

Back To Basics

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SPECIAL ISSUE:

THE RIGHT CONCEPT OF GOD

Johnie Edwards

Having a wrong concept of God has caused man to have a wrong concept of himself. A failure to see who the God of the Bible is has caused some to believe in the false theory of evolution and humanism. Our young people are being taught everything but the right concept of God. We must get back to teaching the basics concerning God.

1) **GOD IS.** The fourth word of the Bible is "God." "In the beginning God..." (Gen. 1:1). A concordance check will list "God" 3900 times plus many additional references to Him. The phrase, "God is" is found more than 150 times in the Bible. "God is" would make a good study.

2) **GOD IS ALIVE.** A few years ago there was a campaign trying to convince us that 'God is dead.' He is not dead, but as David declared, "The Lord liveth..." (Ps. 18:46). That God is the living God is a frequent theme in the Bible. For example, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God..." (Ps. 42:2), the one who "has life in himself" (Jn. 5:26). Since God is alive, it is "in him we live, and move, and have our being..." (Acts 17:28). In answering the Sadducees' resurrection question, Jesus affirmed

that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mt. 22:23-33). We need to sing more often, *Our God, He Is Alive.*

3) **GOD IS THE ONLY TRUE GOD.** These words spoke Jesus about His Father, "the only true God..." (Jn. 17:2). All the other so-called gods are just idols, and lifeless nothings. Jeremiah well described them: "They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good" (Jer. 10:5). The Psalmist wrote, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not..." (Ps. 115:4-7). What a contrast with the God of the Bible!

4) **GOD IS GREAT.** The song *How Great Thou Art* is a great teaching song as to God's greatness. It is written, "For thou art great, and doest wondrous things..." (Ps. 86:10). Please continue to read about God.

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THE REALITY OF GOD

John Isaac Edwards

We cannot know God by our own wisdom. "...the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21). The reality of God must be accepted by faith. "...for he that cometh to God must believe that he is" (Heb. 11:6).

1) **THE BIBLE AFFIRMS THE REALITY OF GOD.** The Bible does not set out to prove God exists. The reality of God is a fact recognized from the first verse to the last. *God* is found 32 times in the first chapter of Genesis alone! The Bible not only admits the existence of God, but it acknowledges Him as the greatest of all realities. The Bible affirms an omnipresent (Ps. 139:8), omniscient (Ps. 147:4-5), omnipotent (Job 42:2) God "made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Ex. 20:11). Any alternative cannot be proved, and, according to what we see, the Biblical claim is the most reasonable explanation.

2) **FACTS ATTEST TO THE REALITY OF GOD.**
Fact #1: The heaven and earth exist. Man is a reality – we are here. Either these have always been (thus eternal), or they had a beginning. The Bible says there was a "beginning" (Gen. 1:1; Prov. 8:22-29). Science agrees that the universe is not eternal, but had a beginning. *Fact #2: Since there was a beginning, there must be something or someone that caused everything to come into existence.* Something cannot come from nothing. Every effect must have a cause. Scientists generally agree that 'the Big Bang' birthed the universe about 15 billion years ago. If the universe began with a Big Bang, what exploded and where did it come from? What caused it to explode? How was dead, unintelligent matter transformed into intelligent life? "Through faith we understand that the worlds

were framed by the word of God..." (Heb. 11:3).
Fact #3: Heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is show signs of amazing design and purpose. Intelligent design requires a designer with intelligence, and the amazing design around us is evidence of One with amazing intelligence! "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Ps. 19:1). Man is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). There is sufficient evidence around us to make us without excuse for not accepting the reality of God (Rom. 1:18-21).

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WHAT TO DO WHEN...

Melba Edwards

Wives are to love their husbands (Ti. 2:4), submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22), and reverence or respect their husbands (Eph. 5:33). These responsibilities are easier fulfilled when the husband is all the Lord expects him to be. But what to do when...

1) **HE DOESN'T LEAVE AND CLEAVE (GEN. 2:24)?** This can be a real problem. If the husband will leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, she won't have any reason to go back to her family. But what about when he doesn't leave and cleave?

2) **HE DOESN'T LOVE ME AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH (EPH. 5:25)?** If the husband obeyed this command it would help many problems in marriage. That's not to say the wife doesn't have her responsibilities. Most men will not be asked to lay down their life for their wife as Christ did. The love of Christ was unselfish. He sought the best for His bride. He gave His best, not His leftovers. He put the needs of the church first, before His own. Any wife married to an husband like that will love her husband, be in subjection to him, respect him, and be the best wife she can be. But what about when he is not like that?

3) **WE DON'T AGREE ON THE DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN (PROV. 19:18)?** Discipline, primarily, is the responsibility of the father (Eph. 6:4). So, what am I to do when discipline is a problem?

4) **HE WILL NOT BE THE HEAD (EPH. 5:23)?** God gave the order in 1 Cor-

inthians 11:3: God, Christ, man, woman. It's much easier to submit when you have a head. But some men won't be the head as God commanded. So, how can I submit when my husband won't be the head?

5) **HE WILL NOT PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY (1 TIM. 5:8)?** This is another problem in the home. How can a wife guide or manage the house when she is busy providing for her family?

The answer to these questions does not lie in what some talk show host may say, but the answer lies in the word of God. *First, pray.* Pray that you will be the wife God would have you to be. Pray for His help and guidance. Pray for a successful marriage. *Second, love your husband,* even when you don't receive the love God commanded back. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 often and practice it with all your being. *Third, submit to your own husband as unto the Lord.* Respect his headship, even when it may seem impossible. You can do this because it is a command from the Lord. *Fourth, communicate.* Let him know how you feel. Do this in a kind and gentle way. *Fifth, concentrate on the positive things, not the negative.* Work on the things you can change, You. Read Proverbs 31:10-31 and then go and do thou likewise. Being the kind of wife God would have us to be when things aren't so smooth takes much effort and determination to make our home the way God intended for it to be. The rewards will be worth our every effort!

GOD IS NOT

John Isaac Edwards

God is not what many people think He is. When we understand what *God Is Not*, we will be in a better position to understand what God is and have the right concept of God.

1) **GOD IS NOT A MAN.** Many think of God as if He were a man. He is not! Balaam told Balak, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. 23:19). Jesus said, “God is a Spirit...” (Jn. 4:24), and “...a spirit hath not flesh and bones...” (Lk. 24:39). Since God is not a man, He thinks differently than we do. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is. 55:8-9).

2) **GOD IS NOT ONE TO FORSAKE HIS PEOPLE.** It is written in Deuteronomy 4:31, “For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee...” Many renounce and turn away from the Lord, but God has never forsaken those who put their trust in Him. The Psalmist said of God, “And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee” (Ps. 9:10). God hath promised, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). Thus, we can have confidence in God and take Him at His word.

3) **GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD.** Jesus answered the Sadducees’ question about the resurrection by referring them to what God said out of the burning bush (Ex. 3:6) – “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the

God of Jacob” – and then drew this conclusion: “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Mt. 22:32). This concept of God opposed the Sadducees’ thinking concerning the resurrection. Though the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob) had been gathered unto their fathers, they were living! There is life beyond the grave because our God, He is alive!

4) **GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION.** Some want to blame God for all of the confusion that exists in the religious world. He is not to be blamed! “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33). When there is confusion, it is not of God! When we band together in doing what the word of God teaches, we will have peace!

5) **GOD IS NOT MOCKED.** Writing the Galatians, Paul penned, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7). Those who think they can just say and do whatever they wish without any consequences need to think again. Harvest time is coming, and God does not suffer Himself to be mocked.

6) **GOD IS NOT UNRIGHTEOUS.** No doubt, all of us, at one time or another, have been hurt by one who deals fraudulently or is deceitful. God is not like that. Hebrews 6:10 affirms, “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love...” God has promised. “...be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12).

CONCEPTS

Craig Thomas

Did you ever wonder why people do illogical things? Why did doctors drain a quart of blood from George Washington when he lay prostrate with Pneumonia? This illogical behavior arose from a misconception of the nature of disease and of the functioning of the human body. If those attending Washington had the correct concepts they wouldn't have contributed to his death through such illogical actions. The same paradigm operates in the spiritual realm. If our behaviors and practices are ever to be acceptable to God, it is essential for us to have the correct spiritual concepts (particularly as they apply to "knowing" God).

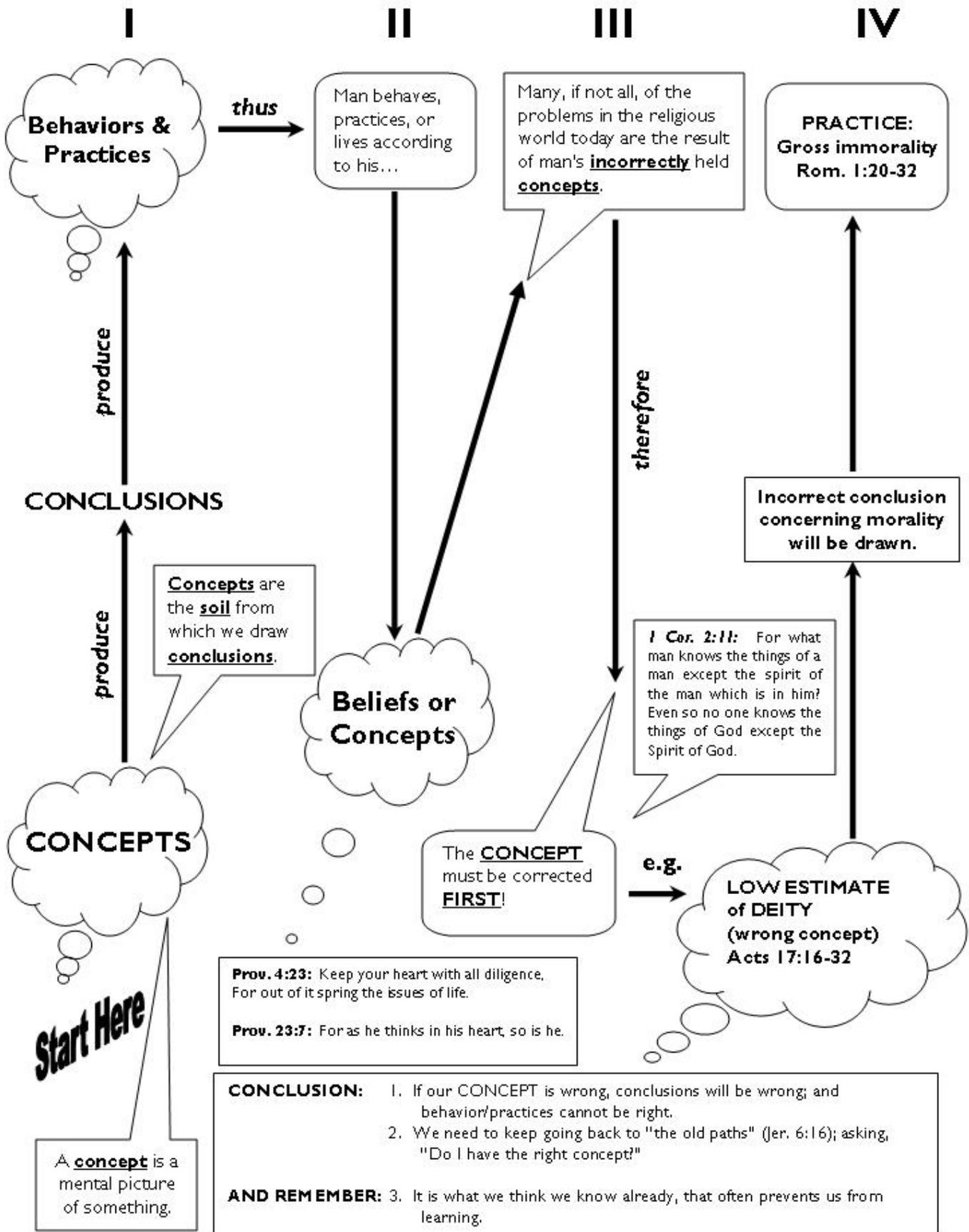
1) CONCEPTS: THE SOIL FROM WHICH WE DRAW CONCLUSIONS. See the chart on the following page. In Figure X, start on the bottom left (Column I). Notice that: "Concepts are the soil from which we draw conclusions." And, conclusions produce behaviors and practices. Since doctors attending Washington had the wrong concept of disease and the human body, they concluded their patient would benefit from "bleeding" and took that action. Thus, (Column II) "Man behaves, practices, or lives according to his beliefs or concepts." The same is true in the spiritual realm. On the far right (Column IV), the Greeks had the wrong concept of deity (Acts 17:16-32), from which they drew the wrong conclusions concerning morality, which led them to the grossly immoral and depraved behaviors and practices Paul describes in Romans 1:20-32.

2) CORRECT BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES CAN SPRING ONLY FROM CORRECT CONCEPTS. (top Column III) "Many, if not all, of the problems in the religious world today are the result of man's incorrectly held concepts." Therefore, the correct

practice or behavior will not be forthcoming UNTIL man has the correct concept. The Athenians didn't have a chance to worship God correctly, or lead godly lives, until they first had the right concept of the one, true, living God. The truth of this general paradigm is confirmed in such passages as Proverbs 4:23 and Proverbs 23:7. The only avenue for them (or us) to learn the correct concept of God is through His revelation (1 Cor. 2:11).

3) OUR CONCEPT OF GOD IS CRITICAL. Many have wrong behaviors or practices because they have the wrong concept of God. He's merely a "doting grandfather" or a "celestial Santa Claus." A. W. Pink, in *Gleaning the Godhead* (pp. 28-29), put it this way, "The god of this century no more resembles the Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering candle the glory of the midday sun. The god who is talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday school, mentioned in much of the religious literature of the day, and preached in most of the so-called Christian conferences, is a figment of human imagination, an invention of maudlin sentimentality. The heathen outside the pale of Christendom form gods of wood and stone, while millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a god out of their carnal minds. In reality, they are but atheists, for there is no other possible alternative between an absolutely supreme God, and no God at all. A 'god' whose will is resisted, whose designs are frustrated, whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity, and so far from being a fit object of worship, merits naught but contempt."

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "KNOW" GOD?

Craig Thomas

French philosopher Albert Camus said, "Life is a bad joke." Most of us, at some point in our lives, have had similar thoughts. All have wrestled with the questions – "Why was I born?" and "What is the purpose of (my) life?" Thankfully, life is not a bad joke and these questions have answers: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me" (Jer. 9:23-24; Eccl. 12:13). In order for our lives to be worthwhile, satisfying and meaningful, they must have a big enough goal. Something "large" enough to catch and hold our imagination; something with enough substance to completely and permanently engage our allegiance. Worldly goals are inherently unsatisfying (Eccl. 3:11; 5:10; Mt. 6:19ff). "Knowing" God is the highest, most exalting, most compelling goal of all! (Phil. 1:21). But, what is involved in "knowing" God? I certainly cannot exhaust the subject in one page, but let me offer three thoughts. Knowing God is...

1) **A MATTER OF GRACE.** Through sin we've forfeited all claim on His favor (Rom. 3:10, 23). Recognizing this is a must at ALL times, before and after our baptism. The "heart of the gospel" is God satisfying His rightful wrath toward us through Christ's sacrifice (1 Jn. 4:10). We don't make friends with God, He makes friends with us! (Col. 1:21-22). The message of reconciliation is the message of God's unfathomable love for us (Rom. 5:8) made available and made known via His grace (Eph. 2:4-10). Only through "the word of His grace" (Acts 20:32) can we come to know His nature, character, will, and this wonderful news of reconciliation! (1 Cor. 2:9-13).

2) **A MATTER OF PERSONAL DEALING.** "Knowing" God transcends "knowing about Him." Rather, it is a matter of personally dealing with Him through faith (Heb. 11:6). We must deal with our condition (Rom. 3:10, 23; 6:23), with God's desire for us (Jn. 3:16; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9), with God's call (2 Th. 2:13-14), with God's plan (Eph. 4:1-24), and with God's ability (Eph. 3:20). Each of these things can only be "dealt with" through faith – a faith based upon God's sole communication with each of us...His word! (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:1-13).

3) **A MATTER OF PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT.** To get to know someone we must commit ourselves to their company, their interests, and be always ready to identify with their concerns. In regards to God, first and foremost, this involves our obedience to His word! "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 Jn. 2:3-4). But "rote" obedience is useless! Our obedience must be from the heart! (Mt. 15:8; Rom. 6:16-17). Obedience involves our mind, our will, our feelings, and our actions (Rom. 12:1-2). We must reshape our priorities to His (Lk. 9:23-24; Rom. 8:29). We must realize just how close God wants to get to us and respond! (1 Pet. 2:9-10; Rom. 8:16-17).

Do you "know" God? The stakes are exceptionally high (2 Th. 1:7-9) and the rewards are unimaginably great (Jn. 17:3). The path to the goal is clear (1 Jn. 2:3-4). Do you merely "know ABOUT God"? Or, do you really "KNOW" Him?

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THE LOVE OF GOD

Ryan Thomas

In an age where style and symbolism have replaced substance, the real meaning of love has become muddled and blurred. Words and gestures have taken the place of actions and deeds. The Bible says, “My little children, let us love not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn. 3:18). In this article, I would like to point out some common misconceptions of love, as the term is used in the Bible, and then show the proper meaning of love.

1) **SINCE GOD LOVES US, HE WON’T PUNISH US.** Many have the idea that God wouldn’t send anyone to hell because He loves us too much. It is true that God loves us. The Bible says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). However, just because God loves us doesn’t mean He won’t punish those who refuse to do His will (Mt. 7:21-23). The Bible also says that just as our earthly fathers punished us for our good, our Heavenly Father chastens us that we might be made partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:5-11; Prov. 13:24).

2) **POINTING OUT SIN AND ERROR IS NOT SHOWING PROPER LOVE.** In today’s society, most have come to expect tolerance and acceptance, especially in the realm of religion. In fact, I recently saw an advertisement for a certain church which said, “No Judging, no Religion, Just Jesus.” While such phrases may sound good, they demonstrate a severe misunderstanding of Biblical principles. When Jesus pointed out sin, He did so with a spirit of love. The same is true with Paul and the rest of the apostles. In fact, a great deal of New Testament teaching deals with pointing out sin and error.

Just read the entire books of 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Hebrews. When men today point out sin and error, they are fulfilling the charge Paul gave to Timothy. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). May God bless men who are not afraid to stand up for what is right and point out things that are wrong.

3) **COMMANDMENTS, OBEDIENCE, AND LOVE ARE CONTRADICTORY.** Suppose we wanted to know what love is. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit has defined it for us in 1 John 5:3, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.” Unfortunately, many in the world do not want to keep God’s commandments. Instead, they would rather create a new definition of love – a syrupy sentimentalism rather than obedience to Christ. They want to impress you with “how much they care” rather than urging people to do the will of God. Jesus said in John 14:15, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” In order to truly demonstrate our love for Christ we must take up our cross and follow Him on a daily basis (Mt. 16:24). Don’t be fooled by those who want to alter the Bible definition of love and minimize the importance of obedience.

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THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

Carl Peterson

One does not have to observe our modern legal system very long to understand that it is composed of fallible humans using limited knowledge and wisdom to arrive at sometimes incorrect judgments. In fact, the legal system was designed with this in mind – it is considered far better to acquit 1,000 guilty persons than to convict a single innocent man. Fortunately, there is a Judge above all judges and juries and courts who is unimpaired in His decision-making process: God. Our God is not subject to the same weaknesses as mankind. His understanding is superior to ours. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Is. 55:9). We can trust that God will rule and decide accurately in all things. Consider some attributes of His judgment.

1) **GOD JUDGES ACCURATELY.** Were we able to determine the intent of man’s heart and of his thoughts, there would be no mistrials or incorrect verdicts. While no man can know the thoughts of another man (1 Cor. 2:11), God does. This makes His judgment superior to our own. When Samuel was sent to Bethlehem to anoint the successor to Saul, he thought upon seeing Jesse’s son, Eliab, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him” (1 Sam. 16:6). The Lord had other plans, as He indicated to Samuel: “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (v. 7). God then passed over the first seven sons of Jesse, until David was brought before Samuel and he was anointed, the man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22).

2) **GOD JUDGES IMPARTIALLY.** When Peter came before Cornelius, he began by saying, “I most

certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality” (Acts 10:34). God freely offers salvation without respect to nationality, thus He holds all accountable without respect to nationality. Paul wrote that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” We are all equally sinners, placing us all equally subject to His judgment. We are not held accountable for the sins of other persons. As the Lord said to Ezekiel, “The person who sins will die” (Ezek. 18:20).

3) **GOD JUDGES WITH FINALITY AND FOR ETERNITY.** There is coming a time when this world will end and Jesus will come again. At this time, all will be judged. This is inescapable. “It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” Whenever we are told of this pending judgment, the judgment is always without appeal and without end. When Jesus described the final judgment, those who were condemned tried to plead ignorance. “Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?” (Mt. 25:44). Ignorance did not excuse them, and they were sent away into eternal punishment (v. 46) – Not short-term or extended punishment, but eternal punishment, the same punishment that verse 41 describes as being prepared for the devil and his angels. This judgment will come at a time He has appointed, but it will come “like a thief” (2 Pet. 3:10). We must be ready to face this judgment, as there are only two possible verdicts. We will either go into eternal life or eternal punishment. No one can hide and no one can hope for undue leniency. Are you ready?

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THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

Donnie V. Rader

The Hebrew writer declared, “Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us” (Heb. 6:17-18). Here the promises of God are assured by the immutability of God. *Immutable* means unchangeable. “Examples from the papyri show that the word was used as a technical term in connection with wills” (*Vine’s*). The immutability of God refers to the fact that God is unchangeable.

God’s immutability is taught throughout the Bible. Consider just a few references. “For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob” (Mal. 3:6). “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:29). “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent” (1 Sam. 15:29). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17).

1) **HOW GOD IS IMMUTABLE.** *His essence is unchangeable.* He is the “I AM” (Ex. 3:14). *His attributes are immutable.* He is good (Ps. 34:8), holy (Ps. 99:9), loving (1 Jn. 4:8), just (Job 4:17), merciful (Ti. 3:5), and severe (Rom. 11:22). None of these change. The very attributes of deity do not change. God is eternal (Ps. 90:2). He is omniscient – all knowing (Heb. 4:13), omnipresent – all present (Ps. 139:7-10), and omnipotent – all powerful (Mt. 19:26). *His plans are unchangeable.* God has an eternal purpose (Eph. 1:4; 3:10).

His promises are immutable (Heb. 6:13). His warnings are unchangeable (Acts 13:40). The objects of his love are immutable (Jn. 3:16).

2) **EVIDENCE OF IMMUTABILITY.** What evidence could we cite that God is immutable? God’s existence is evidence of His immutability. Any argument for the existence of God is an argument for His immutability. Creation itself tells us there is a God (Rom. 1:20). Thus, creation itself tells us He is unchangeable. If He is God, then He is always God (Heb. 13:8). God’s perfection tells us He is immutable. He is flawless. He is perfect in wisdom, knowledge, and in every way. If He is a changing God, then He is not perfect. How do you change perfection? God’s infinity tells us that He is unchangeable. If God is infinite, there is no room for anything else. If He is infinite, there is no room for change.

3) **WHAT DOES GOD’S IMMUTABILITY MEAN TO US?** A study of immutability is not just an academic pursuit. It has practical application in our lives. If God is immutable, then I know that He keeps His promises (2 Pet. 3:13). So, any promise He has made (to forgive, to never leave or forsake, to answer my prayers, etc.) can be trusted. Knowing God is unchangeable gives us assurance and hope (Heb. 6:13-18), which serves as an anchor for the soul. If God is immutable, then I will never be disappointed in Him (Rom. 9:33). Often, we put confidence in man who later changes and becomes a disappointment to us. We may regret that we had confidence in them. This will not happen with God.

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THE JEALOUSY OF GOD

Chris Bates

After God had brought the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, He said to them, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Ex. 20:3-5). God Himself affirms that He is a jealous God.

1) GOD IS JEALOUS OF OUR THOUGHTS.

Many today are not giving the necessary attention to their minds and their thoughts. When asked about the great commandment in the law, Jesus responded, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mt. 22:37). If one truly loves God with all his mind, then he will be careful to set his thoughts and affections on those things that please the Lord. Paul wrote to the saints and faithful brethren at Colossae, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). Again this apostle would pen, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8). Are you thinking on things that glorify the Lord, or do your thoughts provoke the Lord to jealousy?

2) GOD IS JEALOUS OF OUR LOVE.

If one truly wants to be faithful to the Lord so as not to provoke His jealousy, then he will love nothing

nor anyone more than God. Jesus said, “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Lk. 14:26). Of course, our Lord’s point here is that we are to love all of these less than we love Him. God and His will must always be first with the one who desires to be faithful to Him. Writing about those things we should be careful not to love, John admonished, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn. 2:15-16). Is your love for God what it ought to be (1 Jn. 5:3)?

3) GOD IS JEALOUS OF OUR TIME.

Paul stressed the value of our time when he wrote, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). Sadly, people are spending more time in life’s affairs than in doing God’s will. Time is precious and it is fleeting (Jas. 4:13-14). We need to consume our time with Bible study (2 Tim. 2:15), with faithful assembling for worship (Heb. 10:23-25), and in prayer (Eph. 6:18), as those of the first century did (Acts 2:42). Are you making good use of your time?

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THE HOLINESS OF GOD

David Eldridge

The Messianic prophet records, “I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’” (Is. 6:1-3). To have the right concept of God, we must understand what the seraphim proclaimed – “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord.” The holiness of God tells much of His nature and speaks volumes to us about our duty towards Him.

1) **GOD IS HOLY.** To be holy is to be set apart, sacred, and clean. Truly, Jehovah possesses all of these qualities. That God is holy indicates that He is morally perfect. Therefore, the Psalmist wrote, “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Ps. 145:17). God, in His holiness, is above sin and evil, “for God cannot be tempted with evil” (Jas. 1:13). God is the epitome of holiness as “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He” (Dt. 32:4). To proclaim that God is holy is to say that He is set apart from all wrong and clean from the stain of sin in unadulterated righteousness.

2) **GOD’S HOLINESS AND MAN’S UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.** In His holiness, God is perfectly righteous. However, of man it is said, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). Seeing that God is set apart from evil in holiness, He can have no fellowship with unrighteous man. Thus, of man it is written, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your

sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Is. 59:2). We, by our “wicked works,” became “alienated” from and “enemies” of the holy God.

3) **BEING IN COMMUNION WITH THE HOLY GOD.** How then may we, as unrighteous men, be in fellowship with the holy God? In order to be in communion with Him, we must be holy as well. God said to the people of Moses’ day, “I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44). Harkening back to these words, the call is given to us in this dispensation through the apostle Peter: “Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16). God desires that man would be set apart from the things which would defile him in this life and be wholly consecrated unto His service. Thankfully, God has said throughout all generations, “I am the LORD which sanctify you” (Lev. 20:8). To this end, Jesus sacrificed Himself “that He might sanctify and cleanse” those who make up the church “with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26). Therefore, sanctification initially takes place in the waters of baptism as God washes away our sins, thereby reconciling us to Himself (Acts 22:16; Col. 1:21-22). We continue to be among those who are sanctified and in communion with God as we are “holy in all” our “conduct,” “proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” while having “no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (1 Pet. 1:15; Eph. 5:10-11). God abides in holiness. Do you?

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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

Who Am I?

People of the Old Testament



- 1) I was the first man (Gen. 2:19). _____
- 2) I was the first king (1 Sam. 9:17). _____
- 3) I became king when I was 7 (2 Chr. 24:1). _____
- 4) I led the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex. 13:3). _____
- 5) I was swallowed by a great fish (Jonah 1:17). _____
- 6) I purposed in my heart not to defile myself (Dan. 1:8). _____
- 7) I was swallowed up by the earth (Num. 16:32). _____
- 8) I was sold to the Ishmaelites by my brothers (Gen. 37:28). _____
- 9) I killed my brother (Gen. 4:8). _____
- 10) I said, "Let there be no strife...for we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8). _____

**"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).**

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Jeremy Sweets

The Psalmist declares of God, “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne” (Ps. 89:14; 97:2). The Scriptures reveal the eternal truth that God is righteous (Rom. 1:16-17). Righteousness is defined as “the character or quality of being right or just” (*Vine, II, p. 980*). God perfectly bears this quality, displaying His righteousness before all. Notice some different aspects of His righteousness and how God’s character directly impacts us.

1) **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REFERS TO HIS HOLINESS.** God is holy and pure, completely free from the taint of error or sin. God possesses absolutely no impurity, contamination, or corruption. With God, there is no weakness or frailty of character. He is transcendent in His holiness, deserving our highest praise (Ps. 148:13; 150:2). Whereas we falter and fail, God does not. God’s holiness was fully represented when Jesus left the throne of heaven to become like a man (Heb. 1:3). He was tempted as we are, but He was sinless (Heb. 4:15). When we consider the holiness of God, and the perfect example of Jesus Christ, we should also strive to be holy (1 Th. 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 Jn. 3:3).

2) **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REFERS TO HIS FAITHFULNESS.** He is loyal and true, and He will not forsake His word (Ps. 33:4). His faithfulness is great and undeterred (Jer. 3:23; 2 Tim. 2:13). Due to God’s faithfulness, we can trust God and put full assurance in His word. In fact, God’s faithfulness is the basis of our faith. Faith consists of believing that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Faith means believing that God is faithful to His promises. If we believe the promises of

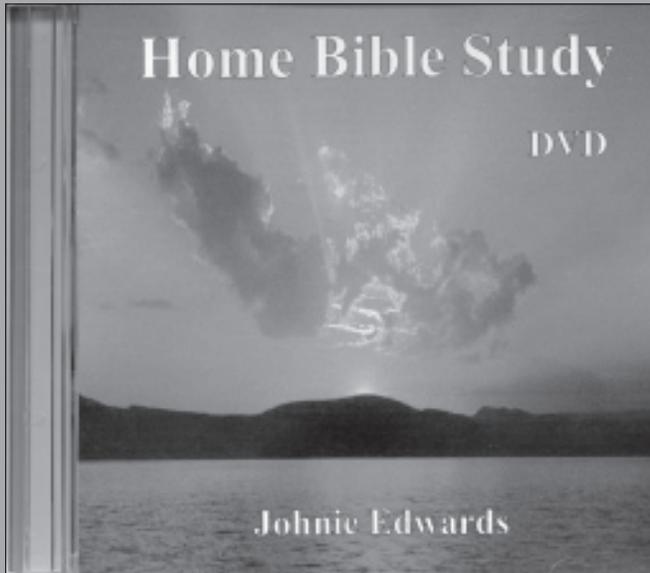
God, we will live in full obedience to Him. It is only when we forget about God and His promises that we slip into worldliness and sin.

3) **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REFERS TO HIS JUSTICE.** This quality of God can clearly be seen in His judgment and dealings with mankind. For man, sin bears the penalty of death. By God’s grace, salvation has been freely offered to mankind. The manner in which God offers salvation displays His righteousness. God did not simply overlook sin. He did not ignore it. He did not disregard it. His justice demanded that the price be paid, so He sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice to bear the penalty of sin for us (Jn. 3:16; Gal. 4:4-5). Moreover, there is no partiality with God (Rom. 2:11). He freely offers salvation to everyone who believes (Ti. 2:11; Acts 10:34; Rom. 3:21-22). Salvation is not restricted by gender, race, or social standing (Gal. 3:28). Rather, the conditions of salvation are attainable for all who desire to be saved.

The righteousness of God proclaims His character as holy, faithful, and just. When we consider who God is, we can more fully know who we should be. We can never be perfect like our heavenly Father, but we can be deemed righteous because of the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus died on the cross that we might be presented before God holy and blameless (Col. 1:22; Rom. 6:12-13). Christ’s sacrifice enables us to become the righteousness of God, bearing the status of our redeemed condition (2 Cor. 5:21; Ps. 24:5). God’s right character offers us righteousness.

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