



BEHOLD YOUR GOD - WEEK 2
The Right Order of Biblical Truth

**10. NEHEMIAH REESTABLISHES
THE TITHE (NEH. 10:35–37)**

Nehemiah is known for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem as part of God's plan to restore Israel after a 70-year captivity. Preparing God's people for temple worship in their homeland required a reorientation to the worship rhythms in the life of an Israelite.

At this point, many Israelites had lived their entire lives in captivity. And while the stories and traditions were kept alive verbally, they no longer knew what it was like to live under the law. Here

we have the reestablishment of the Law in regards to offerings and tithes.

Even with this preparation, Nehemiah finds that the Levites aren't receiving the portion of the tithes that are to be sustaining them (Neh. 13:10).

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Here

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Kasey Crawford and Elevation Church.

Closing prayer

There is a right order to understanding biblical truth and it's vital in our understanding of God.

INTRO: Here's What We Face
WHAT THE PROBLEM IS

Week 2 in our study guide asks this question, “Do we know the God described in Scripture? Or are we drifting from the God of the Bible?”

- The importance of understanding the order of biblical truth is vital to a proper understanding of (God, Self, Sin, Salvation). Because when we don’t begin with God, He’s already smaller. There is a difference between, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,” and “God created all things and you owe everything to Him.” I hope you see the difference. The**

first one is centered in us and the second one is centered in God. So, the first one actually begins with self instead of God and it colors our image of God making Him primarily concerned with us having a wonderful life. That's why getting the order right matters.

- **The Four Spiritual Laws**

John Snyder has said that the reason the general culture doesn't take Christianity

seriously is because we have given them a weightless God.

The wrong question is, “What can we do to make church more appealing, more acceptable to all the people out there who don’t attend church?” The right question is, “Is the way we do church acceptable to God?”

When we have a correct view of God we will have a correct view of self and when we have a correct view of self we will have a correct

view of sin and when we have a correct view of sin we will have a correct view of salvation.

God, self, sin, salvation — that is the correct order in understanding all biblical truth. All behavior problems stem from an inadequate view of God.

The battle the Christian experiences in his or her relationship with the Lord is between the greater things and the lesser things of life. The greater things come through enjoying God. So, we find this fight within between

enjoying God or the lesser things — enjoying His creation. As Paul puts it, we sometimes end up loving the created things more than the Creator. Why is that? Because we do not have a magisterial view of God.

1 The Truth About God

WE MUST START WITH OUR VIEW OF GOD

Timothy Dwight, the grandson of the greatest theologian and possibly the greatest thinker in American history, Jonathan Edwards, dealt with the root sins of skepticism on the

campus of Yale University when he became president.

He basically said, “Because of His character, His majesty, God has absolute right to ascribe laws to His creation. God’s character reinforces His claims. It’s madness to fight against such a God. It is emptiness to hold Him at arm’s length. Therefore, sin is always rooted in our ignorance of God’s greatness.”

- God, Self, Sin, Salvation

Daniel 4:34-35

34 At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven,

This is the first place we should always look — begin with God. When you have an issue in your life, when you have a situation in your life, when you have a problem in your life — behold your God. Contemplate who He is. (When you don't know where to turn in the Bible, turn to Psalms.)

and my reason returned to me,

It's the only way to get a correct diagnosis of yourself and your problem — looking to God first. We spend way too much time trying to show people their faulty reasoning rather than showing them the God revealed in Scripture.

and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever,

Thinking rightly about God will lead to praising Him and honoring Him. It will lead to worship.

**for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and his kingdom endures from
generation to generation;**

Can you tell me the names of your great grandparents? If you can, you're relatively unique. Most of us can't name them. They are

forgotten. One generation removed and they are forgotten. Yet, we think our generation is the generation that's going to matter. Our generation is the generation that's going to make the difference.

Scripture has a different witness for you. Scripture tells us plainly that God does not need humanity.

**35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among**

the host of heaven

**and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand
or say to him, “What have you done?”**

Our view of God is so small that we have made Him bow to our will. In the theology of many, God’s choice is dependent upon our choice. And yet somehow we don’t see that as a smaller God. When our view of God is small we will find ourselves struggling to maintain our Christian lives.

This is the dilemma that humanity finds itself in. “Nothing is more desirable than really knowing God.” Yet, because of how sin has marred the human heart, we don’t naturally desire the most desirable thing in life — knowing God and enjoying Him.

You cannot love and enjoy Someone that you do not know. You cannot worship a God that you do not know.

a. What is required for someone to truly know God?

b. If you've drifted away how do you return to the God of Scripture?

How does contemporary culture understand and react to this topic? Many people do not perceive their spiritual separation from God. They view God as a force. You're less likely to feel the need for personal accountability to an impersonal force, so you're less likely to recognize a problem between you and the personal God who created you.

I had someone say to me the other day, very adamantly that, “God is energy. The God of the Bible is not the God of the universe.” When I asked him how he knew this, he just knew. In our culture today, the foundation of wisdom is looking inside yourself, looking to own heart. In Christianity, the invitation to wisdom comes from outside yourself, but the good news is that you’ve been given an invitation.

James 4:8 (NLT)

8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

That's why we don't know Him the way we could. Pride and self-deception blind us all, saved and unsaved. They blind us from God as He has revealed Himself through His Word and His Son, Jesus Christ. Why is it that even as Christians we find our hearts divided

between the wisdom of God and the so-called wisdom of the world?

Psalm 10:4

4 In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him;

all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

It is not lack of evidence or reason or difficult Old Testament passages that keep people from seeking God. It is simply pride. And our

pride remains so great because our view of God remains so small.

Whether you are a Christian or not, the thing that keeps you from actually coming close to God is pride. Pride is the thing that keeps us from knowing God intimately.

Because when we have an elevated view of self then you'll see God as much the same as yourself. Many people think God is just a greater version of us, which I will address in our final point today. But if you see God that

way, then you'll believe He likes the things you like and He overlooks the sins you overlook.

Proverbs 9:10

10 Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

If there is a God who created the universe, then the place to begin understanding life is in knowing this God who designed reality to function a certain way. Because of His

character and majesty, He has the absolute right to create reality the way He wants. And knowledge of Him will result in a more accurate understanding of life and yourself.

2. Truth About Self

WHERE DO YOU STAND NOW? ARE YOU IN DANGER OF ACKNOWLEDGING GOD WITHOUT KNOWING GOD?

It's one thing to be able to explain the plan of salvation, to understand Jesus is fully God and fully man, but it's dangerous to confuse

knowledge of some facts about God with knowing God Himself. Just because you know some facts doesn't mean you know Him.

Again, have you gotten the order of understanding biblical truth wrong? Have you made salvation primarily about Jesus saving you from sin because it makes you unhappy? Sin is terrible because it effects self — your life, your happiness is the center of your existence. So, what's the problem with sin? Sin is going to make you unhappy. Is your view that God Himself just wants you to be

happy? So, a small view of God and a large view of self leads to a wrong view of sin, which also leads to a wrong view of salvation.

John Snyder puts it like this: “Salvation becomes about you having the negative consequences and the bitter end of sin removed from your future. You’re promised heaven instead of hell and peace in your heart instead of a troubled conscience and a Friend who will never leave you. (Now those things are all true, but because we have low views of God we see them incorrectly.) Because

ultimately salvation is about sin and its negative consequences upon you being removed. So, God picks you, polishes you off, removes all the debris of sin and puts you back down. And you are still in charge. You are still the center.”

But when we cultivate a high view of God it naturally shrinks an elevated view of self, so God becomes the center and not you. Sin is now seen differently, too. It’s not just something to be avoided because of negative consequences. Sin is a thief. It steals God’s

glory. The glory that God deserves from me isn't being given to Him because my heart is filled with other things, lesser things. Salvation in this view deals with not just the consequences of sin, but with the totality of sin. It gets to the heart, the core of your being — heart, soul, strength and mind.

This right to happiness movement is based in the root sin of pride. It takes the view: Happiness is your right, so when something gets in the way of your happiness, say for instance, like a marriage, then you can

discard that marriage because you have a right to happiness.

Jeremiah 9:13-14

13 And the Lord says: “Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them,

This is the first sign that a Christian has a high view of self and a low view of God — you forsake the Bible. Now, there are several ways you can forsake the Bible. One, you can just

stop reading it. That's one way of forsaking it, by ignoring it. That's the root sin of pride. You ignore the Word because clearly you know better.

Second, you can begin to question the reliability of Scripture. "Did God really say?" It's the battle that has raged since sin first entered the human race. This is one of the root sins that leads to other sins — unbelief.

In one sense, forsaking God's Word is a foundational sin, meaning that it leads to other sins. People who doubt God has actually revealed Himself tend to be stupid enough to go against what God has said in His self-revelation. That leads us to the third way of forsaking God — disobedience.

“Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it,

Once you begin to question if God has revealed Himself in a meaningful and reliable way through the Scriptures, through the law and the prophets, through His Son, you'll begin to disobey all those voices.

Now, who do you follow? People who disregard the Bible follow something or someone. Who?

14 but have stubbornly followed their own hearts

“I believe God just wants me to be happy.”
This is a refrain in modern evangelicalism, because we have drifted from a biblical understanding of God. That phrase is used to justify just about any sin that the Bible has prohibited in no uncertain terms. But again, we always make the behavior the issue. Christian marriages are struggling, let's do a series on strengthening marriages. That's all well and good, but the issue of their behavior

is just the fruit sin. The root sin lies in their unworthy concept of God.

“I’m just following my heart.” And that leads to false religion.

and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them.

One of the surest signs that you have an elevated view of yourself is when you believe

it's good practice to follow your own heart. I saw a clip of a college student who was having a discussion with someone about the transgender issue. The person asked this student, "If everyone on campus said you were a cow, would that make you a cow?" And the student said, "For all practical purposes it would, yes."

A generation that believes you can define reality however your heart leads you to is a generation with an overinflated view of self.

You can always avoid reason just by looking to your heart.

What people are really trying to do is silence the law of God that is written on their hearts and this is what people can never really get away from. This is why every single human being speaks of justice and feels there is right and wrong, because God is just and has written His laws upon the human heart.

But wanting to be the definers of reality ourselves we shut out the law of God in our

hearts. When we ignore internal law of God written in our hearts we will also ignore the external law of God written in the Bible. People are in a struggle to silence the voice of reality, especially when it comes into conflict with self, with their desires.

3. Truth About Sin

WHAT HINDERS MY TURNING TO GOD?

“Pride is the parent of numerous sins. High notions of what we deserve from God, or from men, produce impatience, discontent, envy,

anger, strife, all uncharitableness.” —
Newman Hall

PRIDE

Numbers 20:8-12

8 “Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” 9 And Moses took the

staff from before the Lord, as he commanded him.

10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?”¹¹ And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. ¹² And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the

people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.”

What are the root sins of church members in these verses James writes to us?

SELFISHNESS

James 4:1-4

4 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?

So, quarrels and fights are the fruit sins. What is the root sin?

Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

It's not that desire is wrong. It's self-centered desire that's wrong. It's all about what you want. Selfishness is another root sin.

² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

In other words, all these fruit sins of fighting and quarreling are really about you wanting your own way. The root sin is selfishness. If you want to fight less and quarrel less, what's the sin to attack? Selfishness.

You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because

you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

You ask for things that will benefit you. Your prayers are centered in self rather than centered in God's will and what He desires.

⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Why does he makes this leap from being selfish to being a friend of the world? Because the standard operating mode of the general population (of the world) is look to self. You decide what's best for you. You decide what's right and wrong. You define it. Who knows better than you? You can't know that God actually revealed Himself, so you decide.

When you finally see the greatness of God,
you finally see the greatness of your own
arrogance.

4. Truth About Salvation

REMOVING THE IDOL

Psalm 50:21-23

**²¹ These things you have done, and I have
been silent;**

The silence of God in our lives is never a good thing. It's a sign of His passive judgment. He's left you to yourself. Never interpret the silence of God as God condoning what you're doing.

you thought that I was one like yourself.

So many people think God is just a greater version of us. God is nothing like us. He is altogether holy, which means unique. We get the idea that because we're created in His image that He is like us. It's the same faulty reasoning some people have when they say,

“God is love and love is God.” Love is not God. Love is an attribute of God. We’re creatures who are supposed to reflect His character, but that doesn’t mean He reflects us in any way. He is nothing like us. He is God.

But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.

**²² “Mark this, then, you who forget God,
lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver!**

²³ The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me;

**to one who orders his way rightly
I will show the salvation of God!”**

- **Getting the Right Order of Biblical Truth -
God, self, sin, salvation.**