

# Concept Of (and Intimacy with) God

Teach: We all ask four questions: Who am I, Why am I Here, Who is God, and What is His purpose for me?

A.W. Tozer (1961, pp. 1-3) wrote: *"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, 'What comes into your mind when you think about God?' we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. . . Our real idea of God may lie buried under the rubbish of conventional religious notions and may require an intelligent and vigorous search before it is finally unearthed and exposed for what it is. Only after an ordeal of painful self probing are we likely to discover what we actually believe about God."* - *Knowledge of His Holiness*

Our concept of God, our understanding or idea of God, is of crucial importance to fully expressing the Christ-life.

## What Is Your Concept of God?

**A Concept is a "notion that leads to a judgment".**

- Concepts control us more than truth
- Our concepts are often based upon error

*Why do you think you believe what you believe?*

## Five Hidden Sources of Distortion

- The Inter-generational Cycle - *Distortions passed down through generations*  
*Ex. pharasees*
- Attribution - *Experiences and events cause us to attribute things to God*
- Parental Projections - *"God is like my Father" (or whoever is the authority)*

Missing or preoccupied (where is God)  
Angry  
Demanding (perfectionism)  
Too busy (God not have time, need attention)  
Uncaring (God is apathetic)

- Self-Projections - *We project feelings about our self onto how we view God*
- Early Religious Training and Experiences - *Church, SS, Media, and unusual experiences may produce legalistic, shame-based, or guilt motivated view of God*

*Ex. Church sign – work for God, and He'll work for you!*

## **My Personal Concept Of God**

Give "Who is God Worksheet", pray, and work through

Use the questionnaire on "Who Is God?"

Record your first thought

Record your "true" impressions, not religious answers

Ask God to reveal your mental **and** emotional impressions of Himself.

What are your FEELINGS telling you about God?

### **Three false concepts about God**

-Harsh Judge – God's out to get me. "I believe in God – for the bad stuff"

-Divine Employer – "God has me on a time clock and I'm working for Him – If I do well, He loves me, but if I do badly, He hates me."

-Distant Deity – He's 'out there somewhere' watching me.

-Santa Clause – tell Him what you want

## **The Truth About God**

### **God Is Great!**

"Unusually large in size or in degree, distinguished or famous, of much consequence"

"Of extraordinary powers, of high rank or position, of noble character"

1. Powerful
2. Omniscient (all knowing)
3. Omnipotent (all powerful)
4. Omnipresent (everywhere)
5. Awesome

### **God Is Good!**

"morally excellent, righteous, sufficient"

6. He can't act towards us other than is His nature(Ro 8:28)
7. All Things For Good, (But not always "safe" – C.S. Lewis)
8. Wholly Holy

Psalms 86:15 - He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness.

Psalms 23 - He is our shepherd and supplies all our needs.

1 John 3:1 - He has made us His own children.

Phil. 4:19 - He meets all our needs according to His glorious riches.

### **God Is "I Am"**

9. He is who He is
10. He is congruent (in line with)
11. He is eminent
12. He is unchangeable

Heb 6:17-18 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the **immutability** of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: That by two **immutable** things, in which *it was impossible for God to lie*, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (read from v. 14 – Abraham's promise to multiply and be blessed is fulfilled)

### **God Loves Us** (Zeph 3:14-17)

### **God wants Intimacy with us**

*"Very few people today find Jesus interesting as a person or of vital relevance to the course of their actual lives. He is not generally regarded as a real-life personality who deals with real-life issues but is thought to be concerned with some feathery realm other than the one we must deal with, and must deal with now. And frankly, he is not taken to be a person of much ability."* (Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy)

The Story of Eli and Samuel [1 Samuel 3:1-10]

"We have become too familiar with a God we do not know."

*"Today the heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation ... He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. He longs for our presence."* (Richard Foster)

Intimacy with God - **"enjoying, living out of, and being transformed by the adventure of an ever-increasing experiential knowledge of God."**

### **Without intimacy**

Busyness substitutes for meaning, efficiency substitutes for creativity, and functional relationships substitute for love.

We live from ought (I ought to do this) rather than from desire (I want to do this).

Communion with God is replaced by activity for God.

Management substitutes for mystery – no time is given to explore the deep questions of the heart, dreams, passions, fears and wounds.

**Our heart does not respond to principles and programs; it doesn't seek efficiency. It seeks passion.**

"It is by the heart that God is perceived [known] and not by reason ... so that is what faith is: God perceived by the heart." (Oswald Chambers)

## **Intimacy Is An Aspect Of The Nature of God.**

God designed man for intimacy (relationship); it is His life-long pursuit.

"And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.'" (Genesis 2:18, NKJV)

This was said before Adam sinned. Even in a perfect environment, man was designed for intimacy.

What are your enemies to intimacy with God?

One is probably your concept of Him, so let's begin...

### **Understanding the True God**

- Religion gives the idea of God
- Theology interprets and organizes the content
- Philosophy establishes a relation to man's experience
- Bibliology is the study of God's Word

### **Separate any negative experiences in your past from truth**

- Especially experiences involving parents
- Forgiveness process may be needed

### **Make a conscious decision**

- To start a new and real concept of God
- Learn the scriptural truths about God's character

**In prayer, invite God to be your Father of choice.**

### **Approach God as a child**

Challenge: obtain an accountability/prayer partner

## **\*watch video – Spoken Word**

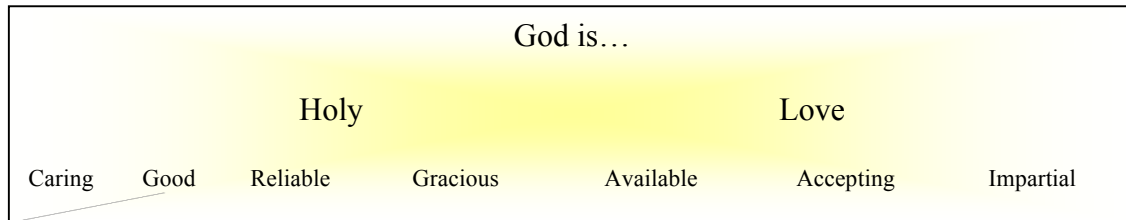
### **Suggest Resources:**

**Relentless Tenderness of Jesus**  
**A Divine Invitation**

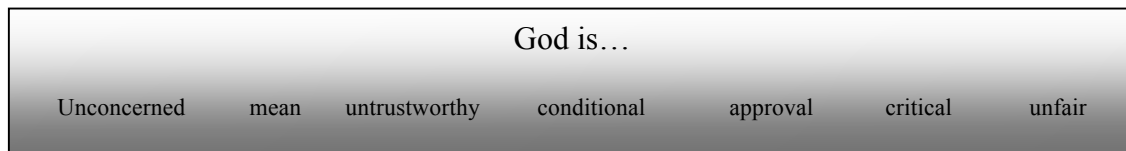
## Who Is God

1. When I think about being with God, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
2. When I have to trust God, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
3. When I think about God, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
4. When I think about God, I wish \_\_\_\_\_
5. Sometimes I get angry with God when \_\_\_\_\_
6. It frustrates me when God wants me to \_\_\_\_\_
7. I really enjoy God when \_\_\_\_\_
8. The one thing I would change about myself to please God is \_\_\_\_\_
9. When I think about God's commands, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
10. The thing that I love most about God is \_\_\_\_\_
11. I feel angry towards God when \_\_\_\_\_
12. Sometimes I wish God would \_\_\_\_\_
13. I can really depend on God when \_\_\_\_\_
14. The one thing that frustrates me most about God is \_\_\_\_\_
15. In my relationship with God, I am always sure that He will \_\_\_\_\_
16. The one thing that frightens me about God is \_\_\_\_\_
17. God surprises me when \_\_\_\_\_
18. The one thing I would like to tell the whole world about God is \_\_\_\_\_
19. The one thing that bothers me most about God is \_\_\_\_\_
20. The one thing I'm afraid God will do is \_\_\_\_\_

# How the Good News Becomes Bad News



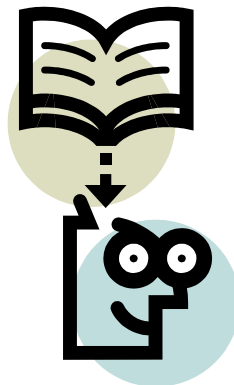
As a result of Unhealthy Relationships, Trauma, Sin, Sickness, etc...  
We decode as bad news



We have a distorted Concept of God & Damaged Love Receptors  
(the Holy Spirit sometimes needs a temporary assistant, like a mentor)



We need to renew our minds with God's truth!



“...you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”  
John 8:32

# The Truth about Our Heavenly Father

The lie...	Renew Mind →	The truth...
He is...		He is...
Distant and disinterested		Intimate and involved (Ps 139:1-18)
Insensitive and uncaring		Kind and compassionate (Ps 103:8-14)
Stern and demanding		Accepting and filled with joyful love (Zeph 3:17; Ro 15:7)
Passive and cold		Warm and affectionate (Is 40:11; Hos 11:3-4)
Absent and too busy for me		Always with me and always eager to spend time with me (Jer 31:20; Ez 34:11-16; Heb 13:5)
Never satisfied with what I do, impatient or angry		Patient, slow to anger, and pleased with me in Christ (Ex 34:6; 2Peter 3:9)
Mean, cruel, or abusive		Loving, gentle, and protective of me (Jer 31:3; Is 42:3; Ps 18:2)
Trying to take all the joy and fun out of life		Trustworthy and wants to give me a full life; His will is good, perfect and acceptable for me (Lam 3:22-23; Jn 10:10; Ro 12:1-2)
Controlling or manipulative		Full of grace and mercy and He gives me freedom to live as I choose, even if I am wrong (Lk 15:11-16; Heb 4:15-16)
Condemning or unforgiving		Tender-hearted and forgiving, and His heart and arms are always open to me (Ps 130:1-4; Lk 15:17-24)
A nit-picking, demanding, perfectionist		Committed to my growth and proud of me as His beloved child (Ro 8:28-29; Heb 12:5-11; 2Cor 7:4)

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