

What We Think about God

Lesson Three

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:1-10

Speaker Carol Helland

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." ~A.W. Tozer

"Indeed, how we think of God is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us." ~C.S. Lewis

God wants a relationship with us, and He desires that our view of Him is accurate and true. For how we perceive God makes all the difference in how we interact with Him—it shapes our thinking, our emotions, and the way we respond to people and circumstances.

The vast majority of people go through life unaware that the way they view things is significantly at odds with how God views things: *The natural person does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolish to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* ~1 Corinthians 2:14

But we have the mind of Christ.~1 Corinthians 2:16 When we trusted the Savior, the Holy Spirit came in and gave us God's Truth to penetrate below the surface to see things as they really are. We can now grow in our discernment to understand more and more of the mind of Christ.

For [she] who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind . . . [she] is a doubled-minded [woman], unstable in all [her] ways ~James 1:6 & 8. Don't think of your life by ups and downs—but by ins and outs. ~Philippians 2:13

Review from Lesson One: As we recognize the lies we've held onto for so long, lies about God and lies about ourselves, we can reject the lies, and renew our mind with God's Truth, creating new neuropathways of thought. The old pathway remains but the new one gets stronger each day. We rarely get to choose our circumstances, but we have a choice about how we think about God. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you can change the way you think about anything.

The weapons we fight with are not weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds ~2 Corinthians 10:3-4. A "stronghold" is a mental fortress built with bricks of thought. We can become so comfortable with our mental strongholds we don't even realize they are there. These strongholds take time to demolish, but we have the Lord Jesus' help.

Our spiritual (mighty) weapons are **prayer, God's Word, God's love,** and the **Power of the Holy Spirit** at work in our lives. ~2 Corinthians 10:5

Five Destructive Views of God

The deadliest lies Satan wants us to buy into are lies about God. He is always trying to get us to have a low view of God, believing things that are untrue.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world ~1 John 4:4. There is no lie Satan can throw at you that God cannot defeat . . . you are on the winning side.

Our Savior has defeated Satan's lies. But if we cannot identify those lies, then it is very likely we will continue to be defeated by them. So the only way to recognize a lie is to know God's Truth.

1. God doesn't love me.

Truth: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are! ~I John 3:1

There is a deep lie in the heart of many women that they are not worthy of being loved for who they are. And if they *feel* unloved, they *are* unloved.

We see God's view of us in the depth of His love. His love is so vast, it is beyond our understanding. His love is so strong that He sacrificed His Son Jesus Christ, so we might not perish but have eternal life with Him. God proved His love for you at Calvary.

Study the Lord Jesus. Know Him for who He really is and of His love for you: *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. ~Matthew 11:29*

"Put together all the tenderest love you know of, the deepest you have ever felt, and the strongest that has ever been poured out upon you, and heap upon it all the love of all the loving human hearts in the world, and then multiply it by infinity, and you will begin, perhaps, to have some faint glimpse of what the love of God is." ~Hannah Whitall Smith

2. God is just mean and cruel.

Truth: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.* ~1 Peter 5:8

Lies about God damage a relationship with Him when we see Him as mean, punitive, spiteful, out to get us. Satan's lies also make it harder to cope with life with the strong emotions that flood us when life goes badly. We begin to see God through our own filter of hurt.

Would you bring your mind back to the Truth? You have the God of Truth. He is your Father, your "Papa." God is good, and always good, whether you feel like He is good or not. That's a God you need not turn away from . . . a God who is rich in mercy and forgiveness, full of love and grace, quick to forgive, and for you.

God has no present ill will toward you. That is not in the character of God at all. Therefore, you need not see Him as cruel. Choose to collapse in His love for you. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever* ~Hebrews 13:8. When you get a glimpse of how much He loves you, it motivates you to move forward in faith believing. When you see Him for who He is, you're drawn to Him. It changes everything from the inside out.

3. God is like my father.

Truth: *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.* ~I John 4:18

The Enemy is very good at convincing us to take the view that God's acceptance is human, and we have to jump through hoops to earn it. And there is the lie: That our worth before God is determined by our performance.

Salvation was designed for people who have made mistakes, failed, and sinned. Our sins are a forcible reminder of our need for God's grace; and our weaknesses make us appreciate God's strength. An understanding of our frailty is the basis for a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. God has promised to supply *all* my need by Christ Jesus—emotional and physical. I am worthy in Christ and "accepted in the beloved." God is pleased with you in Christ. Absorb His Truth to renew your mind.

4. God's ways are too restrictive.

Truth: *If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.* ~John 8:36

It is to intensely religious people that Christ spoke His great word. The Lord Jesus came to preach deliverance to the captive of rituals no less to the captive of sin. The Gospel is a call out of restriction, out of works, to the wide horizons of possibilities God has for you.

No one is really free who is under the bondage of fear. Salvation begins with the complete removal of fear. The believer is assured that Christ has given to her eternal life, and that nothing is able to pluck her out of God's omnipotent hand which holds her. To be free and not to know it is tragic. The Enemy wants to keep us in bondage. God wants us to walk in freedom. So *"stand fast in the liberty where Christ has made you free."* But our freedom is not anarchy . . . the riot of our will vs. God's will. Some have the idea that their liberty in Christ has "earned" them the right to do as they please, and this idea is a great lie. God has given us many privileges, but He never gives the privilege to sin.

5. God has it out for me.

Truth: What then shall we say in view of these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ~Romans 8:31

Trials can change our understanding of who God is. When things begin to unravel, God can be more mysterious than ever. Satan may try to convince you that God has it out for you. Lies. All lies.

God sent trials to the most righteous of men, Job, and that appears to be the very reason God appointed him this special trial. God tests the faith of the righteous. God has a plan bigger than we are able to see and sometimes that which is adversity becomes a blessing.

Some of you may be bitter against God. God understands that. Talk to Him because He loves you. God can handle it. Tell Him what's on your mind. God will pour grace into your soul to wash away bitterness if you let Him. And you will begin to see God's purposes and love, even though the sky is dark and God's ways a mystery.

Take God up on His offer to transform your thinking. You can co-labor with Him to turn your thoughts to His Truth about Him and yourself. If only we would contemplate the glory and majesty of the true and living God. What peace that will bring as He "guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"!

Jesus . . . the very thought of Thee!

With sweetness fills my breast;

But sweeter far Thy face to see,

And in Thy presence rest.

