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# THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

**B**EFORE we can have that deeper, personal experience with God, we must first start by seeking the knowledge of God. From Genesis to Revelation, God has revealed Himself as a personal God with a form; one with whom we can communicate freely; one whom we can know and trust:

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God . . . — Genesis 3:8

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. — Revelation 21:3 (see also Revelation 4:2; 5:1)

The first step in knowing God is to believe that He exists:

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. — Hebrews 11:6

Nature reveals the existence of God; whether we stoop to consider the minutest detail of the smallest flower, the awe inspiring complexity of the human body, or the perfect order in space; all testify of an intelligent Designer, a Creator.

Yet something more than mere belief in His existence is needed, for even the devils believe. To know *about* Him is not enough. Jesus tells us that we must know Him *personally*. We must know His character, not only *who* He is, but *what* He is like. We must know that He cares, and is involved in human affairs – “that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.” Our eternal life depends on this knowledge. Though it is a life and death issue, yet surprisingly many label both His character and His personality a “mystery”.

I once saw a set of audio recordings with the title “Our Fire and our Friend.” I am not condemning what the speaker had to

say, but the title is itself a contradiction in terms, and serves to illustrate my point. A fire can warm us, but can we cannot be friends with a fire. Fire cannot love us. It cannot understand our trials and difficulties, or sympathize with us in our weakness. We cannot have a meaningful relationship with a fire, neither can we have a relationship with an entity that is “purely spirit”. God would not tell us to know Him personally if He were simply a spirit – something as inanimate and intangible as fire. God is a person. This is the beginning of what we must know of Him, and it is a point which the Scripture makes plain.

### **GOD IS A PERSON**

Someone once told me that he believed God was in the ocean, the trees, the flowers, etc. He went on to say that he himself was god, that I too was god, and that everything whether animate or inanimate was god, even a cup of water was god, or a “part of god”.



Such knowledge amounts to nothing, and makes the Creator simply a part of the creation. You see, without understanding the personality of God, we cannot have a vital relationship with Him. You simply cannot have a relationship with a tree, or a glass of water. Neither can we simply “look inside” ourselves for God. No, no, no!

### **MAN WAS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD**

God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. — Genesis 1:27

In order for us to be made in God’s image and likeness, God must first have an image (form) or likeness. But doesn’t the Scripture say somewhere that God is a spirit?

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. — John 4:24

What did Jesus mean by this? Read His words to Nicodemus:

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. — John 3:6

According to Jesus, the born again person is a spirit, but we know that a born again person has a physical form as well. God, therefore must have both a spiritual component and a physical component.

### THEY KNEW GOD AS A PERSONAL GOD

The Scripture records many people who knew God as a person. Enoch and Noah are a couple of good examples:

And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. . . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. — Genesis 5:24; 6:9

### GOD HAS A BODY, A FORM

Though no man can see the glory of the face of God and live, yet many have seen the form of God. The 70 elders at the very beginning of their commission and work were given a personal view of God. They saw Him, and He had feet:

And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. — Exodus 24:10

The prophet Micaiah also saw God:

And he [Micaiah] said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. — I Kings 22:19

Daniel, the prophet, beheld God in vision, and He had a form with a head and hair:

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. — Daniel 7:9

## GOD HAS A DWELLING PLACE

Job reveals that God has a specific dwelling place:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. — Job 1:6

When God brought Israel out of Egypt and established them as a nation, one of the first things He did was to impress upon them the fact that He was a personal God, and that He had a specific dwelling place; for He told them, “. . . make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

This sanctuary was only a pattern of “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” It was to be made after the pattern of God’s literal dwelling place (in heaven), to “serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Hebrews 8:2, 5).

God not only dwells in heaven, but in a specific place in heaven:

The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. — Psalm 11:4

If God has no form or body, He then has no need of a physical dwelling place; and the Scripture record of a heavenly temple and even of heaven itself becomes a fantasy or fiction.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

Isaiah’s personal experience with God is one of the most beautiful testimonies to its transforming power:

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at

the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. — Isaiah 6:1-4

This vision inspired Isaiah with awe and reverence. It brought conviction of sin:

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. — Isaiah 6:5

It changed his religion from one of cold formality to one of genuine worship. It affected his view of God and of himself. He had once denounced the sin of others; but now he saw himself exposed to the same condemnation. How little his wisdom and talents then appeared, as he looked on the sacredness and majesty of God. How unworthy he was! How unfitted for sacred service! We can hear his cry, like that of the apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It was this experience of knowing God that prepared him for his work:

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. — Isaiah 6:6-8