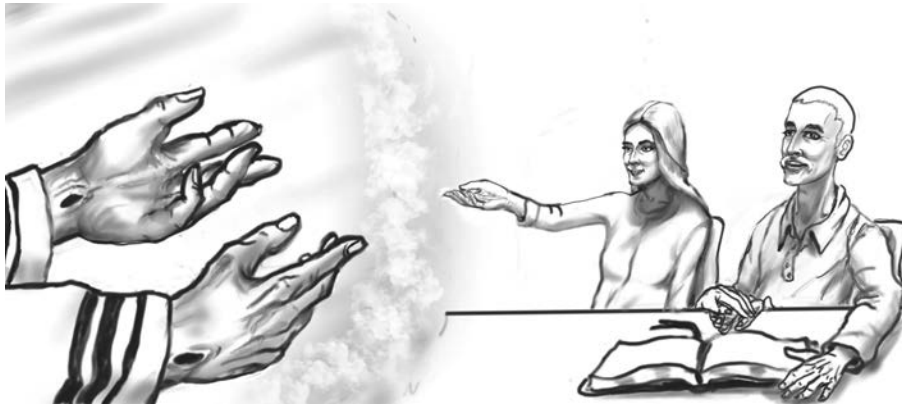


# To Know God



## SABBATH—APRIL 4

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 3:1–5; Leviticus 20:26; 1 John 4:7–19; Genesis 2:7; Matthew 1:23.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘And this is eternal [everlasting] life: that people can know you, the only true God, and that they can know Jesus Christ, the one you sent’ ” (John 17:3, ERV).



As we learn more about God, we can pray to understand and love Him more.

**IF** we want a strong relationship with God, we must first understand who He is. That's why, this week, we will look carefully at what the Bible says about God. “People do not know who God is. People don't understand His love. Worse, because they don't understand God or His love, they think the worst about Him. God gave us a message to share with other people. This message will teach them the Bible truth about God. This message is powerful and can save people. So, we must help them to understand God's love, mercy, beauty, and truth. . . . We must give God's final message of mercy to the people on this earth. This message will show everyone that God is love.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 415, adapted.

We can't fully explain God's love. But we can tell people what the Bible says about Him. We can't know everything there is to know about God and His wonderful love. But as we learn more about Him, we can pray to understand and love Him more. When we pray for these things, we will want to grow close to Him in our hearts. When we are close to God in our hearts, we can show His love to other people.

## A BETTER PICTURE OF GOD (Genesis 3:1–5)

The Bible gives us the best picture of God. The Bible explains why we're here. The Bible also shows us that God is in control and teaches us about His love.

From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation, we read about God. Both the Bible and Jesus tell us about God. The Bible tells us that God is all-powerful (Job 1:12). God knows everything (Isaiah 46:9, 10). God is just (Isaiah 30:18). God is filled with mercy (Deuteronomy 7:9). God is loving and patient with us (Romans 2:4). God is wise (1 Corinthians 2:7). God saves us with His loving-favor (2 Corinthians 12:9). God forgives us (Matthew 6:14). God has a plan for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11). God can wake us up from the dead (John 11:25). God is a strong King (Psalm 47:8). God is everlasting (Deuteronomy 33:27). The Bible tells us so much more about God. These Bible truths give us plenty of reasons to love God and want a relationship with Him. The more we know God, the more we will love Him. We also will want to be close to Him in our hearts.

Who was the first person to doubt God's love? Lucifer was. Lucifer's doubts about God caused war in heaven. Since then, "Satan never stops inventing new ways to keep people busy. Satan wants to keep us from learning more about God."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, page 740, adapted. Satan doesn't care what we believe about God as long as we believe the wrong thing.

**Read about the snake's (Satan's) conversation with Eve, in Genesis 3:1–5. What was the snake's plan? What lies did the snake tell Eve about God?**

Satan's message to Eve was: "God is keeping secrets from you. God doesn't want what is best for you. You can't trust God." Satan tries to tell us these same lies today. Ellen G. White tells us about Satan's plan when she writes, "From the start of the worldwide war between God and Satan, the devil lied about God. Satan tried to get men to reject God's law."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 338, adapted.

**What are some false ideas or beliefs about God that we are taught in this life? Are there times in the past when your behavior showed people a false "picture" of God? If yes, what can you do to change with the Holy Spirit's help? How can you show God's love to the people around you?**



**Lucifer's doubts about God caused war in heaven.**

**GOD IS HOLY (Leviticus 20:26)**

‘Holy’ is not a word that most people use very often in everyday life. Maybe that’s because we see so few holy things around us. The Sabbath is a holy day in time. God, of course, is holy. But apart from God’s love for us, we may not see many holy things in our everyday lives.

If you study the Bible, you will understand that God is holy. But what does that really mean?

**Read Leviticus 20:26; 1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 57:15; and Ezekiel 38:23. What do these verses tell us about God?**

God is holy. He is completely separate from evil and sin. God is 100% good and holy, from beginning to end.

God’s love is holy. His love isn’t selfish. As we saw yesterday, God knows everything. So, His plans for us are holy and good, and not evil. Would you trust a God who knew everything, if He wasn’t holy? Of course not! We would be afraid of Him.

As we also saw yesterday, God is all-powerful. God’s power is holy, too. Imagine in your mind a God who is all-powerful and not holy. Maybe He would be a powerful and evil God. Because God is holy, we can love and trust Him. So, we must trust that God is holy. Then we can understand better who God is. Sad to say, most people do not understand this important Bible truth about God at all.

Think about people in the Bible who met with God: Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John. What did they do when they first met with God? They removed their shoes, hid their faces, or lay down as if they were dead. As humans, we are sinners. We are not holy. We cannot stand when we see God. Any person who looks at God’s face won’t live. In the same way, when Ellen G. White saw God in dreams, she often cried, “Glory . . . glory . . . glory.” This word helps us more than any other word to understand what she saw. And, of course, the four living things in the book of Revelation say these words, too. The four living things don’t rest day or night without saying, “ ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God All-Powerful. He always was, he is, and he is coming’ ” (Revelation 4:8, ERV).

**How does knowing that God is 100% holy fill you with hope? How does this Bible truth change you? How does this idea help you to want to live a holy life, too?**



**What did people in the Bible do when they first met with God? They removed their shoes, hid their faces, or lay down as if they were dead.**

## GOD IS LOVE (1 John 4:7–19)

Most Christians use the word ‘love’ to talk about God and who He is. 1 John 4:8 says, “God is love” (ERV). Notice that John doesn’t say, “God is loving.” No, John says, “God is love.” Love is who God is.

Some people have a hard time understanding God’s love. Maybe their past relationships weren’t very loving. So, their ideas about love aren’t perfect. Our ideas about God’s love must come from the Bible. The Bible shows us the truth about God and His love.

### What does 1 John 4:7–19 explain to us about love?

God’s love is perfect and free. God’s love connects us to Him in a relationship: “So we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. God is love. Everyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them” (1 John 4:16, ERV). God made us copies of Himself (Genesis 1:27). So, we are much the same as God. God made us to love and to want love. In the Hebrew language, an important word for love is ‘hesed.’ This word helps us understand God’s love for people. God’s love is loyal, caring, and dependable. Because God loves us, He protects us. We can trust Him.

God has many different names in the Bible. These names help us understand better the beauty of His love. Below are two examples of God’s names and what they mean:

**Adonai:** This name means ‘The Lord of all, who is the King forever.’ This name for God is used with His Promise (Genesis 15:2; Judges 6:15; Malachi 1:6; Psalm 97:5).

**Yahweh-Yireh:** This name means “ ‘The LORD will give me what I need’ ” (Genesis 22:13, 14, EASY).

The best example of God’s love is Jesus (John 3:16). Jesus died for sinners (Romans 5:8). God could have refused to give us Jesus. But He didn’t refuse to give us this gift. Because sin separated us from God (Isaiah 59:1, 2), Jesus came to end this separation (John 12:32). His whole life showed us God’s perfect love (John 14:9; Hebrews 1:3).

**Many of God’s names show us He is holy. These names also show us His love. Read 1 Corinthians 13. Wherever you see the word “love,” replace it with ‘God.’ What does this substitution teach you about God? Now replace “love” with your name. How well do you “love” the same way as God?**



**Because sin separated us from God (Isaiah 59:1, 2), Jesus came to end this separation (John 12:32).**

## THE GOD WHO MADE US (Genesis 2:7)

What are the first words of the Bible? You may know them in your heart: “In the beginning, God . . .” (Genesis 1:1, EASY). In the Hebrew language, the word for God in this verse is ‘Elohim.’ ‘Elohim’ can mean false gods. But ‘Elohim’ also can mean an all-powerful God who is connected with the things He made. We may not understand everything about God. But He controls everything. God is so powerful that He can make something from nothing with His voice!

Genesis 2 uses a different name for God: ‘Yahweh.’ This name connects to ‘Elohim’ (*Yahweh Elohim*). ‘Yahweh’ is the same all-powerful God as ‘Elohim.’ But ‘Yahweh’ is a more personal name for God. Bible writers often use the name ‘Yahweh’ to talk about God’s Promise. God’s Promise shows the loving relationship He wants with His people.



**Imagine God kneeling on the ground. He uses His hands to make the first human out of the dirt.**

**Compare what the Bible says about God in Genesis 1:1 with Genesis 2:7. What do you notice?**

Imagine a picture in your mind of the story in Genesis 2:7. Imagine God kneeling on the ground. He uses His hands to make the first human out of the dirt. “Then the LORD God took some soil [dirt] from the ground and he made a man. He breathed air into the nose of the man to give him life. So the man became alive” (Genesis 2:7, EASY). Look at how close God gets to Adam when He makes Him. He gets so close that He breathes the breath of life into Adam’s nose. The name “the LORD God,” or Yahweh, shows us a personal picture of God. Moses uses both names of God in the first two chapters of the Bible to help us understand God better.

The name “Elohim” shows us that God is all-powerful. The name “Yahweh” shows us that God wants to be close to us. Both names show us important parts of God: His control and His love. As Paul told the Athenians on Mars Hill: “But he is not far from any of us: ‘By [With] his power we live and move and exist [stay alive]’ ” (Acts 17:27, 28, ICB). We must seek to learn what the Bible tells us about God. Then we will grow in a relationship with Him. We must read all parts of the Bible, and not just one part. As we learn more about God, we will love Him more.

**Read what Elihu says about God in Job 36:24–33 and Job 37. Then read God’s announcement about His power in Job 38 and 39. What do these verses teach us about God?**

## IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US (Matthew 1:23)

What if you wanted to tell someone about God’s love? What example from the Bible would you use?

The best answer, of course, is Jesus. Jesus shows us God. Many verses tell us this Bible truth. But the verse that tells us most plainly is John 14:9. In this verse, Jesus says, “ ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father too’ ” (ERV). Do you want to know more about God? Look to Jesus. His words, actions, behavior, and amazing love show us what God thinks and feels about us.

The Bible gives us four Gospels or stories about Jesus’ life. These stories give us a full picture of Jesus. Matthew was a Jewish writer, who wrote his book for Jews. Matthew shows us that Jesus is the Savior who kept all of God’s promises. Mark shows us Jesus at work. Jesus always thought about other people. He always did what His Father wanted Him to do. Luke tells us about Jesus’ love. Luke’s story helps us to trust what we read about Jesus (Luke 1:3, 4). John tells us that Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth as a man. John shows us that Jesus is who He says He is. This Bible truth fills our hearts with new life. All four Gospels tell us about Jesus. But not everyone thinks alike. So, the four Gospel writers “tell Jesus’ story in different ways. Each writer has his own experience. Each story gives us more knowledge about Jesus. The stories meet the needs of different people.”—Ellen G. White, Manuscript 105, 1900. What is the last Gospel you read?

**In Matthew 1:23, a special name is given to Jesus. Why is this name so special? How does this name help us understand God’s love? Read Matthew 28:20. Look at the last part of the verse. Compare Matthew 28:20 with Matthew 1:23. What do you notice?**

The love of God is a big topic. We’ve only talked a little bit about it today. God is more wonderful than we can imagine in our minds. We will learn about Him forever in heaven and on the new earth.

**God is worthy of our praise. Take some time to praise Him for who He is, what He’s done, and what He’s doing now. Be sure to praise Him for the things the Bible tells us about Him. (Here is an example: “Thank you, God, for being \_\_\_\_\_, as You tell me in [please add a Bible verse of your choice here].”**



**Jesus’ words, actions, behavior, and amazing love show us what God thinks and feels about us.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** God invites His people to show everyone His love. To do that, we need to know God personally ourselves. The best way to know about God is to read about Him in the Bible.

“The love of a human father for his son can’t compare to God’s love. No one can explain God’s love. No one can write the whole truth about it. You may think about God’s love every day of your life. You may study the Bible to try to understand God’s love. But we can’t fully understand or know everything about God’s love. There will always be more to learn and know about it. You may study God’s love for ages to come. But you will never understand fully why God loved us so much that He gave His Son to die for sinners. But we must try to understand His love as best we can. We must think about Jesus’ life and God’s plan to save us. The more we study the Bible, the more we will understand these important Bible truths.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, page 740, adapted.



The best way to know about God is to read about Him in the Bible.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Think about the things you learned about God this week. Which idea did you like the most? How did it help you understand God better?
- 2 What else can you study about God to make your relationship with Him grow strong?
- 3 With a family member or friend, read or listen to *Steps to Christ*, chapter 1. Talk about it together. What new Bible truths about God and Jesus did this chapter make you think about?
- 4 Many people believe false ideas about God. Jesus came to share the truth about God. What can you do to share with people the Bible truth about God’s love?
- 5 Think some more about what you learned from Monday’s study. For sure, we are sinners. We are not holy. At the same time, the Bible says that God’s people must live holy lives. God is holy. He invites us to be holy. But what does it really mean to live a holy life? Read 1 Peter 1:13–16; Romans 6:22; and Hebrews 12:14 for the answer.

## REFUSING TO FLY ON THE SABBATH

**K**asereka Maghulu Kavatsi was a Seventh-day Adventist businessman. He lived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kasereka's businesses included farming, fishing, clothing, and a shipping airline company called Kavatsi Airlines.

Kavatsi Airlines rented a Boeing 707 jet from a business partner in Kenya. The business agreement had many partners. The Kenyan partner rented the plane from a Dubai company. The Dubai company rented the plane from the owner who lived in Britain. Kavatsi Airlines agreed to share with these partners the money it made from using the plane.

The business did well until bad weather came on a Friday. Kavatsi Airlines didn't fly the plane that day. So, the Kenyan partner insisted that the plane leave on Saturday. But Kasereka refused. He said, "There's no way I can fly on Sabbath."

The Kenyan partner called the partner in Dubai and said, "We gave Kavatsi our jet. But he doesn't want to fly on Saturday. Try to convince him. This is a business matter."

The Dubai company called Kasereka. But Kasereka refused to fly the plane on Saturday. So, the Dubai company called the owner of the plane in Britain. The owner was a white man who knew the Swahili language that Kasereka spoke. The owner called Kasereka and spoke to him in Swahili. The owner asked, "Why aren't you flying today?"

Kasereka said, "I'm a Seventh-day Adventist."

Then the owner called other people who rented their airplanes to Kavatsi Airlines. The people said Kasereka was a good man. They said, "The Sabbath is part of Kasereka's faith."

Then the owner told his partners in Dubai and Kenya to respect Kasereka's religious beliefs: "Leave him alone."

Kasereka rented the plane for four months. During that time, Kasereka flew the jet every day of the week except on Sabbath. Then Kasereka gave the plane back to his partners.

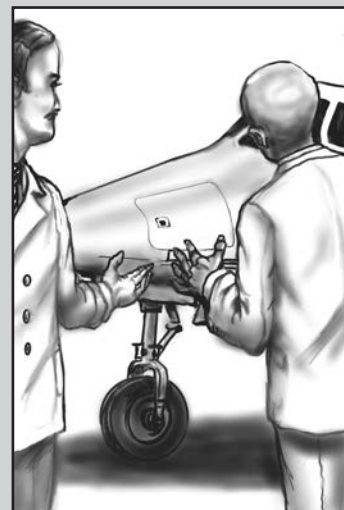
A year later, the British owner called Kasereka. The British owner said, "I'd like to meet you, face-to-face. I want to come to your house and see where you live."

The owner flew to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He stayed in Kasereka's guesthouse. The owner said, "I came here for a reason. I wanted to know if you were the same person of faith you were a year ago when you refused to fly on Saturdays."

Then the British man said, "I made more money in the four months we worked together than at any other time in my life. Because of your faith, I'm giving you a small plane for free." The man gave Kasereka an 18-seat private jet.

Kasereka was filled with surprise at the gift. With no pride in his heart, he answered, "I am just serving the Lord."

## INSIDE *Story*



**"Because of your faith,  
I'm giving you a small  
plane for free."**



**Kasereka Maghulu Kavatsi**