



EXPLORE GOD | Is There a God | Week 2 January 27, 2019

Exodus 3:1-12, Isa. 55:9, Ps. 23

Opening: Over the coming months we will explore some of the deep questions of faith, inviting others to experience the hospitality and grace of community with us, while addressing those questions. This week, we ponder another ageless question with ancillary related questions. Is there a God? How can I prove it? How can I understand and know? What is He like?

Context: Our individualistic, competitive and independent culture is extremely opinionated. Our opinions are formed within the context of our post-modern philosophically materialistic way of thinking. Beginning at the Renaissance we defined the physically material, “measure, touch and feel”, as knowing. That is how we prove, that is how we know. *Name something you know. How do you know that? Name something you love. How would you prove that?*

Physical Evidence: Read Ex.3:1-3. Moses says he must stop and look. *What was he looking at, what was remarkable about the bush? We seek to explain things using the physical principles we grow up and live with. When these principles are not operating as we expect it gets our attention. Talk about an experience you have had where it did not match your physical expectations—the bush did not burn up. How did you explain that?*

Crazy Coincidences: There are ways we explain non-conforming facts. We tend to rationalize that which we cannot explain or “prove”. We don’t want to look crazy so we say it was coincidence. *Why do we not look for non-physical explanations? Are you open to spiritual reality being an explanation? Are unexplained events enough to bring you to belief in God? Why or why not?*

Philosopher’s Dilemma: Pastor Dan Meyers led us through a list of philosophical “proofs” that point to God:

- *Prime mover: atomic particles, solar system, galaxies are in motion-Who started them?*
- *First cause: big bang is scientific theory today-Who made the mass that went bang?*
- *Great Designer: genius of design of life, too complex to be chance-Who designed it?*
- *Transcendent Ethicist: our endowed sense of right and wrong-Who makes “conscience”?*

These claims are real but far removed from everyday life. What kind of proof do you want? Can you argue another to faith with empirical or scientific proof? Would even “mystery explaining” experience do the trick? Talk about a time you tried.

Intellect alone will not lead you to God: We do not come to faith by what we prove or measure or “know” to a large extent because we don’t know enough—we can’t know enough. *Read Isa. 55:9. What do you conclude from this passage?*



Invitation and Presence: Read Ex. 3: 4-6. God makes himself known to Moses. His Presence comes down to Moses. *What is Moses' response? What does he say? What does he do? Reading the text, the presence must have been real and powerful. What does this scene say about God? What is God like?*

God is Like.....: Pastor Meyer leads us through several characteristics of God.

- Read vs.4. God came to Moses. **He is personal** and relational. You do not understand Him as thoughts and ideas, you understand Him as Presence and look for Him around you.
- Read vs. 5-6, God is also Almighty. He is intimate in that He knows everything about you but He is not comfortable or friendly. **He is HOLY.**
- Read vs. 7. God hears our sufferings. He knows the injustice and hardship we bear. God sees our misery. **He is compassionate.**
- Read vs. 8-9. He desires to deliver His people from abuse and hardship. **He is a deliverer.**

Talk about these traits of God. Are these true facts? Now consider these traits placed in a relationship between you and God, traits of a Presence. How is that different? Try to alter the phrase including the word "my" in each bolded description. (e.g. He is my HOLY example).

We are impacted by relationship: Read Ex. 3:10-12. What is more natural in relationship than doing things together. *What does God ask? What does God promise? Give an example of completing a hard task with someone else. What happened to your relationship in the process? How might God be asking to do something with you for the sake of your relationship with Him? Talk about what comes to mind.*

Practice of the Week: Meditate on the Good Shepherd

Each day this week, over your first cup of coffee, read Ps 23. Try to memorize it. The point is not to recite it, but to pull up the meaning without the Bible in front of you. Meditate on the personal, Holy, compassionate, delivering God who is in relationship with you and is your Good Shepherd. The resource below may be helpful.

Family Formation: Which came first?

What can we pray about? Introduce "what was first?" The idea is to have a silly conversation that can lead to the "philosopher's dilemma" ideas at the beginning of this study. Chicken or the Egg? Teachers or school? Water or Rivers? Paper or Pen? I'm sure your kids will be a lot more creative than I am. Then pick one of the dilemmas to talk about.

Additional Resources: *Life Without Lack: Living in the Fullness of Psalm 23* by Dallas Willard

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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