

Who are you, Lord? – Part 4

How do you view God? Your view of God will ultimately determine your relationship with Him, the kind of prayers you pray, the level of your trust (faith), even the nature of your worship.

Knowing God is so important because, as we saw before, it even impacts on eternal life!

John 17:3 – *“And this is eternal life, that they may **know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ who you sent**”.*

That they may know you, the true God – not the invented god, or the man-made god or the gods of religions but the true God!

Knowing the true God

2 Chronicles 15:3-4 *³For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; ⁴but when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them*

There was a time when Israel was without the “true God”. The absence of the true God indicates that they had embraced and relied on a counterfeit: a counterfeit belief and a counterfeit god.

Jeremiah 9:23-24; 10:10 - *Thus says the Lord: “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**, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.*

10:10 - *But the Lord is the **true God**; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.*

Elevating our view of Him

I love passages like these in Jeremiah - they elevate our view of God.

I love to read about Elijah on Mount Carmel declaring and demonstrating that Jehovah is the true God because He answers by fire (1 Kings 18:20-24). Scriptures like these elevate our view of who God is.

As I said before, your view of God will ultimately have an impact on your own relationship with Him: on the kind of prayers you are praying, on your faith level, the nature of your worship etc.

Addressing distortion

The same way certain scriptures elevate our view of God, I believe that there are 4 factors that can distort our view of God. They all start with a P:

1. Perpetrator

While looking for the True God, there is someone whom the bible refers to as '*father of lies*' (John 8:44) – the devil.

... "he was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it"

Right from the beginning of time, the devil has tried to distort mankind's view of God. In Genesis 3:1 he approached Adam and Eve to question two of God's most important attributes: His love and His goodness.

Ever since the fall of man, our view of God has been fractured, and the father of lies is behind it all.

2. Parenting

The way we were raised by our parents has great influence on how we view God. Essentially, our parents were the closest thing to God when we were growing up: they were bigger, more powerful, more experienced and smarter than we were.

If we were raised by loving and kind parents, we tend to see God as caring and gracious. If we were raised by parents who were overly focused on rules and compliance, we may tend to see God in that way too.

If our parents were critical and shaming, we may also think of God as judgemental and condemning. If, on the other hand, we were raised by parents who spoiled us by indulging our every wish, we tend to see God as someone who should give us whatever we want.

Some may see God distant and find it hard to relate to Him as a Father - if perhaps their own father was absent from their lives, for whatever reason.

This is not always the case but there is sometimes a correlation between how we see God, based on our experience with our own parents.

3. Preaching

The things you were taught about God play an obvious role on how we view Him.

Similar to the parenting we received, we often understand God as He has been explained to us by our spiritual leaders.

If we were only taught that God is all hellfire and brimstone, we tend to see Him as full of wrath and eager to punish. If on the other hand, you were only taught that God is here to

give us everything we want and satisfy all our earthly dreams, we tend to see Him as an overindulgent grandfather ready to grant our every wish.

Sometimes bad theology happens to good Christians. That is why it is so important to seat under good, balanced, biblical teaching.

4. Projection

We can project our own 'humanity' onto God.

Our view of God gets distorted when we project our own faults and defects on God. We think of Him with the same human flaws that we have.

There is a flipside to projecting who we are onto God. Sometimes we project our wants, wishes and dreams onto God, as if He automatically agrees with all of them and is going to meet all of them.

As we saw last week, Greek Philosopher Xenophanes said, "*men create the gods in their own image*"

Saint Augustine also said, "*God is not what you imagine or what you think you understand*"

God is_____ He is not a 'fill in the blanks' kind of God – whatever you imagine Him to be.

Only human pride can come to that conclusion.

So, where's the True God?

What is the sure way of accurately finding Him beyond the distortions of the devil, our upbringing, bad theology or our human reasoning?

This is a very important question that I will try to answer in greater detail over the next few weeks, but the short answer is, Jesus!

1 John 5:20-21 - *²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

When we see Jesus, we see the true God without distortion, we see the Father. He is the express image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). He is the ultimate revelation of God and the most accurate view of Him, this side of eternity.

We are in Him who is true. We are not into idols and false gods. We have not embraced counterfeit beliefs, human opinions or impostors but we're going for the true, authentic, genuine living God!