

# Firm Foundation – Christian Living

## Our Father, God – Our View of Him – Pt.1

### I. Digging the Foundation – Discovering the True Character of the Father, God.



Most of us have grown up with a distorted perception who God is and how He desires to relate to us. We may view God as some mean and cruel person who wants to punish us for every wrong thing we do or we may see Him as the benevolent God, who is primarily a forgiving God. Or we may perceive Him as a critical God, who wants absolute control of all things. In this

session our goal will be to define who God is and how we should view Him from true Biblical view.

The truth is how you perceive God will affect how you relate to Him. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that we have a correct Biblical view of who God is.

What were your perceptions of God as you were growing up?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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### II. Forming and Reinforcement: Four Perceptions of God.



#### 1. The Authoritarian God.

He is perceived as angry at humanity's sins and engaged in every creature's life and world affairs. He is ready to throw the thunderbolt of judgment down on "the unfaithful or ungodly."

Those who envision God this way are religiously and politically conservative people, more often black Protestants and white evangelicals.

## 2. The Benevolent God.

He is perceived as still setting absolute standards for mankind in the Bible, but is seen primarily a forgiving God, more like the father who embraces his repentant prodigal son in the Bible. "God is perceived as being in control of everything and being grieved by the sin of the world, by any created person who doesn't follow him. At the same time He is also perceived a God who loves us, who sees us for who we really are; and perceived as a God of the second, third, fourth and fifth chance."

## 3. The Critical God.

He is perceived as having his judgmental eye on the world, but He's not going to intervene, either to punish or to comfort. He is pictured as God with the classic bearded old man on high.

Those who picture a critical God are significantly less likely to draw absolute moral lines on hot-button issues such as abortion, gay marriage or embryonic stem cell research.

## 4. The Distant God.

He is not perceived as a bearded old man in the sky raining down his opinions on us. Followers of this God see a cosmic force that launched the world, and then left it spinning on its own.

Of these four perceptions of God, which one do you find yourself in? Why?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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## III. Pouring The Foundation – Practical Applications.



One of life's greatest pursuits is that of discovering who God is and how that discovery affects our lives. As we begin to discover who God is in all of His glory and majesty, it enables us to come into a deeper understanding and revelation that enhances our relationship with Him as our creator.

***Psalms 145:3 (NLT) Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! His greatness is beyond discovery!***

In order to begin to get a glimpse into God's greatness we must begin to see Him as He views Himself. Instead of allowing our lives to be conformed to our limited view of who we think God to be, we must humble ourselves and see Him as He has revealed Himself through Scripture and the revelation of His Spirit. His ways and thoughts are so much higher than our ways.<sup>1</sup>

We will see God as being both personal and transcendent, meaning that He exists above the material universe and has qualities in His being that we can only approach in our imagination. As created beings we are made in His image, which enables us to personally experience His divine attributes. The difference is that our experiences in His attributes are always incomplete and inconsistent because of our imperfections. But they do give us a glimpse into God and His nature as we look to Him.<sup>2</sup>

## **1. The Transcendent Attributes of God.**

- **God is Self-Existent** – His life is in Himself – *Psalm 90:2*.
- **God is Spirit** – *1 Timothy 1:17*
- **God is One, Yet Three** – Father, Son & Holy Spirit – *Deuteronomy 6:4*
- **God is Eternal** – *Psalm 90:2*
- **God is Immutable** – Unchangeable in nature – *Malachi 3:6*
- **God is Omnipotent** – All powerful – *Revelation 19:6, Genesis 18:14*
- **God is Omnipresent** – Unlimited by space – *Genesis 28:15*
- **God is Omniscient** – He knows all Things – *Hebrews 4:13*

## **2. The Personal Attributes of God**

***Genesis 1:26*** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...."

The Bible reveals a personal God reaching out to His creation, demonstrating all of the characteristics of personhood that we experience as human beings, except without sin.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 55:9

<sup>2</sup> This quote among many others in this study are taken from the CEI Booklet "The Knowledge of God" by Terry Edwards

- **God is Love – He shows unfathomable affection.**

**1 John 4:8** *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

God's love desires our everlasting welfare and all of His acts are done to secure it. His Love is consistent, unending and pure because "God is love" in the core of His nature.

Both heavenly and human beings were created with a free will in order that we could enjoy and fellowship the love of God forever. When sin entered the world, God already had a means for reconciliation in place in His heart.

**1 Peter 1:20** *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*

**John 3:16** *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

This well-known verse speaks of the divine love which moved God to provide salvation for the world through His Son.

**Romans 5:8** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

God's love continually shows itself in infinite and unwavering good will towards us. His love continually wills the good of all and never wills harm or evil to anyone.

- **God is Holy – Absolute purity – Can not sin nor tolerate sin.**

God is absolutely holy with a perfection of purity in His uncreated being that can fill us with awe and worship but cannot be fully grasped by anything created. He is holy with an infinite fullness of purity that is incomprehensible.

**Isaiah 6:3** *And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"*

**Revelation 15:4** *Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You,*

*for Your judgments have been manifested."*

If it weren't for the beauty of God's grace that was accomplished through Jesus Christ, we would not be able to approach God in His Holiness. But in His mercy He has made a way for us to approach Him.

**Hebrews 4: 16** *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

The blood of Christ presents us before the Father as righteous and sanctified, able to stand in His presence with an imputed holiness we could never accomplish on our own.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

- **God is Wisdom:** God realizes the best designs by the best possible means. He cannot make a mistake. His is all wise.

A.W. Tozer defines wisdom as "the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means.

**Psalms 104:24** *O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions;*

All of God's acts are done in wisdom because of the integration of these attributes of His being. He is not tainted by sin or selfishness; His acts are motivated by the awareness of ultimate good; He sees and knows all that can be seen and known. Because His understanding is infinite, His wisdom is boundless.

**Isaiah 28:29** *This also comes from the LORD of hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.*

- **God is a Just God or a God of Love.**

**Isaiah 45:21** (NLT) *Consult together, argue your case, and state your proofs that idol worship pays. Who made these things known long ago? What idol ever told you they would happen? Was it not I, the LORD? For there is no other God but me – a just God and a Savior – no, not one!*

Because He is all knowing, His sense of justice never lacks necessary information. Because He is infinitely wise, His judgments are perfectly integrated with His purposes.

The perfect justice of God was revealed in Jesus Christ when He magnificently displayed His dealings with the sin of mankind. God's love and goodness culminated in Christ taking the full brunt of divine justice in His perfect humanity.

- **God is full of Goodness.**

Love, Benevolence, Mercy and Grace are all included in His goodness. The goodness of God is that which enables Him to be kind, benevolent, and full of good will toward all men. In this core of His being God is tenderhearted, sympathetic and inclined to give blessings. He takes great pleasure in the happiness and well being of His people.

**It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance.**

God's goodness is seen most clearly in His forbearance, His willingness to express extreme levels of patience, kindness and longsuffering in order to bring humanity to repentance and restoration.

**Romans 2:4** *Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*

**Ephesians 2:4-7** *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

- **God is Faithful – Absolutely trustworthy. His Word Will Never Fail.**

God is faithful in the core of His being. Since He is immutable (unchangeable), His faithfulness can never change.

**Hebrews 13:5** *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

**Hebrews 6:18** *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.*

- **God is Merciful.**

Whether in the Garden of Eden or the Garden of Gethsemane, God is seen as both merciful and just. All of His dealings with mankind are in mercy and love. He deals in justice when His mercy has been rejected.

Mercy is an attribute of God that is a deep and inexhaustible energy within His nature which rises out of His love and disposes Him to show compassion, kindness and forgiveness. A perfect example of this is the story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery.

**John 8:10-11** *When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said no one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.*

God's immeasurable love is always seeking for places where justice and mercy can kiss and sinner can go free.

- **God is full of Grace.**

**John 1:16** *And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.*

The Christian's experience of grace begins with the reception of the riches of His grace ("fullness") and is progressive and limitless. Its source is Christ's abundant Person (cf. Phil. 4:19). Indeed there was grace in the Law which came through Moses, but the grace of God which appeared at the incarnation overwhelms all previous manifestations.

God's mercy and grace arise from His goodness and love. Grace and mercy are related but not identical. The mercy of God is His goodness confronting human sin, guilt and misery. His grace is His goodness directed at our inability and our debt. Grace is the good pleasure of God

that enables Him to give favor to the undeserving.

#### **IV. Pouring The Foundation – Practical Applications.**



As you can see, a true revelation of God in His transcendent and personal attributes will liberate the human soul. We ultimately become what we believe God to Be. The right concept of God is very critical to our spiritual maturity.

Once we know God in some Degree of accuracy, He becomes an anchor to our soul. We are truly liberated when we break through the discouragements and confusion of our circumstances and embrace the unchanging, loving, all wise, omnipotent King of glory.

**One of the greatest and most wonderful things about God is that He wants to share His attributes with us.**

***2 Peter 1:2-4*** *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, <sup>3</sup>as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, <sup>4</sup>by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, **that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.***

As we begin to embrace and walk in all of the wonderful promises God has given to us through His Word, the divine nature of God begins to take root in our lives as well.

***Ephesians 1:17-19*** *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup>the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.*



## IV. Finishing Touches – Other Resources



- Movies –
- Books –
- Bible Studies –

The Four Perceptions of God taken from an article: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2006-09-11-religion-survey\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2006-09-11-religion-survey_x.htm)