

The first set of statements is regarding your thought life, your thinking patterns:

- “He forgives, but He’s probably disappointed in me most of the time.”
- “If I were doing better spiritually, then He’d be pleased.”
 - Or any other performance-based lens that implies that love is earned, maintained, or lost, depending on how you’re doing.
- They interpret hardship as punishment rather than formation or presence.
- They struggle to hold both truth and tenderness together—God becomes either holy *or* loving, but not both at once.

Or any of these that have to do with how you FEEL:

- Shame, which sounds like “I am bad” rather than “I’ve done something wrong”
- Insecurity in your standing with God (which sounds/looks like not wanting to come to church for fear of everyone finding out that you’re faking it, or because everyone else has their stuff together but you don’t, or feeling really uncomfortable with other believers because you’re comparing what you know of their lives with the deepest crevices and closely held secrets of your own)
- God seems more like your boss, a judge in a court of law, or even an evaluator than a loving Father
- Difficulty receiving love without suspicion (always wondering when the other shoe will fall or what the catch is).

Or behaviors (like how it shows up in real life):

- Over-performing (especially spiritually, trying to earn what is already given)
- Withdrawing or disengaging (from relationships, church, or any other thing that would cause connection with the love of Jesus)
- Difficulty with confession (either avoiding it for fear of rejection or overdoing it as if you’re stuck in guilt without ever receiving/experiencing forgiveness)
- Chronic comparison with others
- Feeling as though the prayers are formal, guarded, or minimal rather than honest and relational.