

## Who is God?

What a simultaneously fascinating, exciting, confusing and frustrating question this is. I chose those words most carefully from my own life-experience as well as coexisting, observing, assisting, and being assisted by countless individuals in my life; some being believers in God, others not. By asking “Who” as opposed to “what” we indicate a desire to delineate and comprehend “person-like” qualities of God, which is more in-line with the purpose of this article; which is to introduce the reader to the God of the Bible.

Before we continue, it is necessary to frame our discussion. No degree of human examination or experience can fully and completely comprehend all aspects of God. Indeed, life itself has been described as a quest to both know and approach God; at least for some of us. Yet, as revealed throughout the Bible, one can learn of the multitude of characteristics of God that have been preserved for some purpose. Therein lays our goal; to *introduce the reader to the God of the Bible*; to begin a quest to “... *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*”.<sup>1</sup>

As an engineer of 4 decades, I have learned to begin a new undertaking as simply as possible. Therefore, let’s examine some common, secular definitions of God from a few well-known Dictionaries. Accordingly, God is ...

- The one Supreme Being, the creator and ruler of the universe (dictionary.com)
- A being conceived as the perfect, omnipotent, omniscient originator and ruler of the universe;
  - the principal object of faith and worship in monotheistic religions (thefreedictionary.com)
- The Supreme or Ultimate reality :
  - Perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshiped as creator and ruler of the universe (Meriam-Webster)
- The creator and ruler of the universe and source of all moral authority ;
  - the Supreme Being (Oxford Dictionary)

From these definitions, we see both common traits (in each definition) and additional characteristics of those common traits. Therefore, we can compile our initial definition of “what God is” as:

- The One Supreme self-existent Being
  - Perfect and inerrant in :
    - Power,
    - Wisdom,
    - Goodness
  - All powerful, all knowing, ever present

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 3:18, NIV

- The source of all moral authority ...
- Worshiped as Creator and Ruler of the universe

This is indeed a reasonable, general starting definition for secular debate; however let's add to our understanding of this definition by examining a few details contained in just the first book of The Bible.

In the book of Genesis, Chapter 1, God is clearly the Creator of all things, and existed before the universe that He "spoke" into existence. He was not created and resides outside of His creation (in what is termed "heaven") and is therefore self-existent. He is not subject to the physical laws of His created universe, but can manifest both within and outside of His entire creation. Nothing exists that God did not "will" or "speak" into existence, including human beings.

Genesis Chapter 2 delineates the creation of man (the species), and all other living creatures on the Earth, as well as God's plan for man, which is to commune with God and to learn of His love and intentions for His creation. Apparently, God reaches out to His creation so they are able to know of Him and His desires for them.

Genesis Chapter 3 describes how man and woman decided against the original plan of God (to commune with man) and willfully chose their own path. Note verse 8, where God is described as "... walking in the garden in the cool of the day." From this verse we see several characteristics of God, when placed in context of Chapters 1 and 2:

- God wouldn't be described as "walking in the garden" ( part of His creation) without a purpose for that walk, which is fellowship / communion / sharing His all-capable, self-existence with His created humans. God's desire to "walk with us" is evident throughout much of the Original Covenant (commonly called the Old Testament) writings, where men who sought after God were said to have "walked with God", thereby imitating the original "walk of God" with the first 2 created humans, Adam and Eve.
- We also note that both Adam and Eve "... hid themselves..." when they "... heard the sound of God...". Some points of interest here:
  - They could sense ("hear") God in the Garden, therefore God was not hiding His existence or presence. He wanted to be with Adam and Eve and desired they feel likewise.
  - He also gave them their own "free will" to exercise, which is what they did, in direct opposition to God's instructions.
  - Now that they had exercised their own "will" (verses 6 and 7), opting away from God's teachings (often translated more strongly as "commands"), they became afraid of God (verse 10), which placed them in conflict with God's instructions for living in the garden.

So, God is apparently motivated to commune with us because He loves us. If His motivation were anything other than true love, He would not have given us the right to choose our own path in our physical lives. Point: Without free will, unconditional love cannot manifest.

We also note in the remainder of Chapter 3 of Genesis, that God has a judgmental aspect to His character. Note in verses 13 – 24 of Chapter 3, God pronounces:

- curses for the serpent and the “ground” ,
- and expels Adam and Eve from the garden.

Every parent knows that the free will of their children must be guided and trained or the child will become over-indulgent and consummately selfish, seeking their own desires, even at the cost of the free will of others around them. This is what God did – He instituted proper adjustments in the lives of Adam, Eve and the serpent, given the fact that they opted for a disobedient and detrimental approach. Although painful, God did not simply discard His creation and start over. He made allowances for their rebellious behavior, as a loving parent would do.

Do note, that God did not curse Adam or Eve, but did institute different living arrangements and painful reminders of the cost of their will over God’s will. This was simultaneously most “just” and most “loving”.

- If God is all powerful, having created Adam, Eve and the serpent, why didn’t He simply kill them and start over? He had the power and the “right” to do so. Answer: He knew of their opposition before they actually committed the acts, since they were the “created” and He was the “Creator”. Therefore, He made adjustments in the existence of all three, and in the operation of the planet, in an effort to continually demonstrate:
  - His Love
  - His Justice
  - His Power (although restrained by His right and proper judgment)

He (God), in their willful disobedience, was still implementing a righteous justice, yet providing another chance for them to choose Him, as He had chosen them. This is the point of this introductory article; to show the reader that just the first few chapters of the first book of the Bible reveals a God that is:

1. The loving Creator of all we know in the universe
2. The Righteous Judge of His Creation, able to guide those seeking His direction
3. Self-existent, having none superior to Himself
4. Yet in these above 3 superior characteristics, He graciously reaches out to His creation, time and time again

The entire Bible is a compilation of the encounters of many individuals who either embraced God, as the Gracious, Loving, Righteous, and Just Creator, or they rejected Him. To study the Bible is to come to know the recorded experiences of those who chose God over their own wills. In so choosing God, countless characteristics are revealed that demonstrate God’s continuous desire is that no one end their physical existence without an opportunity to know Him. To study the Bible is to read the “love letters” of the Creator Himself to His creation (you and me). If you want to know what your “purpose” is, then study the Bible and know who God is. If, subsequently, you want to know what God expects for your life, study His love letters, for He speaks to those who choose Him through His Word (the Bible) first.