**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)*)*

*Theologian A. W. Tozer is quoted as saying, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” By learning about God being the one true God, being in control, caring about us, and being eternal, we get a broader view of God the Father—our Heavenly Father.*

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| **You Will Need*** Space to play Simon Says

**Getting Ready*** Prepare the room, moving any furniture that might be tripped over.
* *First time leading* Learn *for Youth? Look here for the* [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf).
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*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:*

[*BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads*](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming.*

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| **QUESTION**If you could have controlled one thing about this past week, what would it have been? |

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Thank God for taking responsibility for the world He created and for giving people free will to make choices. Thank Him for being involved in our lives.*

**Introduction**

God is the Master at using illustrations to teach us life lessons. In the Bible reading we’ll discuss today, the prophet Jeremiah shared an illustrated message from God. We’ll see by the illustration God used that our life is in God’s hands more than we may realize. The message shows how God is sovereign. That means He’s able to control what happens in our world when He chooses. Though He has the power to cause anything to happen, He has chosen to allow us the freedom to make choices as well. He desires for us to willingly choose for Him to remold our life to reveal greater purpose and an amazing future.

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| **QUESTION**What do you think it means that God wants to be in control of our life? |

The idea that God is in control is hard for some people to understand since we also get to choose whether to follow Him or not. Think of it this way: God’s plans will always happen how He chooses, but we get to choose to receive the benefits of being a part of that plan or the consequences of rejecting it. One of the best examples of these truths at work comes from the Old Testament book Jeremiah.

**Group Activity**

**Simon Says**

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| ***You Will Need**** *Space to play Simon Says*

***Getting Ready**** *Prepare the room, moving any furniture that might be tripped over. (Be sure to move it back when the game is done.)*
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Before we find out more about how God is in control, we’re going to play a familiar game called Simon Says. Just like Simon, God gives us instructions to follow. Let’s see who can last the entire game by following Simon’s commands.

• *Choose someone to be “Simon,” and give instructions to the players.*

Simon will stand in front of the group and give simple instructions such as, “Do ten jumping jacks,” “Touch your ears,” etc. When you hear “Simon says” in front of the action, obey Simon and do what Simons says. But if you don’t hear Simon say, “Simon says” first, don’t do the action. Each person who gets caught not following the instructions correctly is out.

• *Play until one person remains or time runs out.*

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| **QUESTION**Raise your hand if you would rather be Simon than do what Simon says. Why? |

As we’re about to see, God is in control, but He also allows us to choose to obey Him or not. This tension can bring pain into our life depending on whether we choose to follow Him or not. Before we talk more about it, let’s watch the video.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

The Bible shows us how God continually reveals himself and His plan to His followers. We see many examples in the Bible of some people who rebelled against God and others who enthusiastically followed Him. Let’s look at how God spoke to Jeremiah about His will for the people of Israel and us.

**God Speaks His Will for Us**

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

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| **QUESTION**God knew He could trust Jeremiah to do what He told him. What does that tell us about Jeremiah? |

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| **QUESTION**How could obeying God open us up to seeing God move in our life? |

Like Jeremiah, God’s Word can lead us to the truth He wants to show us. We can trust God to do what’s best for us. Jeremiah trusted and obeyed. That let him take the next step in God’s plan. When we choose not to obey, it means we can miss out on the special things God has for our life.

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| **QUESTION**Has God ever revealed something from the Bible to you about your life, purpose, or calling? What happened? |

**God Wants His People to Be Moldable**

By God instructing Jeremiah to go to the potter’s shop, Jeremiah had to move from where he was at the moment. Sometimes God wants to move us from our current place, spiritually, emotionally, or even physically before He moves us on and reveals more to us.

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

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| **QUESTION**Why did the potter have to remold his clay? |

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| **QUESTION**How might this connect to how God remolds our life? |

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| **QUESTION**Why does God need to remold us sometimes? |

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| **QUESTION**Would anyone like to share a time when God remolded you? What happened? |

Our disobedience can cancel God’s blessings in our life. The good news is that when we turn to God for forgiveness, we can experience His blessings again. During these times, God remolds us in order to help us reach the best outcome for our life.

**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 Takes Action in Response to Our Choices**

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

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| **QUESTION**What does this passage tell you about God’s nature and His will for people? |

God’s control isn’t limited to individuals, but also extends to nations and beyond. Our repentance can bring God’s mercy to us individually and sometimes even to the place we live. We may pay consequences for our sin, but God always responds to genuine sorrow for sin with mercy and grace.

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| **QUESTION**What does our continued disobedience lead to? |

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| **QUESTION**Is anyone willing to share a time when you disobeyed and faced the consequences? What happened? |

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| **QUESTION**What does it mean to repent? |

When we repent, we change directions in our life and actions. We turn away from what was wrong and toward what is right. By repenting, we close the door on bad choices and open our life to God’s molding.

**Illustration**

• *Ask for a volunteer to stand in front of the group. Using the volunteer, you will illustrate how our choices can change our relationship with a sovereign God.*

Let me show you something to give you a general idea of how God’s sovereign will interacts with our freedom to choose. *(Stand in front of the student.)* When I’m face-to-face with someone, I can communicate and interact with them easily. *(Move to standing behind and further away from the student.)* But when I change my position to stand behind them, it’s hard to have the same kind of connection. Even though they haven’t moved, the way I can relate to them is very different.

This is how it works with God and us. He has a sovereign plan and will. But based on how we choose to position ourselves in relation to Him *(move to the front of the student)*, we experience that plan in a very different way! This is the essence of repenting. We move away from actions that put us in wrong relationship to God and move to a place that is in right relationship with Him.

**God Wants to Show Us Mercy**

The sins of a few can lead to an entire nation suffering. We’ve all probably seen examples in life of how one person’s rebellion toward God brought pain and suffering to others. Thankfully, God gives us a chance to turn away from our bad choices and turn to Him.

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

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| **QUESTION**God can bring disaster, but according to this verse, what does He actually want for people? |

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| **QUESTION**In this example from the Bible, how did God get the message of His mercy across to people? |

Those of us who follow Jesus have a responsibility to warn others of God’s judgment and tell them of His great mercy.

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| **QUESTION**How do we help people understand that God wants to be in control because of His great love for them? |

**Reflect**

**God Is in Control**

Some people don’t like the idea of God being in control because they see it as being a negative. What they don’t realize is that God wants the best for our life. He knows best how we think and work because He created us. He wants to be sovereign in our life to accomplish His plan for us. In another place, Jeremiah recorded God saying that He has good plans that are full of hope for the future of His people ([Jeremiah 29:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je29.11)). We just need to let Him be in control to step into that future!

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in God. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection before asking students if they want to share.*

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| **QUESTION**In what specific area of your life might God want to remold you? |

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| **QUESTION**Are you struggling with allowing God to remold this area of your life, or are you open to it, already on the journey allowing Him to change you? |

**Activate**

Break into pairs and tell your partner where you are in your journey with God. Ask them to pray for you, that you will surrender yourself completely to God in the remolding process. Remember, what we share with one another is confidential.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*The truth is, all humans are born sinners, without hope of eternal life outside of Jesus. That sounds harsh until you realize Jesus sacrificed His life for us. That sacrifice gave all people the opportunity to choose to follow God and receive eternal life. Surrendering to Jesus means knowing He loves you and accepting His gift of salvation.**Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?**Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as we close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help. |

**Conclusion**

The fact is, God is over everything, and He is in control of all of it. But that doesn’t take away our responsibility to obey Him. In the same way, our free will to obey or disobey doesn’t diminish His power and authority over creation and His desire to show mercy to everyone.

**Prayer**

Sovereign God, we acknowledge You are in control. We can trust You with our present life as well as our future. Help us to trust You now, more than ever. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Next time we’ll talk about how God cares about us. I encourage you to spend time with God through the daily devotions this week. I look forward to seeing each of you next time as we continue our journey through God’s Word!