PART I

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The lessons of Part I seek to provide a foundation, basis, or rationale for an emphasis on everyday Christian living. A distinctly Christian ethic and a distinctly Christian approach to life in general logically begin with God (Lesson 2), have an important place for man (Lesson 3), are grounded in the biblical revelation (Lesson 4), and naturally evolve from the Christian's experience in and with the resurrected Christ (Lesson 5).

LESSON 2

The Nature of God

What W. S. Bruce said some years ago about Old Testament morality could be said concerning the Christian life in general. He said that Old Testament morality revolved around God as the earth revolves around the sun. So it is or should be with the Christian life. God should be the final point of reference in all that the child of God does.

What is there in the nature of the God around whom the Christian life revolves that will provide a ground or rationale for an emphasis on everyday Christian living? What is there about God that will give us guidelines as we seek to know the kind of life we should live?

God should be the final point of reference in _____ that the child of God _____.

(all, does)

Revealed and Concealed

A logical place to begin a study of the nature of God is the fact that He has sought through the centuries to reveal Himself, His character, and His will to man. Men, however, have been limited in their capacity to receive, appropriate, or understand that revelation. Finally, He sent His Son as the full revelation of the Father. However, the men who were most closely associated with the Son were unable to comprehend fully all that He sought to reveal to them concerning the Father. He Himself said that the Holy Spirit, when He came, would give them additional insights into the truth. The Divine Spirit has continued to seek to lead the children of God into a clearer understanding of the nature and will of God.

Where is a logical place to begin a study of the nature of God? _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

But at best, what we comprehend now is like "puzzling reflections in a mirror" (NEB) or "the baffling reflection of reality" (Ph.). At present all we know "is a little fraction of the truth ." There will come a time, however, when we will know fully (1 Cor. 13:12).

Augustine expressed the paradoxical nature of our knowledge of God when he spoke of God as the "most High, and the most near; most secret, and most present."[1] To use traditional theological terms, God is both transcendent and imminent. Bonhoeffer says that "God is the 'Beyond' in the midst of our life."[2] He is known and yet unknown. He is the other, but not

God is both _____ and _____.

(transcendent, imminent)

[1]Augustine, *Confessions*, (Everyman's Library), p. 99.

[2]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (SCM Press, 1963), p. 93. Some reputable scholars have misused or at best used Bonhoeffer "one-sidedly." Thomas Oden says that "Bonhoeffer is in most respects a Barthian who asked embarrassing questions" (*Radical Obedience*, Westminster Press, 1964, p. 22). Many of those questions were asked in his letters from prison, frequently when he was thinking out loud. Unfortunately, some people have used these questions along with statements in those letters without proper regard for Bonhoeffer's over-all perspective. He has been claimed as a supporter of almost every conceivable position, some of which I am persuaded would be highly embarrassing to him.

the "wholly other." He is secret and yet present.

In Christ we have found God, and yet we have not found Him completely. We have the assurance that He exists, and yet we continue to search for Him. He has been revealed to us, but He is still concealed from us. It really seems that the more fully He has been revealed the more completely He seems to be concealed. The hunger that is satisfied when we find Him in turn creates a renewed or a deeper hunger for a fuller knowledge of Him and His will for us and for our world. The more mature we become in Him and hence the better we know Him the more conscious we become of how limited our knowledge is of Him.

The preceding is the major source for a deep-seated tension in the life of the sincere, seeking child of God. It is the kind of tension that keeps one's face set towards the sunrise of new insights and additional light. It is the type of tension that is necessary if progress is to be made in one's understanding of God and His will for our lives.

As we search for a deeper and clearer understanding of the nature and will of God, we can be assured that He is seeking to reveal Himself and His will to us. We are seeking Him because He has already sought and found us. There is a very real sense in which we seek the Seeker. The question He asked Adam in the Garden is one that He continues to ask man, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9). Where are we? Are we trying to hide from Him or are we searching for Him? Where are we in our knowledge of Him? Where are we in obedience to His will? Where are we in our likeness to Him? How fully do we reveal Him to others? Where are we?

Is the following statement true or false?
Christ is both revealed to us and concealed from us.

_____

(true)

Progress in one's understanding of the nature and will of God requires _____.

(tension)

A Moral Person

Just as it is assumed in the Scriptures that God exists, so it is assumed that He is a Person. All the qualities associated with a person are attributed to Him. When we say that God is a person and when we ascribe personal qualities to Him, we are using human language in an attempt to understand God and to describe to others what we believe we know about Him. The words used to describe God, including the word Person, to use an expression of Luther, need to be "given a bath." They need to be cleansed of their association with the human person.

It should be remembered, however, that language is not static. There may be continuity in the use of words, but there is also movement. For example, when words are related to new objects, they take on new meaning. This is true of a word like "person." It is a human word, but when applied to God new life is breathed into it. God fills the word to the full as He does every word that is applied to Him. This is one reason for man's inability to comprehend fully the nature of God. One never fully understands another human person. This is true in the most intimate human relationship, that of husband and wife. They never completely understand one another.

The fact that God is a person has tremendous significance for our relations with Him and everyday Christian living. For one thing, the fact that He is a person means that to be right in our relations to Him we must be right on a personal basis.

Although a human illustration is an inadequate tool to express

All the qualities associated with a _____ *are attributed to* _____.

(person, God)

Are the following statements true or false?

1. *The meaning of words never change.* _____
2. *The meaning of "person" does not change when applied to God.* _____
3. *One never fully understands another human person, even a husband or wife.* _____

(1.false; 2.false; 3.true)

a great spiritual or divine truth, let us use the relation of husband and wife to illustrate our relation to God as a person. A husband may pride himself on his generous provisions for his wife and his thoughtfulness concerning special occasions. He may think that these things are all his wife should expect. These things are commendable, if they are not made substitutes for something deeper and more meaningful. Many a wife, however, has said, and also some husbands, "It is not primarily your gifts I want, I want you." She is a person, a Thou, and her husband cannot be right with her unless he is right on a personal basis.

So it is with our relation with God. He is a person. Unless we are right with Him on a personal basis, we are not acceptable to Him and will not be approved by Him. This means, among other things, that to be right with God involves more than faithfulness to the formalities of our faith, more than orthodoxy of belief, freedom from hurtful habits, or even active participation in the work of the Lord. There is a dimension to our relation to God as a person that goes deeper than any of the preceding.

There are many Christians who evidently think they can please God by attending worship services regularly, giving a tithe of their income, and being active in the work of the church. Many of us, if we listen, may hear our heavenly Father say, "These you ought to have done, without neglecting the weightier more important matters" (see Matt. 23:23). Formalities are poor and inadequate substitutes for the vitalities of our faith.

There are abundant evidences or proofs in the Scripture that God is a moral person. Really to be a person involves a sense of moral values and responsibility. There are places, however, where specific moral qualities are directly attributed to God; He is just (Ezra 9:15; Ps. 145:17), the Just One (Acts 22:14), righteous (Ps. 7:9; 11:7; 119:137; 129:4), and the "holy and righteous One" (Acts 3:4).

These and other qualities are also revealed in the way God acted or acts. He is just because He is "just in all his ways" (Ps. 145:17). He is righteous because He is "righteous in all the works which he has done" (Dan. 9:14). He judges righteously (Jer. 11:20), His acts are righteous (1 Sam. 12:7), and His judgements are just (Rev. 16:5, 7).

There are a number of other moral traits or attributes of God. One of the most meaningful is love, which will be discussed in a later chapter. We shall limit the discussion in this section to brief statements concerning God's faithfulness or dependability and His holiness. The former is frequently neglected, while the latter is as comprehensive as any one character trait of God.

The faithfulness or dependability of God is a major theme of the Bible. It is related in a particular way to His covenant relation with His people. He is not only a covenant-making God, He is also a covenant-keeping God. His faithfulness to His covenant with His people places them under obligation to keep the covenant.

God's dependability is also evident in the natural order and in the moral order. It is well to remember that the basic laws of God, natural and moral, are unchanging. They are written into the nature of man and of the world in which he lives.

Of the attributes of God none is more inclusive than His holiness. In the main, it is related, as is true of His dependabi-

The author uses a husband and wife relationship to illustrate our _____ *to* _____.

(relation, God)

One can only be right with God on a _____ *basis.*

(personal)

Formalities are poor and inadequate substitutes for the _____ *of our faith.*

(vitalities)

One can know that God is moral by the way He _____.

(acts)

A major biblical theme is God's _____.

(faithfulness)

None of God's attributes is more inclusive than His

lity, to and is expressive of His covenant relation to His people. The latter are a holy people separated from the world and separated unto their God and to His purposes. The "from" and "unto" represent the negative and positive aspects of holiness.

There is at least one other thing that should be said concerning the moral attributes of God. They are not sharply divided. They merge into one another. There is unity in the person of God. For example, there is not wrath on the one hand and love on the other. His wrath is expressive of His love. Also, His love is both holy and righteous. The reverse can also be said. Righteousness must be expressive of and in a sense must incorporate love if it is to be the righteousness of God.

One thing that explains the unity in the person of God is the fact that the attributes of God are not external to Him. They naturally evolve from His nature as a moral person. There is a real sense in which every attribute or character trait is the expression of the essence of God. God is not only "light" (1 John 1:5) and "love" (1 John 4:8, 16), He is also "grace," "righteousness," "faithfulness," and "holiness."

There is at least one other factor that helps to explain the unity in the person of God. Every character trait properly attributed to God finds perfect expression in Him. He is perfect love, complete righteousness, undiluted faithfulness, and untarnished holiness. When these qualities are raised to the level of perfection, there can be no conflict in them.

The perfection of every moral trait of God is most completely revealed in the Cross. What John says about love could be said concerning every other attribute. His statement is, "By this we know love *["what love is," NEB]*, that he laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). We could never have known the depth of God's love *(agape)* apart from Christ's death on the cross. Likewise, we could never have known the full meaning of God's grace, mercy, righteousness, or holiness apart from the Cross.

The preceding has considerable significance for the children of God. We should have a deepening desire that our lives will increasingly express the same character traits found in God and that these traits will be the expression of a unified or integrated personality. This will be true as and to the degree that the outer expressions of our lives are the normal, natural expressions of the inner life. In other words, to the degree that love, mercy, justice, faithfulness, holiness and other traits have become a part of the very essence of our being, to that degree they will be the outer expressions of a well-integrated personality.

In turn, these traits will become the normal, the natural, the inevitable expression of our lives to the degree that we let the resurrected Christ live in us and express Himself through us. In other words, they will evolve from the vital inner relation with the Person who has all these qualities to the level of perfection.

Furthermore, the more completely we appropriate the deeper meaning of the Cross the more we will reveal to others the basic moral character of God. They will see at least to a limited degree revealed in our lives the love, grace, righteousness, faithfulness, and holiness of God. As we take up our cross and follow Him they will see Him and understand something of our relation to Him.

_____.

(holiness)

Give two illustrations of unity in the person of God.

1. _____

2. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The attributes of God naturally evolve from His nature as a _____ _____.

(moral, person)

Where are God's moral traits most completely revealed?

_____

_____

_____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Is the following statement true or false?

Christians should have a deepening desire that their lives increasingly express the same character traits found in God. _____

(true)

Christian character traits evolve from a vital inner relation with the Person who has all the qualities to the _____ *of* _____.

(level, perfection)

Sovereign

A scientist has said, "We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown." The child of God believes that the footprint has been left by the sovereign God of the universe. His creative power brought the universe into existence. His creative work, however, is not restricted to the past. He is now creatively active in the world, seeking to work out His will and purpose. Jesus said on one occasion, "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5:17). Since God is active in the contemporary world, He can be encountered existentially by a child of His in the changing situations of life.

The concern of the sovereign God is as broad as life. He is not only concerned about every aspect of the life of the individual; He is also interested in the welfare of society and is active in the affairs of the nations of the world. He could not be sovereign unless His sovereignty was inclusive of all of life. As sovereign He is at work in the schoolroom and in the legislative hall as well as in the sanctuary. He is seeking to work out His purposes in and through the civic club, the fraternal order, the labour union, and the chamber of commerce as well as in and through church. He is active in the science laboratory and the philosopher's study as well as in the halls of the theological seminary. In some areas of life, to use an expression of Kierkegaard's, God may be, from our perspective, "incognito." We may not be conscious of His presence, but we can be sure that He is there. If we think of history as a great drama, God is not only the author of the script and director of the play, He is also the chief actor and participant in the drama.

Our God is the God of every man, of every nation, and of every aspect of every life. This perspective concerning God and His sovereignty is "whole-istic." As children of God we should be "whole-istic" in our approach to life. We should have a deep sense of responsibility to God for the totality of life. There is no decision that we make and no problem that we face that is beyond the range of the concern of our heavenly Father. This is true of problems widely divergent as alcoholism, smoking, homosexuality, drug addiction, theft, or economic security.

Furthermore, since we serve the sovereign God we can go to our task with hope rather than despair, with a sense of ultimate victory rather than of defeat. We can face the world and whatever opposition we may find in it with chin up. We know that the final word belongs to our God. The clearest evidence of this fact is the empty tomb. It speaks the word of victory over all the forces that oppose the purposes of God.

God is now creatively active in the _____.

(world)

God is concerned about _____ of _____.

(all, life)

God may sometimes be _____.

(incognito)

Christians should have a deep sense of responsibility to God for the _____ of _____.

(totality, life)

Is the following statement true or false?

The sovereignty of God gives Christians hope and a sense of victory. _____

(true)

Father

The God who is the sovereign God of the universe is also our heavenly Father. Here again we are forced to use human language to express a divine relationship. As true of every human term applied to God, its association with Him breathes new life and meaning into the term. The human father on the highest level is a very imperfect representation of God as Father. There

The human father on the highest level is a very

is a continuing challenge to human fathers to move towards the full expression of the concept in the fatherhood of God.

While the idea of God as Father is much more prevalent in the New Testament than in the Old Testament, there are a number of such references in the latter (see Deut. 32:6; Isa. 63:16; Jer. 3:19). In the New Testament there are approximately 275 references to God as Father, with over 100 of these in John's Gospel and an additional dozen in 1 John. It is primarily the Johannine writings that have made "Father" the more or less natural name for God for Christians, although it is used in the Synoptic Gospels and frequently in Paul's epistles.

One reason for the prevalence of "Father" as a name for God in the New Testament is the fact that Jesus so frequently used the term. Many of the references of Jesus to God as Father were simply to "the Father." Being conscious of a unique relation to God, he frequently referred to God as "my Father." He also used the expression "your Father," with nineteen such references in Matthew's Gospel, with fifteen of these in the Sermon on the Mount and all but four of them in chapter six.

It was in the Model Prayer that Jesus used the all-inclusive "Our Father." If God is "my Father" and "your Father," then He is "our Father." The "our" of the original prayer included Jesus and His disciples. Today it includes all who have come into the family of God through their union with the resurrected Christ. The "our Father" makes prayer drastically and for some embarrassingly inclusive. It presents a tremendous challenge to the children of God. Can we pray "our Father" with all of God's children: with those of other churches and denominations, with those of other classes and castes, with those of other colours and races? We should remember that the God who is the Father of all of His children cannot really be "my Father" unless I can accept Him as "your Father" and hence as "our Father."

It possibly should be added that although God is in the proper and deepest sense only the Father of those who have come into His spiritual family, nevertheless He has a fatherly attitude towards all men. He makes His sun to rise "on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). This means that we, His children, should have a brotherly attitude towards all men, even towards those who are not our spiritual brothers.

What was the image that Jesus sought to give when He used "Father" to describe God? One thing that He beautifully portrayed in the Sermon on the Mount is the fact that the Father knows our needs and has resources to provide for those needs. Because of His fatherly care we are not to worry or be anxious about what we shall eat, drink, or wear. Our Father knows that we have need of these things. We are to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness with the calm assurance that the necessities of life will be provided for us.

God as Father is concerned about His children as individuals. How glorious to remember that the sovereign God of the universe knows us by name. We are not mere dots in space, not mere numbers in a computerized world; we are persons, not "its" but "thous." Frequently in the Scriptures persons are addressed by name: "Moses" (Exod. 3:4), "Elijah" (1 Kings 19:9, 13), "Samuel" (1 Sam. 3:10). Jesus, the good or true

_____ *representation of God as* _____.

(imperfect, Father)

The word "Father" has become a natural expression for God mainly because of the writings of _____.

(John)

The term "our Father" in the model prayer presents a _____ _____ *to the children of God.*

(tremendous, challenge)

God has a fatherly attitude towards all _____.

(men)

God has resources to provide for our _____.

(needs)

The sovereign God of the _____ *knows us by* _____.

(universe, name)

shepherd, knows His sheep by name and they recognize His voice and follow Him (John 10:3, 4, 14).

It may be wise to remind ourselves that we are not by nature sons or children of God. Our sonship is by adoption (see Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal.4:5; Eph. 1:5). Through our union with Christ we are brought not only into the formal status of children, but there is also created within us a new heart with new motives and purposes. It is this experience that causes us to cry out "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15; cf. Mark 14:36). Paul used another figure, applying it particularly to the Gentiles, which portrays our relation to God. Paul suggested that the Gentiles, a wild olive shoot, had been grafted into a cultivated olive tree (Rom. 11:17, 19, 23, 24). We have been grafted into Christ.

Whatever figure or symbol we may use to portray our relation to God as Father, the relation entails responsibility on our part. The father in the days of Jesus was the authoritative figure in the home. The will, the rule, the reign of our heavenly Father is to be supreme. As sons and daughters of the sovereign God, who is our Father, we are obligated to seek His will and, once knowing it, we are to be obedient to it. We are to put His cause, His kingdom first in our lives. Every privilege we have as children of God increases our obligation to live a life worthy of His blessings and of being recognized as a member of His family.

It was Calvin who said: "Ever since God exhibited himself to us as a Father, we must be convicted of extreme ingratitude if we do not in turn exhibit ourselves as his sons...Ever since he ingrafted us into his body, we, who are his members, should anxiously beware of contracting any stain or taint."[3]

Our sonship to God is by _____.

(adoption)

Our relation to God as Father entails _____ *on our* _____.

(responsibility, part)

Christians are to put God's cause and kingdom _____.

(first)

The Kinship Appeal

The kinship appeal is a prominent motif in the Scriptures. For example, God said that the children of Israel were to be kind and helpful to widows, orphans, and sojourners among them not only because He had been kind to the children of Israel but also because He had a special concern for the neglected and underprivileged (see Deut. 10:18–19; 24:17) Occasionally God says in a specific way that His people are to be like Him. An example is the frequently quoted statement: "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2; cf. 11:44).

Over and over again the children of Israel were admonished to walk in the way of the Lord (a few of many references are: Deut. 5:33; 8:6; 10:12; Josh. 22:5; Jer. 7:23), which means basically an obedience to His commandments. His commandments, however, are expressive of His nature and hence to walk in the way of the Lord in the final analysis means to walk as He walks, to be like Him. God reveals Himself and His character by His relation to the peoples of the world, by the way He treats them. In the same way, His children will reveal their kinship to Him by the way they relate themselves to people.

The kinship appeal is clearly evident in the New Testament. For example, Jesus admonished His disciples to love their enemies and gave as a motive that they might be sons of their

An important motif in the Scriptures is the appeal to _____.

(kinship)

God's children reveal their kinship to Him by the way they _____ *to* _____.

(relate, people)

[3] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II, 4.

Father (Matt. 5:45). He then adds the continually challenging admonition or ideal: "You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

Paul used the example of Jesus as a basis for his appeal to the Corinthian church for a liberal offering for the saints at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1–9). In discussing what was evidently a rather prevalent problem regarding the eating of meat offered to idols, he appealed to the strong or mature not to please themselves but to please their neighbours. He gave as a motive the fact that Christ did not please Himself. In other words, Christ set the example; His disciples should be like Him (see Rom. 15:1–3). To the Ephesians he wrote: "Walk (*peripateo*—literally "walk around," frequently translated "live") in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph. 5:2). He exhorted the Philippians to have the same mind or attitude of humility that was found in Jesus (Phil. 2:5–8). The Colossians were asked to forgive one another as Christ had forgiven them (Col. 3:13; cf. Eph 4:32).

The initial and continuing invitation of Jesus was and is "Follow me" (Mark 1:17; 2:14; 10:21; Matt. 16:24). To be a disciple of His is to walk His way, to follow where He leads. He did not and does not give detailed instructions about the way in which we should walk. The best instructions come from examining the life He lived. He never asked a disciple of His to walk in a way that He had not walked and will not walk with Him. We should remember, however, that His teachings, including His teachings by example as well as by word of mouth, provide a compass rather than a road map. That compass points to an open road and deepening fellowship with Him as we walk with Him in the way.

If we walk with Him, we will have a deep interest in people—in all kinds of people but particularly in the common people, the neglected, the social and moral outcasts of our society. We shall have compassion for the masses of humanity who are harrassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36; cf. 14:14; 15:32), but we shall also have compassion on individuals who suffer (see Matt. 20:30–34; Mark 1:40–42; Luke 7:11–15). In other words, our compassion will be individualized or personalized as well as generalized. If we walk in the way with Him we, like Him, will go about doing good (Acts 10:38) and the good we do will naturally and inevitably result from the vitality of our relationship to Him.

The preceding represents a goal far beyond our hope of attainment in this life. In the meantime, to use a Pauline expression, we should "as God's dear children, try to be like him" (Eph. 5:1 NEB). To be like Him means perfection and Paul frankly says, "I have not yet reached perfection" but he then adds, "but I press on hoping to take hold of that for which Christ once took hold of me" (Phil. 3:12 NEB). The goal of Paul's life was not behind him; it was constantly before him. Here is a major source of the tension in the life of the child of God that assures progress towards the goal. We can be assured that our heavenly Father will be very understanding and forgiving about our failure to measure up fully to His purpose for our lives if we strive honestly and sincerely to move towards His ideal for us. It seems that He judges us more by the direction of our lives than

What challenging ideal did Jesus give in Matthew 5:48?

_____

_____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

What do the following Scriptures say about kinship?

Rom. 15:1-3 _____

_____

_____

Eph. 5:2 _____

_____

Phil. 2:5-8 _____

_____

_____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Christ's teachings provide a _____.

(compass)

If we walk with Christ, our compassion will be _____ *or* _____ *as well as* _____.

(individualized, personalized, generalized)

God judges us more by the direction of our lives than by

by our present level of living. Are our faces set towards the open road of additional insight into His will and way and to a renewed dedication to His ultimate goal for our lives?

Let us also not forget that He is the main source of strength to help us move in the direction He would have us to go. The Divine Spirit is given to walk by our side, or better, to live within us and to give us the desire, the dynamic, and at the same time the power to move more and more towards the purposes of our heavenly Father in and for our lives.

our present _____ *of* _____.

(level, living)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. What two traditional theological terms can we use to translate Augustine's statement about the paradoxical nature of our knowledge of God? _____

2. How does the tension discussed by the author help the child of God? _____

3. Why is God considered a person? _____

4. Explain what the author means by this statement: "Formalities are poor and inadequate substitutes for the vitalities of our faith." _____

5. Explain the following statements:

   God's faithfulness _____

   God's dependability _____

   God's holiness _____

6. In what way is God's faithfulness related to His covenant with His people? _____

7. What is meant by unity in the person of God? _____

8. List five moral traits which the cross reveals to us. _____

9. In what way is God creatively active in the world today?

10. What does the author mean by God sometimes being "incognito"?

11. What is the "whole-istic" perspective concerning God and His sovereignty?

12. What are a Christian's responsibilities to God as Father?

13. How does God reveal Himself and His character to the peoples of the world?

    How do His children reveal their kinship to Him?

14. Explain the author's statement that Jesus' teachings by example and by word of mouth provide a compass rather than a road map.

15. What is the difference between "individualized or personalized" compassion and "generalized" compassion?

16. Since God judges more by the direction of our lives than by our present level of living, what assurance can we have about our failures to measure up fully to His purposes for our lives?

Supplementary Activity (Levels 2 and 3). The following activities are based on the study guide text.

1. What happens when one knows God better?
2. List five specific moral qualities that are directly attributed to God. Give specific Scripture references to support each quality listed.
3. The author states that the faithfulness or dependability of God is a major theme in the Bible. List some benefits to man that come because of this attribute to God.

4. Why does the author say that the "Our Father" in the Model Prayer makes prayer drastically and for some embarrassingly inclusive?
5. What two figures does Paul use to help us understand what happens when we become children of God?
6. What does the following statement mean: God's children reveal their kinship to Him by the way they relate themselves to other people?

Advanced activity (Level 3). The following activities are based upon the study guide text.

1. List and give a brief summary of the aspects of the nature of God discussed in this lesson.
2. Write a sermon on this subject: "The Moral Revelation of the Cross." Give emphasis to such points as grace, mercy, righteousness, and holiness. (Students who are not pastors or studying to be pastors may prepare a Bible lesson instead.)

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss the statement: "It really seems that the more fully He has been revealed the more completely He seems concealed."
2. Discuss the author's use of the husband and wife relationship to illustrate our relation to God as a person.
3. Expand on this statement by the author: "The more completely we appropriate the deeper meaning of the Cross, the more we will reveal to others the basic moral character of God."
4. Discuss "whole-istic."
5. Discuss Paul's teaching of our "sonship by adoption" and the symbol of "grafting" into God's family.
6. What is there in the nature of God to guide us as we seek to know the kind of life we should live?
7. Level 3 students should share the sermons they have written. The seminar leader should lead the group in a discussion of the content of the sermons.