

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCE

July 29, 2018 | WONDERFUL MINISTRY CHURCH

WHAT IS GOD REALLY LIKE?



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- Jesus settles the question once and for all when he answers: “I’m what God is like! If you’ve seen me you’ve seen the Father.”
- While this is certainly true and potentially liberating for those who have an image of God in need of rehabilitation, having a theology of God’s love is not sufficient
- Ephesians 3:14-21

EPHESIANS 3:19

- NEW LIVING TRANSLATION: “May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

EPHESIANS 3:18-19

- THE MESSAGE: "And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God."

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- “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” [A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1961), 1.]
- And what comes into our minds—what we truly believe—is a result of what we have experienced

FOUR WAYS TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

- **#1: Say yes** – make yourself vulnerable to his love
- Yes, there's risk involved!
- God's love is a mystery that can only be understood from the inside (this is true for newcomers and veterans alike)

FOUR WAYS TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

- **#2: Community** – doing this common life of faith with ordinary people
- Everything Paul writes here is written to the community of believers; each use of the word “you” in this passage is plural
- *Q: Where is God's love to be experienced? A: we find it in the fellowship of the church*
- “God knows nothing of solitary religion.”
[Advice given to John Wesley, (The Journal, Vol. 1, p.469.)]

MORGEN, COURTNEY, AND MOM (AND THE PITFALLS OF COMMUNICATION)



FOUR WAYS TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

- **#3: Listen** – because God is always speaking
- God speaks through the Bible; it's not just a book of information about God. It is a spiritual vial of nitroglycerin exploding with God's presence and heart

FOUR WAYS TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

- **#3: Listen** – because God is always speaking
- God speaks through his Holy Spirit
- **John 16:13-14** VOICE TRANSLATION
“The Spirit of truth will come and guide you in all truth. He will not speak His own words to you; He will speak what He hears, revealing to you the things to come and bringing glory to Me. The Spirit has unlimited access to Me, to all that I possess and know, just as everything the Father has is Mine. That is the reason I am confident He will care for My own and reveal the path to you.”

FOUR WAYS TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

- **#4: Be Alert in Ordinary Life**

- “We do not have to live in a monastery to experience God’s embrace. The spiritual life is not an escape from life but an affirmation of God’s way of life in the struggles we meet in our personal thoughts, in the relationships we have in the family, among our neighbors, at work, and in our leisure. The Christian life is an embodied life. It affirms that all of life belongs to God, and God is everywhere in life.” [Robert

Webber, *The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006]

LOVE & ANONYMOUS NOBODIES

- **Ephesians 3:20** PASSION TRANSLATION

“Never doubt God’s mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, your most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo them all, for his miraculous power constantly energizes you.”

LOVE & ANONYMOUS NOBODIES

- What Paul describes is possible only for those who know what God is really like because they've experienced him and his love—that's the fuel for God's miraculous power flooding through us
- It's love that makes us dangerous

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