

2020-2021 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 1

# Series Overview and Guides

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2020

## Objective

*what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study*

That we learn and practice the power of awe.

### STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told."

—Habakkuk 1:5 (ESV)

"My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave these to him [Levi]; it called for reverence, and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth, and nothing wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and integrity and turned many from iniquity."

—Malachi 2:5-6

"Kepler spoke gratefully of the minor mismatch in Mars' orbit as a 'gift from God' because it spurred his greatest scientific breakthrough. The chief aim of science, he said, is 'to discover the rational order and harmony which has been imposed on it by God.'"

—Morris Kline

*Mathematics: The Loss of Certainty*



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## Premise

*why we are studying this*

People greatly struggle to enjoy the power of wonder. In our modern pretense of maturity, being full of wonder seems naïve or even foolish. We pretend to understand things that we do not. We refuse to research and learn with childlike joy, settling for media headlines instead. Worst of all, we separate the God of wonders from His creation, dividing truth into a false dichotomy of objective and spiritual. This renders us incapable of enjoying the wonder in created objects and unappreciative of the objective nature of spiritual realities. In summary, without wonder we cannot walk by the Spirit; we are reduced to reliance upon our flesh.

The solution is for us to re-engage with the fullness of awe that first brought us to a relationship with God through Jesus. By nurturing our sense of wonder, we get back on the path of growth God prepares for us. Such is the idea in Paul's exhortation of the Galatian Christians in Galatians 3:3-6.

### STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh? Did you experience so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing? So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard—just like Abraham who believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness."

—Galatians 3:3-6

## Theme

*what the study is about*

Reverence and awe are required for a life well lived. In fact, scripture unequivocally declares that reverence for the wonderfulness of God is necessary to fulfill our earthly mission. Therefore, God graciously invites us to join Him in a life of wonder.

### STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

—Hebrews 12:28-29

"Thankfulness for God's grace and mercy empowers us with reverence and awe. The responses in Hebrews 12:28 – reverence and awe – are prerequisites for serving God acceptably. The words are telling, as each is rare in New Testament usage.

*Reverence* (εὐλαβείας eulabeias) is a favorite of Aristotle's. It is often translated 'circumspect,' 'cautious,' or 'conscientious.' The idea is that one acts differently because one is wowed by majesty.

*Awe* (δέους deous) is originally a term for fetters, used most often of prisoners of war. It appears to have become synonymous for that frozen feeling one has when viewing something magnificent or shocking."

Dr. M. Wayne Braudrick  
Study notes on *Wonder* series

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The content of this study guide is based on the sermon and personal study notes of

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## SCRIPTURE QUOTATIONS

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On the **Sermons** page, filter by Series and select **Wonder**.

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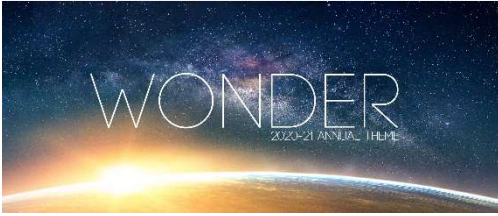
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SERIES 1 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

God calls us out of our cynical insecurity into the great adventure of wonder. Most Christians are searching for authenticity, self-awareness, hope, and the opportunity to effectively serve the Lord. But these are not found in the dark coldness of control. They are found in the wildness of awe. Today, three particular blockades keep us from enjoying God's kingdom through childlike eyes of wonder: lack of trust in God, the idolatry of screens, and self-focus.

OBJECTIVE

We accept the call to wonder.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Pastor Wayne Braudrick recommends the following activities to help one get through the barriers to wonder:

- Fish for [work at] wonder.
- Dwell on God's grace & love.
- Ask for Jesus' help.
- Read poetry.
- Don't settle.
- Read stories.
- Get outside.
- Embrace problems as opportunities.
- Work for God alone.
- Worship at church.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we accept the call to be in wonder of our awesome God.

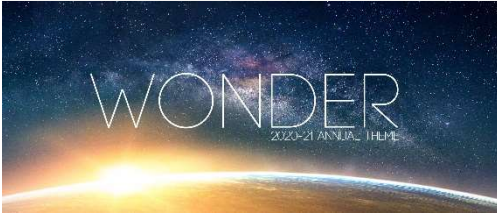
# Session 1: The Call to Wonder

1. Read the Theme, Premise, and Objective of this annual theme series from the first page of this study guide.
  - When was the last time you were truly awed by something? Describe your experience.
  - Knowing that God is more awesome than we can imagine, why are we not constantly struck by wonder when thinking of Him?
2. Read Luke 18:17.
  - Children are said to have a simple faith. What does a child's faith look like?
  - Children are constantly amazed by things they see. What are some aspects of God which have amazed you?
  - Children ask questions in order to learn. Why are we, as adult Christians, often afraid to express doubt and ask more questions?
  - We are called to be childlike, but not childish. What is the difference?
3. Read Habakkuk 1:1-4 and Habakkuk 3:17-19.
  - Contrast Habakkuk's attitude at the beginning and end of his book.
  - Read 1:5. What did God tell Habakkuk to do? What are the verbs of command?
  - What did Habakkuk learn? For a few examples, read Habakkuk 2:12-14; 2:18-20; 3:3-4; 3:12-13.
  - How did engaging with God help this prophet to see things differently?
4. Read Hebrews 12:28-29 together.
  - What enables us to serve and worship God with reverence and awe?
  - Which of God's actions on behalf of His children have put you in awe? Why?
  - How can we nurture our sense of wonder and awe of who God is?



SERIES 1 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



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KEY IDEAS

THEME

God's existence is more than an interesting philosophical abstract. YHWH, the one true covenant God, chooses to exist in relationship. As a Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit are one God in eternal relationship. Humans who receive His offer of redemption join a divine family affiliation that never ends. Because of those relationships, we realize that God is worthy of awe and encounter. Amazingly, He has made engagement with Him an accessible aspect of daily existence even here on a fallen earth.

OBJECTIVE

We engage with God.

NOBLE HELP

"Standing still, in awe, wonder and appreciation, I am humbled by the wonder of the wind of His lovely Spirit who has moved upon my spirit and will all these years. What noble hope He gives to us who walk with Him."

—W. Philip Keller  
*Wonder o' the Wind*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we engage with the God of wonders daily.

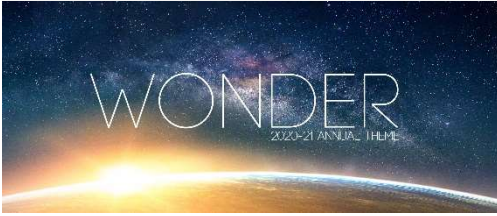
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## Session 2: The Wonder of God

1. Read Psalm 8 together.
  - How does appreciating the wonder and majesty of God aid us in humility?
  - How does it help us keep a right perspective in times of crisis?
2. Read Hosea 6:1-3.
  - How does appreciating the mercy of God aid us in holiness?
  - How does it help us keep a right perspective about sin and repentance?
3. How can we engage with the God of wonders with awe and reverence?
  - Read Psalm 46:10. Do you find it hard to stop, be still, and acknowledge the awesomeness of God? Why, or why not?
  - Read Isaiah 29:15-16 and 1 Corinthians 8:6. How can remembering the Lordship of Christ change our attitude toward both God and others in this world?
  - Read 1 Peter 5:8 and Proverbs 18:10. What are some ways we can turn from self-reliance and instead rely on God—run to His Name?



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KEY IDEAS

THEME

God has spoken in general and specific revelation. Each should be studied with intent and wonder, as the lessons learned are both practically useful and experientially wonderful. The joy of discovery is hard-wired into humanity, yet we don't take full advantage of it.

OBJECTIVE

We joyfully learn from God's world and His word.

WRITINGS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS

*On the Mind:* "All truth is given by revelation, either general or special, and it must be received by reason. Reason is the God-given means for discovering the truth that God discloses, whether in his world or his Word. While God wants to reach the heart with truth, he does not bypass the mind."

*On Rainbows:* "Surely there is something in the unruffled calm of nature that overawes our little anxieties and doubts; the sight of the deep-blue sky and the clustering stars above seems to impart a quiet to the mind."

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we learn how to learn from God's world and Word.

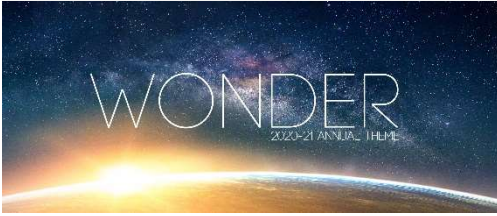
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## Session 3: The Wonder of the World and the Word

1. From the sidebar, read the Theme and Objective of this session.
  - As a child, what did you find amazing and wonderful in nature where you grew up?
  - As a young Christian, what did you find amazing as you began to learn from God's Word?
2. Read Psalm 19:1-6.
  - How do the heavens declare the glory of God? What is meant by verses 3 and 4?
  - Compare Romans 1:18-20. How significant is this silent witness to the glory of God?
  - What in God's creation most clearly tells you something about Him?
3. Read the rest of Psalm 19 (verses 7-14).
  - Which words describe the authority of God's Word?
  - Which words describe how good this divine revelation is?
  - What does God's written Word produce?
4. Pastor Wayne noted three obstacles which impede our learning from the wonder of the world and Word: absorption with personal happiness, the blindness of busyness, and cynicism.
  - To which of these can you relate personally? Pick one and describe how it hinders learning.
  - What else could be added to this list?
5. How can we renew and maintain our joy of discovery in God's world and Word?
  - Read Philippians 3:7-9. What alone has surpassing value? Is that your passion? If not, how can you make it your passion?
  - Read Psalms 11:2 and 119:23-24. What are some practical ways to spend time studying God's world and Word?
  - Read Philippians 4:8. How can you spend more time thinking about these things, and less time thinking about things which are not?







ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

There is incredible beauty in the church of Jesus. Yes, it is full of differences and tainted by the sin that infects all. Nonetheless churches are places of wonder. It presents an entirely new world that is both unchanging in foundation and ever-changing in expression.

OBJECTIVE

We enjoy life as God's wonder-full church.

A SHORT LIFE

"Finally, everybody agrees that no one pursuit can be successfully followed by a man who is preoccupied with many things—eloquence cannot, nor the liberal studies—since the mind, when distracted, takes in nothing very deeply, but rejects everything that is, as it were, crammed into it. There is nothing the busy man is less busied with than living: there is nothing that is harder to learn. Of the other arts there are many teachers everywhere...It takes the whole of life to learn how to live, and—what will perhaps make you wonder more—it takes the whole of life to learn how to die."

—Paul Hahn, FBC Chairman of the Board  
A summary of Seneca's *A Short Life*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we find a new sense of wonder in our redeemed community, and serve each other for the glory of God.

## Session 4: The Wonder of the Church and Its Calling

1. When you consider the worldwide church, do you more often think of its diversity or its unity? Discuss why both are important.
2. Describe some of the images used in the New Testament to explain the church.
3. Read Matthew 20:20-28.
  - What are some of the qualities which make a good church leader?
  - Why were these originally unique to the Christian church?
4. Briefly state the gospel. What is unique about the gospel message?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-14.
  - How does the Holy Spirit help you understand the Bible?
  - Why does the world consider Christianity foolishness?
6. Read Philippians 2:1-4. How is it possible that this attitude can be common among believers?
  - When have you particularly felt the bonds of fellowship (κοινωνία – *koinonia*) which exist in such a wonderful way among Christians?
  - Read Acts 4:32. Have you ever experienced the wonder of fellow believers who voluntarily gave of what was theirs to meet your need? Describe what happened.
7. How do you demonstrate that you value the church in these four areas: worshiping, connecting, growing, and serving?

