

The God Who Is Immanent

Introduction

God alone is the Creator of the Universe. The fact that God is separate from the created order is essential to our understanding of who God is. Yet, there is another equally powerful attribute of God, which we will explore today—His immanency.

Imagining God's Immanency

Immanence of God: God's presence and ongoing actions *within* the created order (McKim). The immanence of God is a divine mystery that it is virtually incomprehensible to the human mind.

Understanding that God is **above** creation (transcendent) and He rules **over** creation (sovereign) the fact that He is involved **within** creation (immanent) expresses His love to us even more powerfully.

In passages like Jeremiah 23:23-34 we discover a dynamic truth that God revealed about Himself: It is impossible to hide from Him. Isaiah 45:19, and such passages, reveals a reciprocal truth: God will not hide from us. It is the desire of God to be with His creation. So, the invitation to seek the Lord comes as a result of the separation caused by sin.

An Invitation to God's Immanence

Though God is sovereign He chooses not to force Himself upon us, instead allowing us to pursue Him. Isaiah 55:6-9 announces the invitation of God to pursue His nearness.

1. **SEEKING THE CLOSENESS OF GOD (ISAIAH 55:6)**

The foundation of our closeness to God is built upon a repentant heart. Repentance of sin opens the door to salvation through Jesus Christ which provides the freedom to be reconciled to the Father.

2. **DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL RECEPTIVITY (ISAIAH 55:7)**

In order to get "closer" to God we must develop what A.W. Tozer terms "spiritual receptivity." Spiritual receptivity is developed through an awareness of the presence of God in our lives.

The immanence of God means that He is always with us, but there are times in which we sense His nearness more than others. But why? Though it doesn't mean that He is

distant, it can mean that our receptivity is weak. A few reasons for this include unconfessed sin, unfathomable situations, unmotivated spirituality, and unfounded skepticism.

Developing spiritual receptivity requires spending time in His presence, avoiding external distractions, and walking in trust and obedience to His Word.

3. OPTIMIZING CLOSENESS IN GOD'S TIMEFRAME (ISAIAH 55:6)

Isaiah 55:6 speaks to the possibility of a time expiration in our pursuit of God. The implication is that there will come a time when we will no longer be able to seek after God or call upon Him.

Immanence and Immanuel

While Jesus was on earth, as Immanuel (God with us), His manifested presence was obviously visible. He was actively involved in the lives of everyone He came in contact with, especially the disciples.

John 20 describes three post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to His followers and each one teaches us some valuable lessons concerning His immanence.

1. Jesus' appearance to Mary (verses 11-18). Just because we may not recognize Jesus in the midst of our problems does not mean that He is not present in them.
2. Jesus' appearance to the disciples (verses 19-23). The awareness of God's presence, even in the midst of deep distress, can transform great fear into peaceful joy.
3. Jesus' appearance to Thomas (verses 24-29). It is not until we personally encounter the presence of God that our lives will be changed.

Conclusion

Attempting to understand the costly effect of God's incarnation will greatly assist in providing an appreciation of His immanence in our lives. The God of all creation, came into the world He created, as a created being to restore humanity's relationship with the Father. That is love!

Further references: Genesis 28:16; Matthew 28:20; Isaiah 7:14; Acts 17:27-29; and 1 Peter 2:22-25.