control gives us confidence and strength. When we’re not in control, our mind can be filled with anxiety and fear. What can we do about our need for control?

Today we’ll talk about the truth that God is in control. God sees all, knows all, and is over all. If God is in control, you and I are free to not be in control all the time! We can trust God—His plans and purposes are good. This doesn’t mean life will always go our way. But it does mean that in every struggle we face, our lives are in the hands of a present, powerful, and faithful God.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: Are you facing something right now where you struggle to give God full control? Share with the group if you’re willing.



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| **QUESTION**Are you facing something right now where you struggle to give God full control? Share with the group if you’re willing. |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

The prophet Jeremiah had one main job: Tell the people of Judah the ways in which they were failing to love God and each other. In the chapter before today’s text, Jeremiah rebuked the people because they were not honoring the Sabbath. The Sabbath commandment was intended to be a blessing—a way to rest and remember to trust God. The practice of Sabbath was a needed break from the exhausting effort to always be in control. But the people of Judah trusted in themselves more than they trusted in God. Sound familiar? We can be just like the people of Judah—refusing to rest because we don’t trust enough in God.

In the Bible passage we’re going to read, God reminds His people of who He is by using something familiar to them: a potter and his work. Through this example, God teaches His people some very important truths about their relationship with Him. Through Jeremiah’s obedience and observations, the message is clear: God is in control.

**God Directs Us**

Read [Jeremiah 18:1–3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je18.1-3).

God had something He wanted to say to His people through the prophet Jeremiah. God could have simply told him the message, but instead He wanted Jeremiah to see and experience something that would illustrate the truth. So, God directed Jeremiah in a very clear and specific way. God can do the same for us. He wants to! Often the problem is we’re too busy listening to other voices instead of listening to His voice. God wants us to know and experience His truth.

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| **QUESTION**In your life, what has God used to direct and guide you? |

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| **QUESTION**Why might God want us to obey and trust Him before He reveals what He wants to show us? |

**God Molds Us**

Read [Jeremiah 18:4–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je18.4-6).

A potter made vessels, usually for household use—like plates and bowls. The wheel Jeremiah mentioned would have included two flat, round stones. Those stones would be mounted on a rod so they could be spun. The potter placed mud and water on them as he spun the stones. If the potter was unhappy with his work, he could remove the mud and start again.

Like a potter, God loves us too much to take His hands off of our life. Sometimes the process is painful. Often we wish He would leave us alone or let us do things our own way. But a loving God will not stop working on us.

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| **QUESTION**How does this metaphor of being formed as pottery in God’s hand help you better understand your relationship with Him? |

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| **QUESTION**How has God brought you to a place of “starting over” at different times in your life? What has been painful about those times? What has been helpful? |

**Did You Know?**

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| Pottery was one of the most common household materials in the ancient world. Easy to produce and arguably just as easy to break, pottery pieces are the most common find on any archaeological excavation of an ancient town or city. How ancient civilizations made pottery changed and evolved over the course of time. Now archaeologists are better able to identify developments in the ancient world by the type of pottery they find. Excavated pottery allows us to discover when ancient civilizations existed, who they traded with, or how they ate and lived their daily life. Ancient Jewish cities in the land of Israel have an even greater amount of pottery remains because Jewish purification laws required that pottery used by a ritually impure person could not be reused, but had to be broken and discarded. |

**God Responds to Us**

Read [Jeremiah 18:7–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je18.7-10).

God speaks of His power and control over nations, not just individuals. As easily as a skilled potter grabs a pile of mud to make a vessel, God can choose an entire nation for His purposes and plans. He is in control of all of creation, and we’re in His hands.

But we also see in this passage that God observes how we respond to His control. A loving parent doesn’t enjoy disciplining their child. In the same way, God wants to do what is best for us—nothing more and nothing less.

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| **QUESTION**It may not seem pleasant to think of God’s punishment following our disobedience. But if we view this as parents would, why might punishment be important to our growth? |

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| **QUESTION**Can you describe a time when God responded to your repentance or obedience by rescuing you from certain trouble or destruction? |

**God Invites Us In**

Read [Jeremiah 18:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je18.11).

In this final verse of our study, God invites His people to turn from their evil ways. Repentance always involves turning away from the things we’ve loved more than God. Repentance is not just about saying we’re sorry or trying harder. Repentance is a heart-level change—we see the uselessness and worthlessness of things we have loved more than God, and we see the beauty and worth of Jesus. He wants us to return to our true hope and source of salvation—Him.

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| **QUESTION**What are some things—useless, worthless, or even good—you’ve turned away from as you’ve grown in your relationship with God? |

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| **QUESTION**What role does God’s merciful invitation of forgiveness play in motivating us to serve Him? |

**Reflect**

**God Is in Control**

The people of Judah needed to be reminded that God is in control. We need the same reminder every day! It’s easy to believe we control our own destiny—until unexpected tragedy finds us. It’s easy to be convinced that pursuing worldly things will give us the power and influence we crave—until we fail in our pursuit and lose our way. It’s easy to think our life is in the hands of others—but the Bible teaches us God is control. Our life is in His hands!

Ultimately, it’s important for us to remember that the punishment and pain we all deserve was poured out on Jesus. He allowed His “vessel” to be broken on the cross, so we could be forgiven. Jesus willingly chose to go to the cross where He gave up control and suffered at the hands of others in our place. God’s control of all included allowing His own Son to give His life as a ransom for us. That’s how good our Heavenly Father is!

He can be trusted! If you haven’t put your trust and hope in Jesus, take a moment now and simply pray: God, forgive me for loving things more than You. I place my trust and hope in Jesus. Help me to follow and serve You. Help me to allow You to be in control. Amen.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**What are some areas of your life in which you are a control freak? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do those areas of your life mean so much to you and have so much power over your emotional well-being? |

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| **QUESTION**What can you do this week to remind yourself daily that God—your Father!—is in control? |

**Activate**

Think of one situation where you struggle to trust God—a situation in which you want more control. Maybe it’s with one of your family members, a work challenge, a health crisis, or something else.

**Challenge**

This week take time every morning to invite God’s control and goodness over that situation instead of acting or responding how you normally would. Instead of worrying, complaining, venting, or posting about it—pray. Ask another person in your group if you can connect with them a couple times this week for the purpose of praying about situations that normally make you crave control.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to learn with the personal devotions.

**What We Believe**

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| **There Is One True God**God has revealed himself as having always existed without any outside cause or agent bringing Him into being ([Isaiah 43:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is43.10)). He is the Creator of heaven and earth ([Genesis 1:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge1.1)) and the One who redeems, saves, and rescues people from sin and its painful consequences ([Isaiah 43:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is43.11)). God has further revealed himself as a single Being ([Deuteronomy 6:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Dt6.4)), consisting of three interrelated Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ([Matthew 28:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19); [Luke 3:22](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk3.22)). This concept of one God or Being of three Persons is called the Trinity. |
| **The Significance of This Doctrine**It is contrary to the clear statement and meaning of Scripture to speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three gods or as three modes in which the one God has revealed himself. Through the centuries, such misguided teachings have created division and devastation in the Church. Though the concept of a “three in one” Trinity has no parallel in the human world, it is absolutely scriptural and essential to a proper understanding of the multifaceted nature of God. Other Scripture references support the nature of the one true God and the relationship between the Three Persons: [Zechariah 14:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Zec14.9); [Matthew 1:21–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt1.21-23); [11:25–27](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt11.25-27); [28:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19); [Luke 1:35](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk1.35); [John 1:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.1), [2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.2), [14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.14), [18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.18), [29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.29), [49](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.49); [5:17–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn5.17-30), [32](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn5.32), [37](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn5.37); [8:17–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn8.17-18); [14:16–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn14.16-17); [15:26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn15.26); [17:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn17.11), [21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn17.21); [Acts 2:32–36](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac2.32-36); [Romans 1:1–3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro1.1-3), [1:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro1.7); [14:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro14.11); [1 Corinthians 1:24](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co1.24); [15:24–28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co15.24-28); [2 Corinthians 13:14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Co13.14); [Philippians 2:8–9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php2.8-9); [Hebrews 1:1–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb1.1-13); [7:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb7.3); [12:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb12.2); [1 Peter 1:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe1.8); [3:22](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe3.22); [1 John 1:3–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn1.3-4); [2:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn2.22-23); [3:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn3.8); [4:1–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn4.1-5), [10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn4.10), [14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn4.14); [2 John 3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Jn3), [9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Jn9); [Revelation 1:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re1.13), [17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re1.17); [4:8–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re4.8-11); [5:6–14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re5.6-14); [7:9–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re7.9-10). |

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: God Is in Control**

Read [Jeremiah 18:1–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je18.1-11).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about surrendering control of your life to Him? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: God’s Control Speaks to Our Worries**

Read [Matthew 6:25–33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.25-33).

These powerful words were spoken by Jesus. He embraced the full human experience, so He knew our tendency to worry and be anxious about every little thing in our life. In fact, anything that affects us or those we love doesn’t seem little to us at all—it seems enormous!

So Jesus gave His listeners some examples from everyday life to teach how God is in control over every little detail. If God cares so much about the little things, how much more will He care for you and me—those who bear His image and those for whom Jesus gave His life?

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| **QUESTION**Jesus gives several reasons in this passage that we should not worry. What are they? |

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| **QUESTION**Which of those reasons helps you the most? Why? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: God’s Control Gives Us Strength**

Read [Isaiah 40:28–31](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is40.28-31).

In this passage, the prophet Isaiah reminded God’s people of His faithfulness. Isaiah acknowledged that people get tired and grow weary, but hope can be found even for the most exhausted. Hope is found in waiting on the Lord and trusting in Him! We can trust the God who is in control to give us strength to continue.

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| **QUESTION**What causes you to grow tired and weary in life? |

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| **QUESTION**Reread verse [28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is40.28). How do those truths speak to you and help you today? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: God’s Control Helps Us Pray**

Read [1 Peter 5:6–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe5.6-11).

Peter was one of Jesus’ closest followers. And many times Peter struggled with trusting that God was in control. For example, Peter is the disciple who tried to use force to stop Jesus’ arrest and then hours later Peter denied knowing Jesus.

But Peter was fully restored by Jesus—forgiven, welcomed back, and then made a leader of the Early Church. This same Peter wrote the words you just read. He knew something about the need to give his worries to Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**Reread verse [10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe5.10). What will God do for us if we learn to trust and follow Him in all situations? |

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| **QUESTION**Peter makes a connection between having humility and being willing to give our worries to God. Why do you think both are important? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: God’s Control Brings Us Peace**

Read [Isaiah 26:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is26.1-4).

In this Scripture, the prophet Isaiah spoke of a future day and a song to be sung then. This song is about a place for the people of God—a place where they can be safe and secure. We find a beautiful truth in verse [3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is26.3). God will keep us in His perfect peace if we’ll keep our minds set on Him. This requires something of us—to keep our mind on Jesus. But it also offers us something we desperately need: the peace found only in Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**How does the imagery in this song speak to the significance of what God is doing and will do for His people? |

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| **QUESTION**What kind of peace does God offer us? |

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| **QUESTION**What does it mean to keep our mind set or stayed on God? |