



# **7 MYTHS ABOUT GOD**

**THAT MAY HOLD YOU BACK FROM TRULY  
KNOWING HIM AND HIS PLANS**

## MYTH 1:

# GOD WANTS TO PUNISH SINNERS



## HAVE YOU EVER TYPED GOD INTO GOOGLE IMAGES?

A lot of interesting pictures come up. Some depict an old, angry man in the clouds looking down at earth who looks ready to strike anyone who has done something wrong.

A lot of people believe this is who God is but Jesus came to demonstrate to us what He is really like.

Let's take a look at how God deals with sin and why the Gospel is such good news to us.

Firstly, the Bible tells us that everyone has sinned (1 John 1:8) but that God desires to forgive us of all of our sins if we confess them (1 John 1:8).

Sadly our first and natural reaction when we have done something wrong is to make sure nobody finds out; we want to hide our sin away from God and from others.



**'...I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE  
LIFE, AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL.'**

**-JOHN 10:10**

The reason why God hates sin is because it ultimately leads to death (Romans 6:23) and Jesus clearly states that He has come to give us life – and life to the full (John 10:10).

It's not too difficult to recognise that there is a lot of brokenness and pain in the world today.

This is a result of sin.

People's everyday choices have real consequences and can cause a lot of suffering. God's hatred of sin comes from a place of love for us.

**GOD'S HATRED OF SIN COMES FROM A PLACE OF LOVE FOR US.**

**AND SIN IS NOT OUR IDENTITY.**

We're going to take a closer look at how God personally reacts and deals with sin. A good example in the Bible is found in the Gospel of John (chapter 8:2-11).

Jesus was in the temple when the Pharisees and the teachers of the law brought before Him a woman, guilty of committing adultery.

All of this for public judgement.

And what you have to understand is,

according to the law, she was deserving of punishment.

But what we see happen next is really incredible.

Because to the surprise of the crowd, Jesus' response was one of love and forgiveness.

Jesus covers her shame and humiliation with forgiveness. He reminds the crowd that all have sinned, therefore *all* are deserving of punishment.

Jesus taught the crowd that since we have all sinned (1 John 1:8), that it could have been any one of them in her position.

Jesus doesn't deny that she had sinned but also makes a point for her to go and sin no more. The woman walks away free from shame and punishment and we know that Jesus took her punishment with Him on the cross. God has generously invited us to a new way of



Photo: The Chosen.  
<https://studios.vhangel.com/the-choosen>

**'...NEITHER DO I CONDEMN YOU.  
GO NOW AND LEAVE YOUR LIFE OF SIN.'**

**- JESUS, JOHN 8:11**

living — a life free from the slavery of sin and shame.

**WE DON'T NEED TO HIDE OUR SIN AWAY FROM GOD FOR FEAR OF PUNISHMENT.**

This is exactly what the enemy would want for us to do (because He really does not want us to be in relationship or close to God).

It is in our brokenness, mess and pain that we need to run to God knowing He has the forgiveness and healing we so desperately need.

**MYTH 2:**  
**GOD  
WANTS  
ME TO BE  
AFRAID  
OF HIM**

**THE BIBLE HAS A LOT  
TO SAY ABOUT FEAR**

It talks a lot about the '*fear of the Lord*' but also can be referenced saying '*... do not be afraid*'.

We need to fear God but not be afraid... how does that work?

Before we begin, it's important to understand that there are 3 types of fear mentioned in the original Hebrew text (of the Bible) that will impact the way we define the '*fear of the Lord*'.

- 1.** The first form of fear mentioned has to do with fear of unpleasant circumstances or punishment
- 2.** The second is fear over the anxiety of breaking God's law
- 3.** And the third and highest form is a profound reverence for life that comes from '*rightly seeing*'. This third type of fear is what the



Bible means when it refers to the '*fear of the Lord*'. The Hebrew word for this is *yir'ah* (Proverbs 9:10).

The word *yir'ah* can mean:

- awe
- fear
- reverence
- wonder
- amazement and
- astonishment.

### **IN THIS BIBLICAL DEFINITION; FEARING = SEEING.**

It's like when you see something incredible and need a moment to really look at it. Think about a breathtaking landscape; a powerful waterfall, a tall mountain or a beautiful sunset. It is awe-inspiring.

Let's take a look at how *yir'ah* works in our relationship with God.

Remember this famous story in the Bible of a man named Isaiah who finds himself in the throne room of God overhearing an important conversation?

In the very first verse of this story Isaiah says '*I saw the Lord*' (Isaiah 6:1b) and then goes on to describe an incredible life altering situation.

As Isaiah sees the Lord sitting on the throne there is immediate personal realisation that he is an unclean man with unclean lips in need for atonement which he freely receives.

Once his sin is dealt with Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord ask a random question,

*'Whom shall I send?'* And Isaiah is quick to volunteer *'here I am send me!'* (Isaiah 6:8).

So in this story we learn that the *'fear of the Lord'* is about seeing God as a king and being quick to deal with any sin in our own lives so we can care for the things God cares about.

## **GOD TRUSTS THOSE WHO FEAR HIM (PSALM 35:14)**

This is why the *'fear of the Lord'* is the key to intimacy with God.

It was prophesied that Jesus would *'delight in the fear of the Lord'* (Isaiah 11:1-3) and grew in favour with God (Luke 2:42) demonstrating to the world what a life lived with God would look like here on earth (John 17).

If we have an awareness of God's presence in our lives we will not allow ordinary fear to rule our hearts (Galatians 1:10).

God has made a way for us to overcome fear.

The first church in the book of Acts experienced peace despite turbulent times in different regions because they walked in *'fear of the Lord'* (Acts 9:31).

God wants you to be free of fear and invites you to know who He really is. What will your response be?



**MYTH 3:**

# MATURE CHRISTIANS DENY THEIR EMOTIONS

## EMOTIONS. WE ALL HAVE THEM.

We can feel happy, annoyed, or even angry – sometimes all in the same day!

As Christians it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that the more spiritually mature we become, the less emotions we will have to feel.

This idea comes from a Buddhist worldview where the aim for the human experience is to reach a goal of feeling ‘nothingness’ (known as Nirvana).

This means no emotion at all or any sense of self.

However the Christian faith is one of relationship and this involves the heart. This means emotions will be involved.



Isaiah 43:4 and Judges 10-16 tells us that **GOD HAS EMOTIONS!**  
It also tells us that **HUMANS ARE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE** (Genesis 1:26-27)  
and that **JESUS ALSO EXPERIENCED MANY EMOTIONS** during his time on earth.

This is what the Bible says about emotions.

We can also read that:

- Jesus was born into a family (Matthew 1:16)
- He had a childhood (Luke 2:40)
- He had friends (John 2:1)
- Jesus worked in a trade (Mark 6:3)
- He did ministry with a team of people (Matthew 20:17)

This sounds like an ordinary life that would have included all of the everyday challenges we experience with family, friendships and work.

The Bible is specific with mentioning the emotions Jesus felt with His humanity including times when Jesus felt joyful (10:21), sad (John 11:35) and angry (Mark 3:4-6). There were many times He was moved with compassion because of what he saw (Matthew 9:36).

In the last few hours of His life, just before the cross, we read about Jesus being so emotionally stressed that He was sweating blood (Luke 22:44).

### **THESE ALL SHOW JESUS' HUMANITY.**

Life can be full of so many emotions but like Jesus, we can allow God to have the final say. God says He wants to give us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26).

The life of Jesus here on earth involved human emotions and yet He never failed to love God and love others. He has made a way for us to acknowledge our emotions and also to be led by the Spirit.

## MYTH 4:

# GOD ONLY SPEAKS TO A SELECT FEW



## IS IT TRUE THAT HE CAN SPEAK TO ME?

It would be easy to think that you need to be a Christian in order to hear God's voice but that is not what we read in the Bible.

In the very beginning we are introduced to a God who speaks (Genesis 1:3) and who continues to speak to individuals; from the most unlikely widow (1 Kings 17:9) to even the most powerful of rulers (Genesis 41:16).

Throughout the Bible, God has spoken to many you would not expect.

Even those who were against Him including:

- Cain after he murdered his brother (Genesis 4:6-8)
- Balaam; a man hired to place a curse on Israel (Numbers 22:32)

In the New Testament, God sends Philip to explain what He was saying to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) through the book of scriptures of Isaiah.

## **GOD PURSUES THOSE WHO DON'T YET KNOW HIM.**

Jesus came to earth to demonstrate what God is like in the flesh and we can see someone who constantly reaches out and talks to those who were not His followers, even those who weren't Jews (as He was)!

In Luke 19 Jesus walks through the city with crowds of people who are wanting His attention but He singles out and calls to a tax collector named Zacceus (tax collectors weren't particularly liked back then).

This story is often told as a children's tale but is a powerful example of God's lovingkindness to pursue relationship with those who don't yet know Him.

## **'GOD HAS MADE IT KNOWN TO US THAT HE DESIRES RELATIONSHIP WITH MANKIND'**

**- 1 TIMOTHY 2:3-4**



Again we see Jesus break down wrong ideas about who God is when He takes a moment to sit down with a Samaritan woman at the well (see: John 4).

This conversation is a life changing moment for the woman who, by the time she gets back to her town, preaches about the Messiah.

In the book of Acts we are introduced to an Italian named Cornelius who has been praying continually to God when he suddenly receives an answer.

At the very same time Peter also receives a vision where God prompts him to go find this man, Cornelius *who was not a Jew*, and share the Gospel. This situation is mind blowing for Peter who realises that 'God shows no partiality' (Acts 10:34).



## MYTH 5:

# GOD HAS NO MATERNAL INSTINCTS

Everybody has a mother.

A mother can play an important role in our life. Maybe your mum is sometimes embarrassing like the one in this pic but did you know that there are several times in the Bible where God shares His desire to relate to us *with* maternal instincts?

Ever read the following verse before?

**'AS A MOTHER COMFORTS HER CHILD, SO I WILL COMFORT YOU;  
YOU SHALL BE COMFORTED IN JERUSALEM' - ISAIAH 66:13**

Wow. Imagine God relating to you like a mother. What kind of mother would He be like?

In the the Gospels of Matthew (23:37) and again in Luke (13:34), Jesus states that He wanted *'to gather your children together even as a hen protects her brood under her wings'*.

Have you ever seen baby chicks covered by their mother? They are tucked in close, under the wing; to a place of warmth, comfort and safety.

There is a similar image when the Psalmist mentions that God will *'cover you with his feathers and under his wings you will find refuge...'*(Psalm 91:4).

Boaz also refers to this imagery when He tells Ruth, *'The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!'*(Ruth 2:12)

Safety. Wings. Feathers.

These words are soft and comforting. We don't often think about God with maternal instincts but this is one of the ways God invites us picture what He is like.

## **GOD'S COMFORT IS PRESENT AND STEADFAST.**

God uses the example of a mother to share that He wants to provide comfort to the heart of mankind in relationship with Him.

There are a lot of things in life that we run to for comfort but nothing will leave us truly comforted in both spirit and soul, the way only God can comfort. God's comfort is present and steadfast.

It's like how God describes His everlasting love for mankind when He says, *'Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of*

*of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you' (Isaiah 49:15).*

This is a God who welcomes us not only as a King for which He is worthy but as a mother or father. He describes Himself as a parent who nurtures, provides and protects.

## **GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN AS ONE WHO CARES FOR THOSE HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR.**

What a joy to know a God like this!

*He is one who wants to be 'like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them' (Hosea 11:3-4).*

We have just gone through only a few short examples of how God expresses his emotive love towards mankind using female characteristics.

It is a beautiful thing to know that God is reaching out to relate to us in such an intimate way.





## MYTH 6:

# OBEDIENCE IS NOT A CHOICE

The word 'obey' is not the kind of word that stirs happy feelings the way 'love' does but Jesus teaches us that these two words are, in fact, connected.

This idea generally doesn't sit well with many people and it makes sense why. Perhaps you grew up in a home where obedience meant doing something you didn't particularly want to do.

Let's go with an example:

As a child, you may have wanted to go outside and play with your friends but your parents asked you to instead stay inside and wash the dishes.

Obeying in this context would have meant that you didn't get to do what you wanted and if you chose not to obey, there would have also been the chance of you getting punished.

And in the end, your obedience is actually for fear of punishment or because you had to, and that is a difficult thing to love doing.

This childhood experience of obedience can be translated to our relationship with God, and it's easy to feel like we don't have a choice.

In the last few hours of Jesus' life before the cross, He gave His disciples a new definition of obedience.

## **'IF YOU LOVE ME, OBEY MY COMMANDS'**

**- JESUS, JOHN 14:15**

Take some time to think about this line. It sounds weird and could be read that Jesus is manipulating the disciples to do what He wants them to do but the truth is that Jesus is providing great insight into how God views obedience.

The nature of obedience in the kingdom of God is voluntary. No one can force you to obey God. *The only way you can ever truly obey is by wanting to.*

Obedience is about the heart and it comes from a place of valuing God's heart.

### **OBEDIENCE IS ABOUT THE HEART.**

God reveals His heart and we get the opportunity to respond. Jesus modelled this kind of loving obedience from a close relationship to the Father.

There may eventually come a point in your relationship with God that you make the things that are important to God, important to you.

Isn't that what relationship is all about?

*Real love considers another's heart.*

You have the opportunity to love God through obedience and this is your choice to make. It is a privilege.

**'WHOEVER HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND  
KEEPS THEM IS THE ONE WHO LOVES ME'**

**- JESUS, JOHN 14:21**

God makes known His will to those He loves and our simple 'yes' to God will bring true partnership with Him.

So next time you are tempted to shrink away from the word 'obey' think of the relational word 'partnership.'

Because it truly is a beautiful thing to partner with God's own heart.

## MYTH 7:

# GOD'S CALLING IS AN INSTANT DOWNLOAD

EVER STRUGGLED TO FIND YOUR CALLING?



If so – you are not alone! Trying to choose one path to direct the rest of your life is a big problem. It's not how relationship works.

This idea of a calling leaves people feeling stuck in making any decisions about their future career or job roles, until they finally 'find' their calling. But what if we have the wrong idea about calling?

*'Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.'*  
- Psalm 119:105

**GOD LEADS US IN THIS WAY; STEP BY STEP AS WE CONTINUE TO LISTEN AND OBEY.**

Just picture this image for a moment. Notice the use of the word 'lamp' and not 'spotlight'.

If you are walking with a lamp it will only light up one step at a time, and as you take the next step it will continue to reveal the way ahead.

The path we are on is not permanently set like some railway track where one decision determines one direction for the rest of our lives.

Rather it is a journey of discovery as God leads you through relationship with Him! God leads us in this way; step-by-step as we continue to listen and obey.

### **GOD CALLS US BY NAME**

*(Isaiah 43:1)*

### **HE CALLS US TO RELATIONSHIP**

*(John 6:4)*

### **HE CALLS US TO OBEDIENCE**

*(John 14:15)*

### **HE CALLS US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL**

*(Mark 16:15)*

### **AND TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS**

*(Matthew 28:19)*

God already has a lot to say about calling in the Bible and it's different to what you may think.

A true calling involves our relationship with God and has to do with simple obedience (check out our blog to read more on God's definition of obedience).

A calling is not defined by a career, a job role or a title.



Your calling will involve your values and gifts and is something you can't retire from. A job, ministry or projects you do are simply opportunities for you to express your calling.

*'Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them'.*

*- 1 Corinthians 7:17*

In this verse, Paul is reminding us that our calling has to do with how we live in the everyday; we each have the opportunity to be a light to our family, school, workplace, and community.

## **YOUR CALLING INVOLVES HOW YOU BEST DO THAT, WITH THE LORD.**

Paul's calling was to preach the Gospel full-time as an apostle (Galatians 1:1).

In the book of Acts we see that Paul used his personality, gifting, education, and even imprisonment to live out his calling to the maximum potential.

We read that God was sometimes very specific about what Paul was to do (like going to Cyprus in Acts 13:4).

Other times Paul made his own decision; such as traveling to Jerusalem in Acts 21:4 to preach the Gospel despite not having a clear word from God and with the discouragement of many.

Paul was confident because God had already called him to 'preach in every city' (Acts 20:23) so Paul knew a trip to Jerusalem would already fit within His calling!