

Object Lessons for Biblical Counseling (Attributes of God) **By Wendy Wood**

Romans 1:19-20 "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

When young counselees come in for counseling, typically they are very focused on their circumstances and what is not going "right" in their life. Whatever is troubling them in their situation gets the majority of their time, attention and thoughts. For teens who come to counseling, they may be overwhelmed with friendship issues, or feeling anxious about grades and measuring up to parents' expectations, or struggling with "fitting in" to the popular crowd at school. It is easy to get consumed with the "problem" and forget about the bigger picture, which includes a bigger God. Over and over in scripture we are told to "look", "behold", or "remember". God has graciously revealed Himself in His Word, through His Son, and in creation.

Biblical counselors must deal with the specific revelation of the work of Christ revealed in the Word and the life of Christ. We must teach the fundamentals of the gospel and encourage our counselees to live daily, moment by moment, in the truth of what Christ has accomplished for believers in the past, what He is currently doing now, and all the promises that are yet to come. Biblical counseling must be rooted in the truth of the Gospel. But, God also gives general revelation about Himself and it is also useful in counseling to point our counselees to God's nature as revealed in the world around us.

I want teens to be amazed with who God is. Rather than give teens more reading homework about God's attributes, I encourage them to go for a walk and take pictures that "declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1). As they walk in their neighborhood or through the woods, I encourage them to

look for anything “cool” in nature and reflect on what it “says” about God. They are to write a sentence or two about each picture explaining how God reveals Himself through the world He created.

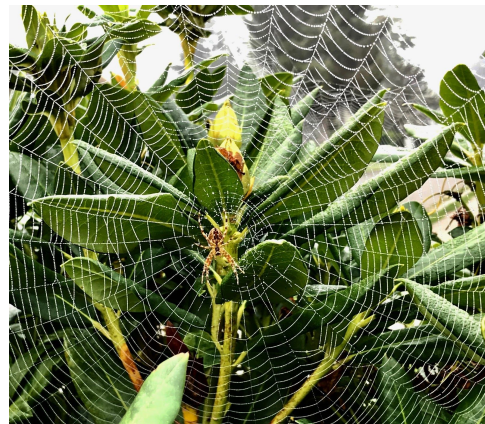
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Here are a few examples of the ways we can be amazed by God in nature.



It's spider season here in the northwest. When was the last time you stopped and thought about how spiders work? Spiders spin a very symmetrical web daily to catch prey to eat. Think about how you draw a picture of a web. You are looking at the piece of paper from a

distance and can gauge where the middle is and how far apart each supporting concentric circle should be. The spider does this completely blind, unable to see from a distance how the web is taking form. Then, the spider is weaving sticky threads so that the prey will get caught, yet the spider does not stick to his own web! Consider how small the spider is to produce so much silky web material. After the spider eats its prey, it will eat its own web each day to produce the energy needed to make a new web for a new meal.



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After giving thought to some of the unique and amazing features of a spider and its web, consider the God who created the spider! Scientists have found 45,000 species of spiders. God does not run out of ideas and creative ways to design new beings! God cares about the details of webs, whether they are spiral webs (like the one pictured), funnel webs, sheet webs, or triangle webs. God puts each speckle on the back of each spider and places every hair on each leg. Matthew 6 reminds us that God cares about the birds of the air, and He also cares about the spiders and their webs.

Flowers are another part of creation that reveals part of God's character. The sheer number of different types of flowers is amazing, but when we



look closely at just one flower, God shows Himself to be orderly, precise, and involved in every detail of His creation. When you look closely at a flower (or a pinecone, a fern, a conch seashell, an artichoke, and many more natural objects) there is a mathematical sequence to the petals. Flowers are beautiful because God perfectly placed each petal in a specific order and place. The mathematician Fibonacci was the one who discovered this pattern and so the sequence is named after him. Fibonacci's sequence is 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, This sequence is

arrived at by adding the previous two numbers together. $1+1=2$, $1+2=3$, $2+3=5$, $3+5=8$, and so on. This arranging of petals allows for each one to have the correct amount of space and to maximize exposure to sunlight. While we typically take in the whole of a flower, God has intricately placed each petal to care best for His creation.

The changing of leaves is a fascinating part of God's creation. Each year, trees that have grown green leaves and provided shade during the hot summer months, begin to drop their leaves as we head into cooler weather and the dormant season of winter. I marvel at the beauty of a tree lined street that has dozens of shades of greens, yellows, oranges, reds, and

browns. But what can we see about God in this? As the days get shorter in fall and there is less sunlight, leaves stop making chlorophyll and that is what begins to change their color. As the days get colder, the leaves close



off their connection to the branches as they turn yellow, orange, and red, and prepare to fall to the ground. This allows the tree to conserve its energy in the winter.

Shedding leaves helps a tree conserve energy and water so it will survive the winter months. God has perfectly designed trees to go through specific processes all year. We see a God who is purposeful and intentional in design. We see a God who loves beauty and creativity. As your counselee goes for a walk in the fall, encourage them to take time to think

about the processes that trees go through each year. Just as a tree has the season of budding new life in spring, providing shade in summer, and dropping beautifully colored leaves in the fall, to be bare all winter, God designed us to go through seasons too. Maybe encourage them to look through Ecclesiastes that talks about a time for everything. What season is your counselee in? What encouragement can they find in a God who is intentional and purposeful in all that His creation goes through in life?



Other parts of this world continue to reveal more about the nature of God. Romans 1:19-20 tells us that looking at creation leads us to know there is a Creator behind it all. Use nature in your counseling to point people to the wonderful character of our God. Science exists because God created the world with order and principles that man has labeled and discovered. While only certain people enjoy knowing about the Fibonacci



sequence and the Golden Ratio of mathematics, the beauty of this world is because there is a beautiful Creator who perfectly places each petal, spot, hair, leaf, and seed to reflect His nature. Get your counselee to “look” and “behold” the wonders of God!

