



EXPLORE GOD | IS CHRISTIANITY TOO NARROW? | Week 4 February 10, 2019

**1 Tim. 2:3-5, 2 Pet. 3:9, John 3:16-17, Acts 4:5-12,
Rom. 3:23, 6:23, Eph. 2: 8-9**

Opening: Over these weeks we are exploring some deep questions of faith. This week, we look at a common objection often given in the “debate” around who God is and what God has said about us, the human race. Starting again from the skeptic’s view, “If there is a God, surely that God can be found by more than one way—surely there is NOT only one way to God’s blessing!”

Context: One of the first definitions we want to draw around God originates in our need, or our perceived need. If we are bankrupt and suffering, in great need, then we are open to a God who saves. If we have no perceived needs our acceptance of something bigger than ourselves becomes less critical and our immediate self-sufficiency breeds questions and debate. *Think back to a discussion you have had on this “one way” question with a friend. How and when did each of you display pride vs humility during the discussion? What about need vs self-sufficiency?*

Jesus is Radical: Jesus’ life has been noted across several religions. Even atheists comment on his exemplary life. But Pastor Dan Meyer makes this statement: “Then Jesus goes over the top by claiming what no other Founder of a world religion has ever claimed -- that he is not simply “a” child of God, the way the rest of us are, but the Son of God in a unique sense -- the eternal Word, come in human flesh.” What stirs in your heart and mind *when you hear this statement? What questions are you compelled to ask?*

The “never” and “only” syndrome: I’m sure, in your days of taking standardized, multiple choice tests you learned to look for “never” and “only” as answers to eliminate—they are seldom correct. This is part of our trained critical thinking. How does this influence your thinking of Jesus? Why would Jesus Christ be the only way? *Do you react to this? What stirs in your heart or mind?*

The arms of GOD are open very wide: Read the following: 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9 & John 3:16-17. *What is common across all three of these scriptures? What is God’s intent? What are the requirements?*

But what about.....: We have so many “exceptions” we can think of (However, none of them are outside of God’s Holiness, Omniscience and Omnipresence). What about those who haven’t heard? What about those devout Muslims? What about the good people down the street? *What do you say to these objections? Have you heard them? Have you made them yourself? Do you believe there are people who should have eternal life that God will not save? Why or why not?*



The wide open arms are attached to JESUS: Read Acts 4:5-12. Peter is before the Sanhedrin explaining how someone was healed. His boldness and clarity surprise the religious leaders. This is the same ruling body that condemned Jesus to death. *Imagine yourself as Peter. What are you saying? Why are you saying it? What response do you expect? Where do you think the boldness comes from?*

Solid Rock: Pastor Dan reviewed four principles of faith:

- Read Rom 3:23; Rom 6:23. God is perfect Justice and no one is entitled to salvation.
- Read Eph 2:8-9. God is perfect love, sending Jesus, His son, as a sacrifice to reconcile us back to relationship with Himself. Grace: unmerited favor.
- Read 1 Tim 2:5. When we fully understand our depravity and our need we will “accept the terms,” we’ll humbly and thankfully use whatever bridge that is offered.
- Read Heb 11. These Old Testament saints were right with God by faith. Jesus wasn’t there yet, and He brings a new reality. But reality, remember, is not in the hypotheticals. The reality is we know we are sinners, we know we do need grace, we do know what scripture says about Jesus as the “name on the bridge” and “whosoever believes in him shall not perish.” Christianity teaches that Truth is not a principle, or a proposition, or a process, but a Person.

How has this message changed your view? What belief do you stand on? How can you help others? What questions do you still have?

Practice of the Week: Live the Early Church—the Emergence of the Gospel

Read Acts 2:1—4:12. Imagine yourself as Peter in the story. Remember his background (denial, re-instatement, impetuosity). Consider the enormous impact of these first events in the infant church. What does the Spirit bring to mind as you read and reflect? Is there something new you need to do?

Family Formation: A Better Gift

What can we pray about? Read Acts 3:4-10. Silver and Gold is replaced with what? God’s gifts are often different and better. Tell a story about being surprised by God with a gift different and better than what you asked for. That tells them something about you. Can you get them to tell a similar story about themselves?

Additional Resources: *True For You, But Not For Me*, by Paul Copan.

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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