

Congregation of Yahshua
Growing in Yahshua – Part 1 - Foundations

Congregation of Yahshua

2100 Eccles St, Pittsburgh, PA 15210



Growing in Yahshua

Part 1:

Foundations

First steps in growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior
Yahshua Messiah

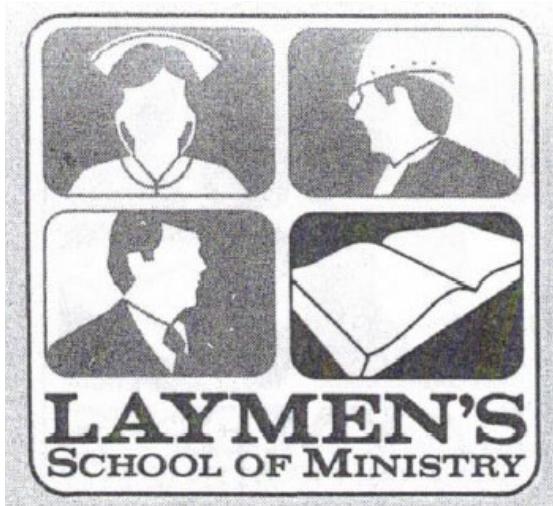
*2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior
Yahshua Messiah. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*

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By Laymen's School of Ministry
Modified by Congregation of Yahshua, Pittsburgh
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This study is adapted from Laymen's School of Ministry's Foundations for Christian Growth and has been modified in certain areas to align with the beliefs and doctrines of Congregation of Yahshua, Pittsburgh. We acknowledge and appreciate the time and effort it took to create the study and we pray that Yahweh continues to bless the people and work of Laymen's School of Ministry.



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Lesson 2: The Nature of Elohim

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I. INTRODUCTION

Elohim's existence and power are clearly seen in the created world in which we live. These things are shown to *all* men, and can be known by them, apart from any direct revelation by Elohim through His spoken or written Word.

The creation points unmistakably to a divine Creator (Romans 1:19,20). Paul, when preaching to unregenerate pagans, said of Elohim, "*He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness*" (Acts 14:17).

Elohim has not left man without an indication of His presence. Men who deny the existence of Elohim, the Bible labels as "fools" (Psalm 14:1), who suppress the truth which the creation plainly reveals (Romans 1:18). The created world is evidence for Elohim's existence and power which cannot honestly be denied or ignored. Creation points to its own Author, the Almighty Elohim.

However, a deeper understanding of Elohim's nature and character, beyond the fact that He exists and is powerful, can be gained only through the Word of Elohim. Since the beginning of creation, Elohim has communicated with men, progressively revealing more and more about Himself. We have this revelation of God, today, in the scriptures.

The Bible is the means by which Elohim brings us to a deeper understanding of Himself and His ways. It is through the scriptures that we come to understand that Elohim is holy and righteous. The Bible reveals Elohim's love to us by showing all that He did for us in Christ. He has not hidden Himself from man. Through His revealed Word, Elohim has openly showed His nature and character.

II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF ELOHIM

When Elohim created man, He created him in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). Thus, in many respects, man is like Elohim; Elohim is a spirit, and He created man a spirit being. He gave to man a free will and a rational mind, which is able to reason.

But there are some attributes which belong to Elohim alone, and to no other created being. These are attributes which define Elohim as the Creator, the Almighty One of the universe. "*In the beginning, Elohim created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). In the beginning, before anything was, Elohim was there. Elohim existed before anything existed; no one and nothing created Him, because He has always been (Colossians 1:17; Revelation 1:8). Elohim's pre-existence places Him in position of absolute supremacy. Everything that exists is there because Elohim created it. "*Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art Elohim*" (Psalm 90:2).

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There are many created beings in the universe, and they all bear, to some degree, the imprint of their Maker. But there is only one Creator, and that is Elohim. Thus, the qualities which define Elohim as supreme are those that belong only to Him. Elohim is all-powerful (*omnipotent*); He is all-knowing (*omniscient*); and He is present everywhere at the same time (*omnipresent*). No man or angel can claim these attributes, for they are what define Elohim as Elohim. There is only one Elohim, and He is supreme over all that He has created.

A. OMNIPOTENCE

Elohim is all-powerful. That is one of His exclusive attributes. The Bible describes Elohim's acts and accomplishments as those which only an omnipotent Elohim could perform. "*'To whom then will you liken Me that I should be his equal?' says the Holy One. 'Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power not one of them is missing'*" (Isaiah 40:25,26).

There is no created being, whether human or angelic, which equals Elohim in power and ability. Throughout the scriptures, Elohim is referred to as "Almighty" (Genesis 17:1; Genesis 35:11; Revelation 4:8). Elohim is Almighty because **only He is all-powerful**. Because He is omnipotent, there is nothing that is beyond Elohim's ability (Jeremiah 32:17).

Elohim's power is sufficient to bring about all His purposes and plans (Isaiah 46:10,11). All this Elohim can do without in any way diminishing Himself. When He exerts power, or endues one of His creatures with it, His own power is never lessened. "*The Everlasting Elohim, Yahweh, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired*" (Isaiah 40:28).

Elohim is all-powerful, and so is able to do whatever He wills. However, Elohim's will is always consistent with His divine nature. He will never use His power to do anything which contradicts that nature. Thus we find that there are certain things that Elohim *cannot* do. The Bible says that **Elohim cannot lie** (Titus 1:2), and **He cannot deny Himself** (II Timothy 2:13).

Elohim's supreme power always operates within the confines of His righteous and loving nature. Elohim cannot sin, nor can He ignore sin in others, because to do so would be to deny His very nature. Omnipotence does not mean that Elohim uses His power arbitrarily, irrespective of the limits which His character sets. Elohim is not governed by His power; He always governs that power in keeping with His divine character and nature.

B. OMNIPRESENCE

Another one of Elohim's divine attributes is that of omnipresence. Omnipresence means that Elohim is present everywhere at the same time. This does not mean that Elohim and creation are one and the same (Pantheism); Elohim is separate and distinct from His creation. But He is dynamically present everywhere in that creation. "*'Am I a Elohim who is near,' says Yahweh, 'And not a Elohim far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places, so I do not see him?' declares Yahweh. 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?' declares Yahweh*" (Jeremiah 23:23,24). Elohim's presence fills the universe that He made. David declared that no matter where he went, the presence of Elohim's Spirit was there with him (Psalm 139:7-12). When Solomon dedicated the Temple, the "house of Yahweh," he confessed that Elohim's presence could not be confined to a building (II Chronicles 6:18).

Only Elohim is omnipresent. He shares this attribute with no other created being. No man and no angel is present everywhere at the same time. (This means that Satan, a fallen angel, is not omnipresent. He can only be in one place at any given moment of time.) Because He is omnipresent, nothing escapes Elohim's notice. Even the smallest sparrow does not go unnoticed by Elohim (Luke 12:6). No good thing done goes unnoticed by Elohim, and no sin committed goes unobserved by the all-present One (Psalm 94:7-9).

C. OMNISCIENCE

Elohim's omnipresence points directly to another of His divine attributes, that of omniscience. To be omniscient means to be all-knowing. Omniscience is intrinsic to Elohim's very nature. His knowledge is not derived from any source outside of Himself. In other words, nobody "taught" Elohim anything! "*Who has directed the Spirit of Yahweh, or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, and informed Him of the way of understanding?*" (Isaiah 40:13,14).

Elohim has always known everything there is to know. He sees and knows all that has happened in the past, all that is now happening, and all that will happen in the future.

Only Elohim is omniscient. No man or angel can claim to be all-knowing. Elohim's reprimand of Job is a commentary on the immeasurability of Elohim's understanding as compared with the finiteness of man's understanding (Job 38:4,18). Only Elohim is infinite in understanding (Psalm 147:5). Man is finite in his understanding. Any knowledge which a man has was derived from an outside source. But Elohim's knowledge is not externally derived; it is an eternal attribute

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of His infinite nature. *"Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite"* (Psalm 147:5).

The Bible says that Elohim knew about us before the foundation of the world, and predestined us to adoption as His very own children (Ephesians 1:3,4). He knows everything about us, and is familiar with all of our thoughts (Psalm 139:1-3); nothing is hidden from Him. If we live uprightly, we can derive comfort from knowing that Elohim is aware of everything we do and the motivation behind our actions. In fact, Elohim knows us better than we know ourselves. That is why David prayed, *"Search me, O Elohim, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way"* (Psalm 139:23,24). And, those who do not live uprightly must not think that their actions go unobserved by the all-knowing, all-seeing Elohim.

Please read all referenced verses.

D. THE GODHEAD

The Godhead is one of the most profound mysteries of Christianity. To understand the Godhead is to understand how Elohim can be one Elohim, and yet three distinct persons simultaneously. A proper perception of the Godhead is essential, as misunderstanding of this truth has, in the past, led to error and heresy within the Church. *The three distinct persons of the Godhead are the Father, the Son (Yahshua Messiah), and the Holy Spirit. Each of these persons is fully Elohim, none being subordinate to the others... And yet these three persons are one Elohim, not three Elohim (Gods)... The paradox of the Godhead is how there can be unity and plurality in Elohim at the same time.* These two concepts must be held in balance in order to retain a correct view of the Godhead. Emphasizing the unity of Elohim, at the expense of the plurality of Elohim, will lead to error. By the same token, emphasizing the plurality of Elohim at the expense of His unity, will cause the same problem.

Understanding the Godhead involves accepting two paradoxical concepts, the unity of Elohim and the distinction of persons within the Godhead. We will look at each of these separately.

1. Unity within the Godhead

"Hear, O Israel! Yahweh our Elohim, Yahweh is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4; Exodus 20:3-7). When Elohim took the children of Israel out of Egypt, He called them away from the polytheism (i.e. worship of many gods) of the surrounding nations, telling them that there is only **one** Elohim in heaven - the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This theme is reiterated

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throughout the Old Testament; there are no gods but Elohim alone (Isaiah 43:10; 45:5). Elohim is called the *"only true God"* (John 17:3), because every idol which people might worship is in reality a *"false god"* (1 Corinthians 8:4), which the scripture labels *"lying vanities."* (**Read Jeremiah 10:1-16**).

2. Distinction of persons within the Godhead

The scriptures clearly teach that there is a plurality within the unified Godhead. *"Then Elohim said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."* (Genesis 1:26). Elohim is not addressing the angelic host here, for the creation of man is ascribed exclusively to Yahweh Elohim.

The use of the plurals "Us" and "Our" in this verse is a reference to the three Persons of the Godhead. These Persons are distinguished at the baptism of Yahshua (Read Luke 3:21,22). Here we see the Son, being endued with the Holy Spirit, while the Father speaks His approval from heaven.

The three Persons of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are indeed Persons, and not merely manifestations or modes of God. Yahshua, the Son, was sent by the Father (1 John 4:10), and returned to the Father (John 17:13), at whose right hand He is now seated (Mark 16:19). The Spirit who was promised by the Father, was sent by the Son after His ascension (Acts 2:33). This is one of many examples in which we see the distinction between the **Persons** of the Godhead (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16,17,20-23).

These scriptures become absurd and meaningless if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are viewed merely as manifestations of one Elohim. Manifestations don't converse with one another, neither do they express mutual affection for one another (John 12:27,28; 17:24). These are the actions and activities of persons, not manifestations or modes.

Each of the Persons of the Godhead is fully Elohim. Elohim is not divided. The Bible says of Yahshua, *"For in Him (Yahweh) all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form"* (Colossians 2:9). Yahshua is no less Elohim than the Father Himself (John 1:1). The scriptures also clearly equate the Holy Spirit with Elohim. When Peter rebuked Ananias, for *"lying to the Holy Spirit,"* he said, *"You have not lied to men, but to Elohim"* (Acts 5:3,4). The plurality of the Godhead must not be viewed as three Gods. There is only one Elohim. **Elohim's being is in three Persons, each one equal to the other, each one fully Elohim, each one possessing all the attributes and characteristics that make Elohim who He is.**

III. THE NATURE OF THE WORD

Elohim's nature is best described by the word **Love**. Although this isn't the only characteristic of His nature, it supersedes all others and is the one by which all the actions of Elohim recorded in the Bible must be judged. The Bible says that *Elohim is Love* (I John 4:8,16). He defines what the word Love means.

As believers, we must keep this revelation of Elohim's character foremost in our thinking. ***Elohim is Love, and He desires only good for us all the days of our lives.*** Because of His love, Elohim promised a redeemer on the very day that man fell (Genesis 3:15). Because of His love, He fulfilled that promise by sending His own Son (John 3:16). Because of His love, He redeemed us through Christ and seated us with Himself in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:4-6).

Our perception of Elohim's character must be rooted in a revelation of the love of Elohim. Unless a person sees clearly how much Elohim loves him, his concept of Elohim will be twisted and marred by fear. Elohim's intentions toward him will never be clear in his own thinking.

Please read all referenced verses.

A. MAN'S IMAGE OF ELOHIM

To clearly understand Elohim's love for us, we must begin by erasing from our minds some common misunderstandings about Elohim's character. These misconceptions are prevalent among unbelievers, and a surprising number of Christians. They are rooted in the Fall and used by Satan to paint a dark and twisted picture of Elohim in men's minds.

1. Sin distorts man's image of Elohim

Elohim created man to have fellowship with Him. Sin not only destroyed that fellowship, but also distorted man's image of Elohim. Because of sin, man lost sight of the fact that Elohim is a **loving Father**. The fear that entered into him because of sin (Genesis 3:10) kept man from being able to see Elohim as He really is. Sin put Elohim far away from man; He was now a Being that struck terror in the minds of those to whom He appeared. Recall the Israelites' reaction to the manifestation of Elohim's presence (Exodus 19:18,19). They told Moses to talk to Elohim for them; they would stay in the background - at a safe distance.

Please read all referenced verses.

2. Satan defames Elohim's character

Using man's distorted conception of Elohim to his advantage, the enemy seeks to this day to deceive men about Elohim's true character and intentions. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul says the following concerning unbelievers: " ... in whose case, the Elohim of this world has **blinded the minds of the unbelieving** that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of Elohim." The Elohim of this world is Satan. He is the one who is trying to convince unbelievers that Elohim doesn't love them. He is the one who blinds their minds to the gospel, a gospel which boldly proclaims to all men that **Elohim loves them**, that He has reconciled Himself to them through His Son; Elohim is entreating them even now, "*Be reconciled to Me!*" (2 Corinthians 5:19,20). Satan must keep unbelievers ignorant of this gospel revelation, for if they understood it, there would be no question as to whom they would serve.

Not only has Satan deceived and blinded unbelievers, but he has also deceived many believers. He comes to them with the commonly accepted lie that Elohim is a withhold. The Bible clearly states that Elohim is a **liberal giver** (James 1:5), and that He will *not* withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly (Psalm 84:11). **Read Genesis 3:1-5.** In this account of Satan's temptation of Eve, the tempter told Eve that the real reason Elohim didn't want them to eat from the tree of knowledge was because He was holding out on them.

Satan planted in Eve's mind the idea that Elohim's intentions toward her were not altogether loving, and that Elohim was *withholding* good things from her.

Believers must settle in their own hearts and minds that Elohim loves them, and is not holding out on them. The fact that Elohim sent His own Son to die for us is eternal, unfading *proof* that He is a **liberal giver** and not' a withhold (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:8). "*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not with Him freely give us all things?*" (Romans 8:32).

Please read all referenced verses.

3. Religion distorts man's thinking

Religion (by which we mean a set of ideas about Elohim formed largely by the traditions of men, rather than the Word of Elohim) has done much to

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promote an incorrect image of Elohim in men's minds. Traditions of men have portrayed Elohim as being an angry ogre, ready to strike down any offender. He is never thought of as loving, only stern and austere. This type of thinking was prevalent in Yahshua's day, even among His own disciples. **Read Luke 9:52-56.** James and John (called the "Sons of Thunder" by Yahshua in Mark 3:17) were ready to call fire down from heaven. They assumed that Elohim's reaction to the Samaritan rejection of Christ would be the same as theirs. Yahshua's response to them shows that they did not in any way understand the heart of the Father Elohim, nor His reason for sending the Son. **James and John projected onto Elohim their own ways of thinking and responding to people.**

Many Christians make the same mistake with regard to Elohim's love toward them. They assume that Elohim's ways and thoughts are just like man's ways and thoughts; they project their own carnal thinking about themselves onto Elohim. Many times they base their concept of Elohim's ways upon what *they* would do if *they* were Elohim, just as James and John did.

But, Elohim says, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8,9).

Never assume that you know what Elohim is thinking unless He tells you through His Word. Presumption always leads to misunderstanding.

B. ELOHIM'S IMAGE REVEALED – YAHSHUA

As we have already seen, man's concept of Elohim is blackened by sin and twisted by religious tradition. But Elohim has a way to show man what He is really like, to reveal His true nature. That way is Yahshua.

In Hebrews 1:3, Yahshua is called "the radiance of His (Elohim's) glory, the exact representation of His nature. "Yahshua exactly represents Elohim and His great love for man. He is, in effect, Elohim's statement to the world: "Here is what I am like! This is how much I love you!"

In every way Yahshua exemplifies the love of Elohim, not only in the fact that He was sent by Elohim (John 3:16), and that He died for our sins (Romans 5:8), but also in the manner in which He conducted His ministry while here on the earth. The teaching and lifestyle of Yahshua during His earth walk reveal a Elohim with a heart full of compassion and love.

1. His Teaching and Love

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Whenever Yahshua instructed His disciples, He always referred to Elohim as "**Father**" and "**your Father**." The Jews knew Elohim as "Yahweh," a Name considered so holy that they were not allowed to say it audibly. Yahshua came calling Yahweh, "Daddy" (Matthew 6:4,8,9). He knew that Elohim was by nature a Father, and that before the foundation of the world, Elohim had wanted a family (Ephesians 1:4,5). So, He introduced Yahweh to the world as a "**heavenly Father**," One that is infinitely good and infinitely loving.

In Matthew 7:7-11, Yahshua was teaching His disciples that Elohim would answer their prayers **and that the reason He would do so was because He is a loving Father.** He said that no normal father would give his child stones and snakes when asked for bread and fish; in other words, no father gives evil, harmful things to his children. He would be considered warped and sadistic if he did so. The Father Elohim is far better than any "evil," earthly father. *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, HOW MUCH MORE shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"* (Matthew 7:11). Elohim doesn't give "stones" and "snakes" to His children; if a believer is getting "stones" and "snakes" in his life, he can be sure that they are not coming from the Father in heaven.

"In that day you will ask (the Father) in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf, for the Father Himself loves you ... " (John 16:26,27). Yahshua is saying that He won't have to ask the Father *for us*; Elohim will answer because He loves *us*. Yahshua prayed, at the end of His time on earth that *"... the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them even as Thou didst love Me"* (John 17:23). No one has any difficulty believing that Elohim loves Yahshua; Yahshua is His only begotten Son. Elohim would do anything for Yahshua. But here we are told that **Elohim loves us just as much as He loves Yahshua.** This is in keeping with the fact that Elohim loved man so much, that He considered it worth the price of His own Son to redeem him from the hand of sin and Satan.

Please read all referenced verses.

2. His Life/Love Personified

Not only did Yahshua' teachings reflect the love of Elohim, but His earthly life did as well. We see the compassion of Elohim flowing from Yahshua toward the lost, the hungry, the maimed, and the sick. He *"... went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for Elohim was with Him"* (Acts 10:38). When Yahshua was moved with compassion, and healed the sick (Matthew 14:14), it was because Elohim the Father wanted the sick

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healed. When Yahshua was moved with compassion and fed the multitude (Matthew 15:32-37), it was because Elohim the Father wanted the people fed. When Yahshua was moved with compassion and told the disciples to pray the Lord to send laborers forth (Matthew 9:36-38), it was because Elohim the Father wanted the lost multitudes saved. **Yahshua was moved with compassion because Elohim was moved with compassion.**

Yahshua showed us beyond any doubt that Elohim is a loving Father. His words and deeds were witnesses to this fact. Yahshua didn't come representing an angry ogre, ready to condemn and destroy. Yahshua came showing us a Father that wanted to reconcile to Himself the creature that He loved, a Father who wanted to save lost man from a life of death.

"For Elohim sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17 KJV).

Please read all referenced verses.

C. KNOWING ELOHIM'S LOVE

The Church needs a revelation of the **Love of Elohim**. We need to see it so clearly that our first thoughts at the start of the day are of Elohim's love for us. Ignorance of the fact that Elohim loves them has left many Christians spiritually paralyzed, unable to move with any boldness in the things of Elohim. Elohim has " . . . granted unto us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him . . ." (2 Peter 1:3). We will not be able to fully appropriate all the things that Elohim has given to us, unless we come to a full knowledge of who Elohim is; we must know that He perfectly defines the word **Love**.

1. Renewing Our Minds

Paul prayed for the Ephesian church, a church noted for its maturity in Yahweh, that they "being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of Elohim" (Ephesians 3:17-19). Paul was praying that they receive a supernatural revelation of Elohim's love. It is only by a revelation of the Holy Spirit that we can "**know**" something which "**surpasses knowledge**." Only by the Spirit of Elohim will our minds be able to grasp the immensity of Elohim's love.

Because Elohim's love goes beyond human reasoning, your intellect and emotions can't always be trusted to comprehend the love of Elohim. Unfortunately, many believers base their assurance of Elohim's love on their

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feelings, or on what they can figure out with their minds. They get up in the morning and see what state their emotions are in to determine whether Elohim still loves them or not.

Your emotions can't tell you anything about the love of Elohim. When a person has to experience a certain emotion before he'll believe that Elohim really loves him, it's the same as asking Elohim for a "sign" that His Word is true. The Pharisees were continually asking Yahshua for a sign to prove that He was telling the truth; Yahshua called them wicked and adulterous (Matthew 12:38,39).

Elohim has given us all the proof we'll ever need to show us how great His love is. He sent His only begotten Son into the world to die, and watched Him hang on a cross, just so He could redeem us to Himself. Knowledge of Elohim's love comes through meditating on the new covenant revelation of what He has done for us, and why He has done it. *"But Elohim, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Messiah Yahshua, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Yahshua"* (Ephesians 2:4-7).

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ... "(Romans 12:2). We must have our minds renewed to the fact that Elohim loves us. To wallow around in feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, and inferiority is nothing more than being conformed to this world.

The world is trapped with these kinds of emotions because they have a twisted picture of Elohim, but through His Word, Elohim has revealed to us His true nature. He has shown us that He is a **loving Father!**

As we renew our minds, the love of Elohim will become a concrete reality for us. Knowing that - Elohim is *for* us and not against us will be so integrated into our thought patterns that the mere suggestion of inadequacy or insecurity will seem absurd. *"If Elohim be for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31).

2. Holding Fast Our Confidence

In Hebrews we are told that in order to please Elohim we must believe something specific about His character; we must believe that **He is a rewarder** (Hebrews 11:6). Confidence in Elohim is not possible unless a person believes that He is a rewarder and a liberal giver (James 1:7).

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The apostle John said, "And we have come to know and to believe the love which Elohim has for us ... " (1 John 4:16). Again, we find the principle of believing something about Elohim's character; not only did John know about the love of Elohim, but he also believed it. John had received a revelation of Elohim; Elohim is love! "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear ... "(1 John 4:18). John knew that being free from fear and having confidence before Elohim were results of knowing and believing the love of Elohim. When one has such a deep-rooted revelation of Elohim's love that he can say - "Elohim is Love," being afraid of Elohim is out of the question; confidence before Him becomes very natural.

No one will begin to experience this freedom from fear and confidence before Elohim until he puts **faith** in the fact that Elohim loves him. In Hebrews 11:1, faith is called an **assurance**. In Hebrews 3:14 we are told to "*hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.*" You have to hold firmly to the assurance of Elohim's love. It is impossible to believe that Elohim is a rewarder and a withholder at the same time; the two are incompatible. Either He is a rewarder, or He is a withholder; He can't be both. But the Bible is *explicit* as to the true character of Elohim. Elohim is a **rewarder** (Hebrews 11:6); He is a **liberal giver** (James 1:5); **He will not withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly** (Psalm 84:11).

D. ELOHIM'S TRUE NATURE

Elohim's nature is Love; it always has been, and it always will be. The world, through sin and the deceits of Satan has developed a wrong picture of Elohim. It has viewed Elohim as angry and demanding, a person to be greatly feared. But, when Elohim sent His only Son Yahshua, He presented to the world the most profound evidence of love divinely possible. Through Yahshua, Elohim showed man once and for all the true nature of His character.

For too long the Church has been paralyzed by an unnecessary fear of Elohim. She has lacked the confidence to move boldly in the areas where Elohim has required her to move. But the Church today is awakening to the fact that Elohim will not hold out on them.

It was this confidence that enabled the early church to do the mighty works which it did. They had a revelation of Elohim's love for them; they knew He would answer their prayers and requests, because He loved them. As today's church begins to get "*rooted and grounded in love,*" (the revelation of Elohim's love), she will begin to move in the boldness required to do the works of Yahshua and the greater works that He referred to in John 14:12.

IV. SUMMARY – THE ALMIGHTY – OUR LOVING FATHER

It is essential for a proper perspective of Elohim, to understand His position of supremacy. Everything that exists is there because Elohim created it. In His position of supremacy, Elohim has attributes which cannot be shared by any other creature. These are the attributes which define Elohim as Elohim. Elohim is all powerful; there is nothing that can diminish His might. Elohim is all knowing; there is nothing that He does not know. Elohim is present everywhere at the same time; He sees all that occurs anywhere, at any given moment of time.

But as vast and powerful as Elohim is, He has not separated Himself from us, or made Himself unapproachable. Knowledge of Elohim's vastness must be tempered with the revelation that "Elohim is love!" All of Elohim's attributes are manifested in keeping with His loving character. Because Elohim is love, He didn't use His power and wisdom against us, but *for* us. He sent His only Son, Yahshua, to purchase our redemption. Thus, Elohim's vast power and knowledge is channeled toward our good and benefit because Elohim is a loving Father. We serve a Elohim who is Almighty and who has no peer. But that Almighty Elohim is a loving Father, whose good intentions are directed toward us, His children.

V. LESSON TWO – THE NATURE OF ELOHIM - STUDY QUESTIONS

A. Lesson Two – Day One

- 1) Find four Scriptures (Old or New Testament) which reveal the pre-existence of Elohim.

A.

B.

C.

D. _____

2) Elohim's exclusive attributes (i.e. those that belong only to Him) are omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Briefly define each, then show how they are displayed in and through Elohim. (Use scripture to support your answer.)

3) List two things which Elohim cannot do - and the scriptures which reveal these things.

a)

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4) Elohim's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence are more than mere theological concepts. They are spiritual realities. What do these mean to you? How do they affect your life?

B. Lesson Two – Day Two

1) What are the two paradoxical (i.e. seemingly contradictory) concepts involved in understanding the Godhead?

a. _____

b. _____

2) How would you respond to a person who said, "I believe that the Godhead is three separate and distinct gods"? What scriptures would you show that person?

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3) Briefly explain the distinction of Persons within the Godhead. How is this different from the idea that the Godhead is three manifestations or modes of Elohim?

4) List two scriptures which point to the unity of the Godhead.

a. _____

b. _____

List three scriptures which point to the plurality of the Godhead.

- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

C. Lesson Two – Day Three

1) What three things have caused man to have a dark and distorted image of Elohim?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2) How has a revelation of Elohim's love affected your life? How will it affect you in the future?

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3) How does faith relate to our knowledge of Elohim's love?

4) The Bible is explicit about the true character of God: Elohim is a _____
and a _____; He will not _____
any good thing from those who walk uprightly.

D. Lesson Two – Day Four

1) Yahshua reveals Elohim the Father to us, both through His words and His deeds. List the qualities and characteristics of Elohim the Father which are revealed to us in Christ. Then explain **how** Yahshua reveals those qualities. Give specific examples from the words of Yahshua and from the actions of Yahshua as recorded for us in the Gospels.

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2) How would you respond to a believer who said, "Elohim has forsaken me. I just don't feel His love anymore! I feel like Elohim must hate me"? What scriptures would you share with this person, and how would you explain them, in the light of his "feelings"?