

THE RIGHT POSTURE IN COMING TO GOD: LIFE WITH GOD

Central truth: Many people in our culture want to either dismiss God or use God to achieve what they want. Christianity is all about having a relationship with God; being in constant communion with Him.

Introduction:

Different people approach God in different ways for different reasons. How should we approach God? How should we think about what it means to be a Christian?

Story of the two sons (Luke 15:11-ff)

Read Luke 15:11-12.

I. The Prodigal Son

A. The younger son's view of his Dad. (Life from God)

1. He looked at his dad as someone who owed him. He felt entitled.
2. He looked at his relationship with his dad as one that he used to get what he wanted.
3. He didn't really care about his dad.

B. Do people ever view their relationship with God as one where God is here to serve them? How so?

1. I obey God and do what He wants, and therefore, he is obligated to bless me and give me what I want.
2. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism: God wants us to be happy, and so if we are good, we can call on Him to help us when we need Him. God is like Santa Claus.
3. This person doesn't really have a relationship with God.

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II. The older son (Read Luke 15:25-30)

A. The older son's view of his dad. (Life for God)

1. He served his dad. He obeyed his dad. He always did what was right.
2. He has a respectful relationship with his dad.

3. He was on a mission. He knew what his Dad wanted so he did it.
- B. Why was he serving his dad? (vs 29-30)
1. He serves because he believes this will give his life purpose & meaning through what he does.
 2. It appears he is living his life for his dad but he is ultimately serving his dad so he can feel good about himself.
 3. He obeys his dad but he doesn't really have a close relationship with his dad. As a matter of fact, he finds more of his identity in what he does for his dad than from his relationship with his dad.
- C. At the end of the parable, where is the older brother in relation to the dad? (vs 28) He is on the outside, separated from his dad. He refuses his dad's invitation to join him.

III. The right posture toward God (life with God)

- A. Let's review:
- Some people believe that a prosperous & blessed life comes from God and that God is like a genie in a bottle here to serve us. (Life from God)
- B. Some people live their lives on mission for God because in doing so, they feel like their lives are significant and have purpose and have meaning. (Life for God)
- C. It is surely right to serve God, but why we serve makes all the difference.
- D. Did you notice the common posture that both brothers had toward their dad?
1. They both were looking to their dad for what they could get from their dad. But they weren't really looking for an intimate relationship with Him.
 2. One was not socially acceptable – "I wish my dad was dead. I just want my inheritance."
 3. The older brother served his dad to feel good about himself but still didn't do it because of relationship.
- E. The father's desire for his sons.
1. He was obviously heartbroken that his younger son was gone. Why do we say that?

Read Luke 15:20 "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

Does that sound like a father who cares about his son? One who has been looking and longing for his son to return.

2. He not only loved his son, but he wanted to have a relationship with his son not as an employee, but as a son.

Read Luke 15:21-24 “The son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But the Father said to his servants, Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate.”

Was the son really dead? Not physically, but relationally to his dad he was. The Father wants to have an intimate relationship with the son. This is a picture of our heavenly Father’s heart toward us.

F. Our posture in coming to God. (life with God)

1. We come to Him not for Him to serve us.
2. We come to Him not because we just want to get stuff from God.
3. We come to Him because we love Him.
4. We come to Him because we want to have relationship with Him.

F. What does it mean to be a Christian?

1. The Bible tells us that we were born alienated from God – separated from a relationship with God because of our sin. (Romans 3:23)

2. Yet we were created for a relationship with God. That is part of what it means to be made in the image of God.

3. Thankfully, Jesus came and died in our place to reconcile us to God.
(Read I Peter 1:18-21)

4. With the barrier of sin removed by Jesus on the cross, the way has been opened for us to enter into a relationship with God. All that remains for us is to trust in what Jesus has done. Our faith in Jesus enables us to be united with God.

5. Unfortunately, often, our message is devoid of any notion of treasuring God – of being united together with Him in an intimate relationship.

6. When that happens, we are back to just using God as a means to escape from hell rather than allowing God to be our end and our treasure.

G. story of pumping gas for Joseph.

The other day a man had stopped by the church for gas. So I went to Speedway to pump it for him and while I was doing that I asked him if he knew that if he died if he would go to heaven? He responded by, “I don’t think that is the point I think the point is being more like Jesus.” Now I don’t know exactly what he met by that but he is certainly on the right track.

G. John Piper says it this way:

“Christ did not die to forgive sinners who go on treasuring anything above seeing and savoring God. And people who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there, will not be there. The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God. It’s a way of overcoming every obstacle to everlasting joy in God. If we don’t want God above all things, we have not been converted by the gospel.”

H. Being a Christian is entering into a loving relationship with God. It is about having daily communion with Him and treasuring Him above all.

I. Why don’t people treasure God?

1. We don’t have a clear vision of who we are apart from Christ, and we don’t have a clear vision of who Jesus is.

2. Think about Adam & Eve in the Garden. In Genesis 3:1-5, Satan got them to question the goodness & love of God. Their vision of God was clouded. As a result, they believed a lie and settled for something less.

3. Consider the story of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5:1-20.

a. This man is in bondage.

b. He is driven from town and is out of control.

c. He cuts and hurts himself. He knows he needs help.

d. Jesus has mercy on the man and casts out the demons.

e. Notice the contrast of the towns people’s response and this man’s response to Jesus. Read Mark 5:15-18.

(1). The towns people are afraid of Jesus. They plead for Him to leave their region.

(2). The demon-possessed man begs to be with Jesus.

f. Why the different response to Jesus? This man had an experience with Jesus and knew his need and clearly saw Jesus’ love, mercy & power. The towns people had a distorted view of Jesus and were afraid.

J. The reason people don’t spend time with Jesus:

1. It isn’t because they don’t have access to Bibles.

2. It isn’t because they don’t have the time.

3. It is because they lack an understanding of how beautiful and amazing Jesus is.

4. Because they don't understand that this is all about a relationship with the One who knows you best and loves you most.

5. By the way, your relationship with God doesn't start when you die. It begins the moment you place your trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord. At that moment the Holy Spirit takes up residence within you to enable you to communion with God.

John 17:3 "Now this is eternal Life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Conclusion:

What is your posture toward God?

1. Are you like the Prodigal Son who lives like God owes you and is here to serve you?
(Life from God)
2. Are you like the older brother working really hard serving God but doing it so you can find significance and purpose but not really experiencing a relationship with God? (life for God)
3. Christianity is about having a relationship with God and communing with Him continually. It is finding Him to be the treasure that you seek. (Life with God)

Application:

Sin can be defined as looking to someone or something other than God for significance or satisfaction.

What is your treasure? What is the goal/desire of your life? What would you give everything to possess?

If there is something other than God that is your treasure I want to challenge you to confess that to God tonight and ask Him to help you treasure Him above all. Ask him to help you daily commune with Him. That is what we are going to be talking about during the remainder of our time this weekend.

Questions for small group:

1. Which of the two brothers do you identify with the most? Why?
2. How does that relate to how you tend to come to God?
3. How would you characterize your communion with God?
4. How do you view God? How often do you think/talk with God through the day?
5. What do you tend to treasure more than God?

