

The Pursuit Of God

Session Fourteen / September 28, 2016

NO OTHER GODS!

Exodus 20:3

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

For the past several months, we have been involved in THE PURSUIT OF GOD.

- Who is He?
- What are His attributes?
- What are His decrees?
- What are His purposes?
- What is His nature?
- Etc.

It is essential that the followers of Christ know Who the Father really is? The Apostle Peter gave us a vital command: 1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

How do we “sanctify God?” The only God most people know anything about is the One they see through us. The opinion or knowledge they have of God depends upon what they see in the way we live. Therefore, our lives are to be an accurate picture of the true God - of who He truly is. So how can we do that unless we, ourselves, have a true understanding of Him? It is essential that we reflect Him truthfully. Otherwise, we have resorted to idolatry.

Here is the essence of idolatry: It is the consideration of God to be anything other than Who He truly is! A distorted picture of God is the projection of a false deity. So let’s briefly review some of the issues we have discussed in the last few weeks.

A BRIEF REVIEW

“Our concept of God leads to basically every action in our lives, the way we act (or react), our speech, our behavior at home, our missiology, our thoughts concerning worship and,

1 in general, our lives basically lived.” (From Session One - lines 26-28)

2
3 As Tozer has reminded us, *The mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of*
4 *God.* Every evil under the sun can be traced back to its origin with people with unsound
5 doctrine or theology. Until we see God, high and lifted up - as did Isaiah, as He truly is
6 in time and eternity, the Gospel becomes diluted and useless, destroyed by our sorry lack
7 of the pursuit of Him. Romans 1:21 *For even though they knew God, they did not*
8 *honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their*
9 *foolish heart was darkened.*

10 11 The Attributes of God

12
13 Attributes of God are those things which are true of Him, or whatever might be accurately
14 ascribed to God. We covered such topics as:

- 15 • God is Spirit John 4:24 **God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must**
16 **worship him in spirit and in truth.** – Jesus
- 17 • God is invisible Exodus 33:20 And he said, **Thou canst not see my face:**
- 18 • God is Alive! He is THE SOURCE OF ALL LIFE.
- 19 • God is a Person with intellect, sensibility and volition (will).

20
21 God is Holy! 1 Peter 1:16 **Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.** We
22 studied Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4 where we learned of the great six-winged seraph angels
23 who fly over the throne of God declaring Him to be HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. A
24 definition of holiness is to be “separate.” God’s holiness is transcendent: 1 Samuel 2:2
25 **There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any**
26 **rock like our God.**

27 28 God is Self-existent

29
30 God is eternal, therefore He has always been and always will be. How did God “begin?”
31 He did not begin; He has always been. You and I came from human parents. God did
32 not for He was not dependent upon anything outside of Himself. His very name is “I
33 Am That I Am.” Exodus 6:3) God is free from all succession of time.

34 35 God is Omniscient

36
37 He is all-knowing. God knows everything, whether actual or merely possible - whether
38 past, present or future. He knows everything perfectly - immediately, simultaneously,
39 exhaustively and truly.

1 God is Omnipresent

2
3 Psalm 139:7-12 **Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy**
4 **presence? [8] If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell,**
5 **behold, thou art there. [9] If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the**
6 **uttermost parts of the sea; [10] Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right**
7 **hand shall hold me. [11] If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night**
8 **shall be light about me. [12] Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night**
9 **shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.**

10
11 God is Omnipotent

12
13 That means all-powerful. There is nothing beyond His ability or creativity. There is
14 nothing He cannot do - that is, that is consistent with His divine nature.

15
16 Other Aspects of God

17
18 We studied God's incredible goodness, His mercy (His **not** giving us what we deserve)
19 and His grace (His giving us what we **don't** deserve).

20
21 We spent time studying the justice of God. Because of God's righteousness, He has to
22 be just.

23
24 We studied at least to a small measure the creativity of God. Creation was the very work
25 of God, not some happenstance explosion somewhere in space.

26
27 We studied the immutability of God – He never changes. Malachi 3:6 **For I am the**
28 **Lord, I change not;**

29
30 Several weeks ago we studied THE TRINITY OF GOD. No, we do not have three
31 Gods. We have One! God is three eternal distinctions in one divine essence (being).

32
33 SO MANY GODS IN THIS WORLD!

34
35 On the following page you will find a picture of the Hindu (alleged) god named Vishnu.
36 This personage is one of the 33 main gods of Hinduism. I have been informed on my
37 trips to India that the Hindu gods are so pervasive that it's as if there are 33 million gods.
38 I have stood in the Hindu temples from Chennai to Jaipur, from Calcutta to New Delhi,
39 and watched professional men and women, toting expensive designer briefcases, enter
40 those buildings and prostrate themselves before man-made cement gods, garishly painted,



1 and looking like elephants on steroids, weeping and calling out for help. I have watched
2 beggars enter and do the same - not to mention little children who have probably never
3 heard of the One True God, Jehovah.
4

5 In Jaipur, while observing a full Hindu service, the priest admitted to me that his god had
6 been perpetually helpless in answering any of his prayers. In New Delhi I was invited to
7 attend a ceremony in a Hindu temple where the people were excited about the arrival of a
8 “new god,” a strange looking apparition someone carried in and put on a cabinet shelf.
9 (I would hate to devote my life to some “deity” that could be carried about or put on a
10 chest.)
11

12 Now this was India. But I have seen similar activities in Russia with the Shamans - in
13 China with the Buddhists - and in Africa with the animists. Why all these gods? The
14 Bible clears up that question:
15

16 Romans 1:20-25

17 **For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen,**
18 **being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;**
19 **so that they are without excuse: [21] Because that, when they knew God, they**
20 **glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their**
21 **imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. [22] Professing themselves to be**
22 **wise, they became fools, [23] And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into**
23 **an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and**
24 **creeping things.**

25 **[24] Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their**
26 **own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: [25] Who changed**
27 **the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the**
28 **Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.**
29

30 FROM “IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING” - A BOOK I WROTE IN 1994
31

32 *SINGAPORE – a metropolis of modern architecture and booming business shining as a*
33 *jewel against black velvet. From my 11th floor hotel standpoint, I stare down to the*
34 *constant movement below me: the dashing about of Mercedes 500s and Porches, the*
35 *construction workers frantically racing the deadline to build Singapore’s new subway*
36 *system, the cranes cluttering the skyline where construction is nearly done on one of the*
37 *world’s tallest hotels, the glittering facade of Gucci’s new store, and then - a building of*
38 *such grotesque ugliness and bizarre art that it catches your eye immediately. This latter*
39 *edifice is a Hindu temple.*
40

1 *I slip down to ground floor on the whisper-quiet elevator, stroll through the perfection of*
2 *Hyatt's lobby and into the heat of the street, Singapore's legendary humidity immediately*
3 *attacking my body. I make my way through the masses of people until I am standing in*
4 *front of the monstrosity I viewed from my hotel window, the Hindu temple.*

5
6 *Its facing is crawling with plaster snakes and multi-headed monsters. The paint is a*
7 *conglomerate of gaudy colors and seems to have been done by a demented third grader.*
8 *Inside the temple are scores of cement gods, leers and glares painted on their demonic*
9 *faces. And I watch businessmen, students, housewives and humanity in general from*
10 *every social strata bowing and weeping before these man-made manikins. The scene, to*
11 *me, is Stephen King gone mad.*

12
13 *How can seemingly intelligent humans allow themselves to become addicted to such a*
14 *hopeless, morose, bizarre religion? It was then that the Holy Spirit directed my inner*
15 *gaze back to my own nation, the United States of America where over 4,000 cults flourish*
16 *with abandon, where false prophets seem as profuse as McDonalds, where one only need*
17 *snap on a radio or TV to hear blatant distortion of biblical truth. I think back to my own*
18 *nation where the prophets of Baal are having a field day and where it seems that no*
19 *teaching is so "off the wall" that it cannot attract a large following. And yet I should not*
20 *be surprised for the Captain of my soul long ago prophesied such proliferation of false*
21 *prophets (see Matthew 24 and 25), these bogus-gospel gigolos who titillate the senses and*
22 *extract the dollars.*

23
24 *Matthew 7:15-23*

25 ***Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they***
26 ***are ravening wolves. [16] Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of***
27 ***thorns, or figs of thistles? [17] Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a***
28 ***corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. [18] A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,***
29 ***neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. [19] Every tree that bringeth not forth***
30 ***good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. [20] Wherefore by their fruits ye shall***
31 ***know them.***

32 ***[21] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of***
33 ***heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say***
34 ***to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name***
35 ***have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will***
36 ***I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.***

37
38 **America's False Gods**

39
40 Americans in general know so little about the Bible that they are easily "taken in" by
41 sundry false and crazy teachings today. One of the craziest came out of the first Star

1 Wars films: “May the force be with you!” Or as I have translated it, “May the FARCE
2 be with you.”

3
4 Our country loves New Age teachings. Some of them have carried over into the
5 Pentecostal/Charismatic world, unfortunately. All kinds of books are now on news
6 stands in which the authors tell of somehow being transported to Heaven and back - or,
7 yes, even to Hell and back. The contents of the books, despite having no basis in holy
8 Scripture, somehow seem to appeal to multitudes of people who accept the fantasies as
9 fact.

10
11 New Age is really Old Farce and has so much in common with both Hinduism and
12 ancient gnosticism. One commentator has put it like this:

13
14 *New Age religions are **PANTHEISTIC** (believing in the divinity of creation as well as*
15 *the Creator), **MYSTICAL** (viewing truth as something one finds within oneself), and*
16 ***SYNCRETISTIC** (blending and merging religious ideas from any number of sources.)*
17 *There is also a large dose of occult superstition in most New Age thought.*

18 THE GLORY OF HEAVEN / MACARTHUR / CROSSWAY BOOKS / PAGE 25

19
20 A very popular hit song had this very untrue line:

21 *This can't be wrong / it feels so right!*

22
23 That's the essence of what Paul addressed to the Romans in chapter 1 of that book:
24 because people did not really know God they made up their own ideas of Who He really
25 is - and they were deadly wrong. There are almost as many concepts of God as there are
26 people; this is despite the fact that the Bible tells us exactly Who God is and what we are
27 to know about Him.

28 29 GOD IS LOVE

30
31 Each day when I drive to or from home, I see the sign in a neighbor's yard, proclaiming to
32 one and all, “GOD IS LOVE.” God bless those people for that signature truth about our
33 Heavenly Father. The Apostle John was used by the Holy Spirit to declare that truth to
34 humanity long ago, yes, God is love!

35
36 To many, that is solely who God is. They conveniently overlook the many other facets of
37 His divine Being save that one and count solely on His love to somehow get them into
38 eternity safely. But that is a watered down version of Him, leaving not the God of Israel,
39 not the God and Father of Jesus, not the God of the prophets and the apostles, not the God
40 of the saints and reformers and martyrs, not (as Tozer reminds us) the God of the
41 theologians and hymnists of the church.

1 I want to be clear about this fundamental truth. *The words "God is love" mean that love*
2 *is an essential attribute of God. Love is something true of God but it is not God. (We*
3 *do not worship "love;" we worship God Who has the attribute of love.) It expresses the*
4 *way God is in His unitary being, as do the words of holiness, justice, faithfulness and*
5 *truth. Because God is immutable, He always acts like Himself, and because He is a unity*
6 *He never suspends one of His attributes in order to exercise another.*

7 THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY / TOZER / CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS / PAGE 105

8
9 What a profound truth! Millions upon millions count upon a god who is simply love
10 (like some Captain and Tennille song) and overlook the other attributes of God. This is
11 a fatal error that can affect a person's soul for all eternity.

12 13 GOD IS REASON

14
15 Over 90 times in Scripture we are called upon to the majesty of "reason." Isaiah 1:18
16 **Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord:** What a privilege that the
17 Creator God calls upon His creation to actually THINK and discuss matters with Him.

18
19 Often in our Pentecostal circles we hear from the leaders of services, "Well....don't you
20 just FEEL His Spirit here?" Yes, sometimes and it's wonderful. But....but....I always
21 KNOW! Feeling is not always rational and is therefore an undependable guide. But
22 KNOWING is always rational and is static and dependable.

23
24 A long time ago, an old song used to fill our Assemblies of God sanctuaries, one written
25 in 1920 by Anna Waterman:

26
27 *Some, ye sinners, lost and hopeless / Jesus blood can make you free /*
28 *For He saved the worst among you when He saved a wretch like me!*

29
30 *And I know, yes, I know Jesus' blood can make the vilest sinner clean.*
31 *And I know, yes, I know Jesus' blood can make the vilest sinner clean.*

32
33 Mrs. Waterman was echoing the classic line of the Apostle Paul: 2 Tim. 1:12I am
34 **not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able**
35 **to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.** "Knowing" and
36 "persuasion" are issues of the MIND, not the emotions.

37
38 I believe the Apostle Peter had this truth in mind and heart as he penned: 1 Peter 3:15
39 **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to**
40 **every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and**

1 **fear:** In dealing with agnostics, atheists or false prophets, you need to KNOW what
2 you KNOW and WHY YOU KNOW IT. The God Who created space, stars, humans,
3 and life in general, is a God of REASON and KNOWLEDGE.
4

5 Webster defines “reason” as: a basis or cause, a justification, an explanation, the mental
6 powers concerned with forming conclusions or judgments....good sense, normal and
7 sound powers of the mind. Webster does not use the word “feeling” in that definition.
8 While emotion may be a valuable after effect, positive but sometimes negative, it cannot
9 be a dependable day-in day-out cause for living. Why? Because emotion is dependent
10 upon too many outside considerations that may or may not be valid. But reason is always
11 based on fact alone! And, friend, we serve a GOD OF REASON!
12

13 We sing often here, “What a mighty God we serve!” Amen to that! Oh, the majesty of
14 our great God, the only God, the One before Whom we will all one day stand. At His
15 right hand is our “attorney,” our advocate, Christ Jesus Himself. And drawing us into
16 His presence is the precious Holy Spirit.
17

18 It is incumbent upon us to represent the Godhead truly and thoroughly. He is not a
19 plastic form residing on the dashboard of our car. It is my prayer that these weeks
20 together in THE PURSUIT OF GOD bear great fruit in your personal life.
21

22
23 Next week: It has been a year or two since I took your questions - written or oral. We
24 will do that next Wednesday.
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