

2. PART I **BASIC**- The Master Builder: “Who is God? Who are we?”

(REVIEW)

Let’s take a look at just a few text that introduce The Plumb Line itself- The Master Builder- (*Other text you might browse: Romans 1:20 & Proverbs 8:22-30*)

- **Genesis 1- The Old Testament Declares God is the Master Builder!**

Genesis 1:1-3 & 26 nlt

In the beginning **God created the heavens and the earth.** ² The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface.** ³ Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light... ²⁶Then **God said, “Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves.** They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals.”

- **John 1- The New Testament Declares God is the Master Builder!**

John 1:1-3 & 14 nlt

In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and He was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ **He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn’t make...** ¹⁴**So the Word became human** and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

- **Jeremiah 10- The Prophets remind us that God is not only the Master Builder but also the Father of Israel.**

Jeremiah 10:16 & 51:19 nlt

But the God of Israel is no idol!

He is the Creator of everything that exists, including Israel, his own special possession.

The LORD Almighty is his name!

a. Who is God?

- i. Who does God say God is? **“I AM WHO I AM.”****

Exodus 3:13-14 nlt

But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they won’t believe me. They will ask, ‘Which god are you talking about? What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

¹⁴ God replied, **“I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS.** Just tell them, **‘I AM has sent me to you.’”**

Exodus 3:13-14 nkjv

Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What *is* His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

¹⁴ And God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM.**” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘**I AM has sent me to you.**’ ”

ii. **Nelson’s OPEN BIBLE (NASB pg.904)**

GOD

The Bible reveals God as the only INFINITE and ETERNAL BEING, having no beginning and no ending. He is CREATOR and SUSTAINER of all things. He is the SUPREME PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE, and RIGHTEOUS RULER OF HIS UNIVERSE.

He is LIFE and therefore, the ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE.... In the Old Testament He revealed Himself to and through His prophets. In the New Testament He reveals Himself through His Son Jesus Christ.

iii. **John Wesley wrote a great statement on who God is in the Holy Trinity in his Article 1 for the Articles of Religion for the people called Methodist:**

Article 1- Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity-the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”
(Article 1 from John Wesley’s articles of religion for the people called Methodist)

b. The Bible indicates 3 Characteristics that are central to the “WHO” of God:

i. **God is LOVE. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. (1 John 4:16b)**

1 John 4:11-17 nlt

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love has been brought to full expression through us.

¹³ And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. ¹⁴ Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ All who proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. ¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in him.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we are like Christ here in this world.

- ii. God is **HOLY**. (note: The three-fold “Holy, Holy, Holy” indicating the Trinitarian aspects of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.) **In a great chorus they sang: “Holy, Holy Holy is the LORD Almighty, the whole earth is filled with His glory. (Isaiah 6:3)**

Isaiah 6:1-3 nlt

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ² Hovering around him were mighty seraphim, each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with the remaining two they flew. ³ **In a great chorus they sang:**

**“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty!
The whole earth is filled with his glory!”**

- iii. God is **JUST**. (Psalm 9:16a & Isaiah 28:17)

Psalm 9:16a nlt

The LORD is known for his justice.

Isaiah 28:17 nlt

¹⁷ “I will take **the measuring line of justice** and **the plumb line of righteousness** to check the foundation wall you have built...

C. We have seen God in His Son Christ Jesus:

Hebrews 1:1-3 nlt

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. ² But now in these final days, He has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he made the universe and everything in it. ³ The Son reflects God’s own glory, and everything about Him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of His command. After He died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, He sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven.

d. GOD & US. “Who is God & Who are We?”

God is the **Potter** & We are the **Clay**:

Jeremiah 18:1-5 nlt

The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, ² “Go down to the shop where clay pots and jars are made. I will speak to you while you are there.” ³ So I did as he told me and found the potter working at his wheel. ⁴ But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so the potter squashed the jar into a lump of clay and started again.

⁵ Then the LORD gave me this message: ⁶ “O Israel, can I not do to you as this potter has done to his clay? **As the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand.**

Isaiah 45:9-12 nlt

“Destruction is certain for those who argue with their Creator. **Does a clay pot ever argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying, ‘Stop, you are doing it wrong!’** Does the pot exclaim, ‘How clumsy can you be!’ ¹⁰ How terrible it would be if a newborn baby said to its father and mother, ‘Why was I born? Why did you make me this way?’ ”

¹¹ This is what the LORD, the Creator and Holy One of Israel, says: “Do you question what I do? Do you give me orders about the work of my hands? ¹² I am the one who made the earth and created people to live on it. With my hands I stretched out the heavens. All the millions of stars are at my command.

Isaiah 64:8 nkjv

But now, O LORD,

You *are* our Father;

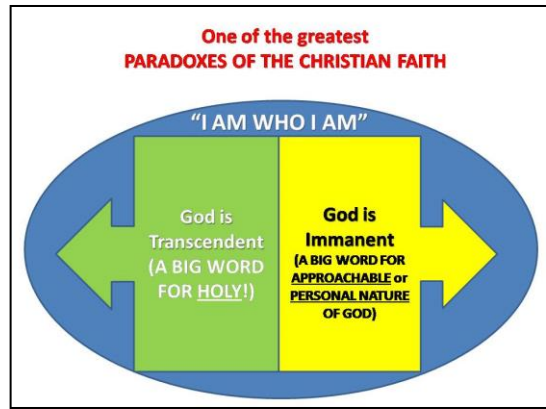
We *are* the clay, and **You our Potter;**

And all we *are* the work of Your hand.

Romans 9:21-24 nlt

²¹ **When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn’t he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into?** ²² God has every right to exercise his judgment and his power, but he also has the right to be very patient with those who are the objects of his judgment and are fit only for destruction. ²³ He also has the right to pour out the riches of his glory upon those he prepared to be the objects of his mercy—²⁴ even upon us, whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

e. One of the greatest **PARADOXES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH** is found in the **TRANSCENDENT** side and **IMMANENT** side of God. (SEE SPECIAL GRAPHIC)



i. God is Transcendent. (A BIG WORD FOR **HOLY!**) *“Transcendence is the abstract, infinite, impersonal, and somewhat unknowable Holy nature of God, especially as God is the object of theoretical reflection.”* It means:

1. God’s **HOLINESS** seems to contradict God’s **PERSONAL** loving nature.
2. God is more than we can fully **DEFINE** or **COMPREHEND!**
3. God is **AWESOME, MYSTERIOUS, SACRED, ALMIGHTY**
4. God is **ALPHA & OMEGA**- Always was and **always will be.**
5. God’s **EXISTENCE, POWER & KNOWLEDGE** are **NOT LIMITED** in any way as God is **Omnipresent** (Everywhere), **Omniscient** (All knowing/seeing), **Omnipotent** (All Powerful).

ii. God is Immanent. (A BIG WORD FOR **APPROACHABLE** or **PERSONAL NATURE OF GOD**) *“The immanent qualities of God have to do with God’s action, God’s availability to us and God’s intervention in the events of the world.”* (pg. 11)

1. God is totally **LOVING** and **FORGIVING**- God has a gracious, unmerited and undeserved love for us!
2. God is **GOOD, PATIENT, GENTLE & KIND.**
3. God is **JUST & FAIR**, but God despises **SIN.**
4. God is constantly **INVITING** us to **ACCEPT** God’s love, but God **SUFFERS** when we turn away.
5. God hears **PRAYER & INTERVENES** in human affairs.
6. God desires a relationship with us as our **FATHER** and even our **FRIEND!**

f. Five aspects that can help us get a better look at the MASTER BUILDER:

1. The **EXISTENCE** OF GOD. (*John 1:1-3 & 14*)

John 1:1-3 & 14 nlt

In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God.² He was in the beginning with God.³ He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make...¹⁴ So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

2. The **PERSONALITY** OF GOD. (*Romans 9:14-24*)

Romans 9:14-24 nlt

What can we say? Was God being unfair? Of course not!¹⁵ For God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose."^{*}

¹⁶ So receiving God's promise is not up to us. We can't get it by choosing it or working hard for it. God will show mercy to anyone he chooses.

¹⁷ For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, "I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you, and so that my fame might spread throughout the earth."^{*} ¹⁸ So you see, God shows mercy to some just because he wants to, and he chooses to make some people refuse to listen.

¹⁹ Well then, you might say, "Why does God blame people for not listening? Haven't they simply done what he made them do?"

²⁰ No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to criticize God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who made it, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? ²² God has every right to exercise his judgment and his power, but he also has the right to be very patient with those who are the objects of his judgment and are fit only for destruction. ²³ He also has the right to pour out the riches of his glory upon those he prepared to be the objects of his mercy—²⁴ even upon us, whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

3. The **NATURE** OF GOD as Holy & Pure. (*Leviticus 19:1-2, Prov. 30:5, Matthew 5:8*)

Leviticus 19:1-2 nlt

The LORD also said to Moses,² "Say this to the entire community of Israel: You must be holy because **I, the LORD your God, am holy.**

Proverbs 30:5 nkjv

Every word of **God is pure**; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Matthew 5:8 nkjv

Blessed are the **pure in heart, For they shall see God.**

4. The **GRACE** or Special Favor OF GOD (*Ephesians 2:4-10*)

Ephesians 2:4-10 nlt

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, ⁵ that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. **(It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!)** ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms—all because we are one with Christ Jesus. ⁷ And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus.

⁸**God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.** ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are **God's masterpiece.** He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

5. The **TRINITY** OF GOD. (*Genesis 1:1-3 & 26, Matt 3:16-17 & John 15:26-27*)

Genesis 1:1-3 & 26 nlt

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light... ²⁶Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals."

Matthew 3:16-17 nlt

After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him."

John 15:26-27 nlt

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

g. In our BIBLE God's existence is **ASSUMED without **Defense or Apology!****

"There is no attempt to prove God's existence in Scripture. Instead, the authors of both the Old and New Testaments simply assume the existence of God and focus on reporting the just, loving, and forgiving nature of God." (pg.8 An Adventure in UM Confirmation & Membership)

“The task of Christian witness today is not to prove God’s existence but to affirm a God who loves and forgives each and every human being.” (pg. 8)

Many PROOFS of God’s existence have been argued:

- i. “The **Teleological** Argument.”- they point to evidence of design and the orderliness in nature as proof of an intelligent designer- God.
- ii. “The **Cosmological** Argument” - says the motion or process in nature had to be caused by something else and that else is- God.
- iii. “The **Ontological** Argument”- A Very existential argument started by St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) he said that “only a fool would deny the existence of God because even a fool can conceive of ‘that than which is nothing greater can be conceived.’ Therefore, God exists, because if God did not exist, God would not be that than which nothing greater can be conceived. Conversely, if God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived, God cannot not exist.” (pg. 8)
- iv. “The **Experiential** Argument” The final test always comes down to your personal FAITH experience. *As Malachi 3:10 ncv says “...’Test me in this,’ says the LORD All Powerful...”*

h. When it comes down to it there is only one option. **THERE MUST BE A GOD** and our Existence is undoubtedly purpose driven!

The *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren begins with this assumption of Paul’s letter to the Colossians and these core thoughts:

Colossians 1:16 Msg

“For everything, absolutely everything above and below, visible and invisible...everything got started in HIM and finds its purpose in HIM,”

- Bertrand Russell, atheist said *“Unless you assume a GOD, the question of life’s purpose is meaningless.”* (pg. 17 Purpose Driven Life.)
- *“God is not just the starting point of your life; HE is the SOURCE of it.”* (pg.20 PDL)
- *“Without God life makes no sense.”*- Quote from Andrei Bitov, a Russian Novelist. (pg. 21 PDL)

- i. Small Group Break Out Discussion: *(Break into groups of 6-8)*
 - i. What words do you see over and over again in the Scriptures we have looked at in this lesson describing God? *(Notes.)*
 - ii. As a group use 10 words or less to create your definition for GOD. *(Notes.)*
 - iii. If God is the Potter and YOU are the Clay, then what kind of vessel do you believe God created you to be? *(Notes.)*
 - iv. What description, word or phrase about God most resonates with you personally when you first believed in God? *(Notes.)*
 - v. And what description, word or phrase about God do you most resonate with today? *(Notes.)*
- j. Group Share on small group learning from the 5 questions. *(Notes.)*
- k. "HE IS" The Name of God- Video Clip from Sermon Spice!
- l. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK

The Master's Plan: *"God's Basic Plan of Salvation"*