

God is Essential

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application
Lynn Haven UMC – June 7, 2020 – Pastor Craig Carter

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The combination of the hurricane and the pandemic has stripped away much of what we as a church once considered essential. As we begin to rebuild our church life together, what would you consider essential to our church community? Our church's vision statement is "Love God. Love others." Therefore, what is absolutely essential to our existence as a church? God, and people. In today's sermon we consider how God is essential to life.

God made the world and everything in it. He is Lord of heaven and earth, and he doesn't live in temples built by human hands. He doesn't need help from anyone. He gives life, breath, and everything else to all people. From one person God made all nations who live on earth, and he decided when and where every nation would be. God has done all this, so that we will look for him and reach out and find him. He isn't far from any of us, and "he gives us the power to live, to move, and to be who we are." As some of your poets have said, "We are his children." (Acts 17:22-28 CEV)

Discussion Starters:

⇒ Think back to Hurricane Michael. What types of things did you stock up on before the hurricane because they were "essential"? What did you learn about what was really essential after the storm?

Key Sermon Points:

God is essential because He gives us:

1) The Power to Live

God made the world and everything in it. He is Lord of heaven and earth...He gives life, breath, and everything else to all people... "He gives us the power to live..." (Acts 17:24-28 NLT)

Unfortunately, many people and churches today fail to realize that, apart from God, they are not really living but merely going through the motions.

⇒ Consider how God has turned our Fusion campus from a pre-hurricane financial liability to a fantastic blessing. What other hardships have you seen God turn into blessings?

2) The Power to Move

God made all nations who live on earth, and he decided when and where every nation would be... "He gives us the power to move..." (Acts 17:26,28 NLT)

It is easy for us to fall into the trap of depending on ourselves and moving based on our own agenda. We too easily leave God out of the planning process for life.

⇒ Consider how God has provided direction and resources for our church at every turn these last two years. How have you learned to listen to God and respond in obedience in this season?

3) The Power to Be Who We Are

God has done all this, so that we will look for him and reach out and find him... "He gives us the power to be who we are." As some of your poets have said, "We are his children." (vv. 27-28) God made all nations (ethnos) who live on earth... (v. 26)

We find our true identity in God, as His children and as members of the family of God – without regard to race or ethnicity. The children's song is true – *"Red, brown, yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world."*

⇒ Consider how you define your identity. Is it as a child of God, first and foremost? How can you reach out this week and affirm your love for those of other races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?

Closing:

⇒ Our relationship with God is essential. King David prayed, *"You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in life."* (Psalm 142:5 NLT) This week, how can you live differently so that seeking God first is a clear priority?