

God is not who you want Him to be

Spring Retreat 2025

Questions for the group:

1. Who here has a perfect understanding of who God is?
2. Who here would like to know God better?



God is not who you want Him to be

The hierarchy of God.

How we create a false image of God.

Symptoms of creating a false image of God.

Consequences of creating a false image of God.

Provisions to see God for who He really is.



The Hierarchy of God

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. - Exodus 3:14



- 1. God never had a beginning.**
- 2. God will never end.**
- 3. There is no reality before Him.**
- 4. God is utterly independent.**
- 5. Everything that is not God depends totally on God.**



6. God is constant.

7. God is the absolute standard of truth and goodness and beauty.

8. All that God does is always right, always just, always beautiful, always in accord with the truth.

9. God is the most important and most valuable reality in the universe.



- **God deserves our praise and worship because He is who He is, not because of what we get from Him.**
- **If I truly believe that God is omnipotent and my place is to worship Him, then I need to “allow” God to be who He is.**
- **It’s easier for us as humans to create a false image of who God is rather than accept a God who disappoints us.**



How we create a false image of God

Exodus 20: 1-6

Exodus 32:1-5

Matthew 16: 15-23

1And God spoke all these words, saying:

2“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of [a]bondage.

3“You shall have no other gods before Me.

4“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; 5you shall not bow down to them nor [b]serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting [c] the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, 6but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

1Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us [a]gods that shall go before us; **Exodus 32:1-5** for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

2And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.” 3So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. 4And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.

Then they said, “This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”

5So when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD.”

15He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

16Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
Matthew 16:15-23

17Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not [g]prevail against it. 19And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth [h]will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

20Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

21From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, [i]“Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

23But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are [j]an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”



We are prone to the temptation to create our own image of God.

- Jesus has grace for those of us growing in faith. Mark 9:23-24
- Complete knowledge of God will not happen until we see him face to face. 1 Cor 13:11

23 Jesus said to him, “If [d] you can believe, all things *are*
possible to him who believes.”

Mark 9:23-24

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with
tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a

1 Corinthians 13:11-12

child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things._

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.



Symptoms of creating a false image of God

- Correction/Conviction/
Repentance/Restoration
- Explaining away Scripture
- Not doing God's will
- Not seeking God

Correction/Conviction/Repentance/Restoration

John 21:17-19

17He said to him the third time, “Simon, *son* of [f]Jonah, do you [g]love Me?”
Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?”

And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.” 18Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish.” 19This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

Explaining away Scripture

2 Timothy 4:3-4

3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Not doing God's will

John 14:8-12

8Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

9Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

12“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

Not seeking God

Exodus 33:17-18

17 So the LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.”

18 And he (Moses) said, “Please, show me Your glory.”



The consequences of creating a false image of God

Matthew 7: 21-23

John 10:24-27

A false image may lead to condemnation

Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. [22](#) Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' [23](#) And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Sin often comes from having a false image of God

John 10:24-27

24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in [d] doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

25 Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, [e] as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.



Provisions to see God for who He really is: (How do we keep from having a false image of God?)

- Spend time with God.
- Spend time in the Word.
- Spend time in Spiritual Teaching.
- Spend time with believers.
- Welcome the Holy Spirit.

Spend time with God

Exodus 34:28-30

So Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.[g](#)

[29](#)And when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was unaware that his face had become radiant from speaking with the LORD. [30](#)Aaron and all the Israelites looked at Moses, and behold, his face was radiant.

Spend time in the Word

Luke 24:25-27

25 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”_

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He [g] expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Spend time in Spiritual Teaching

Phillipians 4:8-9

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. [9](#) The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Spend time with believers

Hebrews 10:23-25

Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. [24](#) And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, [25](#) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Let us welcome the Holy Spirit

John 14:15-21

15“If you love Me, [d]keep My commandments. 16And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another [e]Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

19“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and [f]manifest Myself to him.”

What will you do?