

Psalm 76

Read Psalm 76:1-7: How can there be such a differing view of God? Some people love him; and others are indifferent. Some people even hate God. Part of it has to do with how we deal with reality. Do we try to impose our desires into our imagination...to make a false reality? It seems to be a common theme today.

God does not change. His ways can be offensive to our flesh. Little children and babies also want the world to yield to their wants. A parent's job is to take a rebellious and selfish mind; and train it to stop and think about the impact of their actions. Some people grow up without that black and white processing of truth.

God has a reputation with his people. He is our hero. He is our rescuing protector. It is a good reputation among the Jews who know him. He answers their prayers in spiritual and physical ways. They saw many answered prayers as the barbarians were at their gate. God's reputation among those who seek him is much different than to those who ignore or avoid him.

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. (Deuteronomy 30:15-16)

Think about how humbling it was for God to be associated with the Jews (or any people). They kept rejecting him. Instead of showing the world his protective power and glory, he had to allow continual attacks (for corrections and repentance), and his glory departed from their unbelief. It may have appeared that their God could not protect them. All other nations use their idols to carry out war; or live an imposing lifestyle. It seemed that his own people did the opposite of promoting him on the earth.

Today God is still mischaracterized by unbelievers as being outdated, restrictive, hateful, judgemental, uninvolved, or boring. That is one of the dis-services of religion. The view of God is reduced to hypocritical narrow-minded people. This is why our post-Christian society has pushed God out of our affairs. This includes: school prayer, abortion rights, flag saluting, gender and sexual preference, domestic partner rights, pornography, a re-definition of separation of church and state, marijuana dispensaries, and Islamic Law

advocates. People who arrive at this conclusion are only concerned about immediate gratification. They have no concerns about how satisfying their pleasures affects others or even themselves in the long term.

God reveals himself more directly and intimately to believers. Unbelievers still encounter him indirectly by seeing that their pursuits are not worthy of their affections. Those who seek to rob, abuse their bodies, and abuse others have been dying in the streets since the beginning of time. We are gullible; and we keep committing the same sins generation after generation. Satan doesn't need any new lures.

We all have a conscience; and are surrounded by proof of God's existence. God might be revealed through the universe.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who [d]suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is [e]manifest [f]in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [g]Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:18-21)

Even so, NASA has a program called Origins, which is spending a lot of money to try to find an alternate origin or source of life somewhere else in the universe. The smartest people in the world, who reject Christ are displays of foolishness. The further they go; the more it confirms the uniqueness of earth.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." (1 Corinthians 3:19-20)

For many, life is like a sad country song. It is filled with failed attempts to achieve their quests. Even success is actually failure. Those who do succeed outside of Christ have trapped themselves in their own creations.

Those of us who have taken the time to get to know more about God realize that the world broadcasts misinformation and mischaracterization about faith and God. God is not a killjoy or oppressive force. God is love and wisdom. He wants us to have an abundance

of joy and fulfillment. Our feelings and inclinations can be deceiving in the long run. We were designed to meet others' needs.

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

How would God be defined, if he was only known by the way he has dealt with you? For me, he would be *a God of second chances* and patience. My faith progression has been very non-linear. It has taken a long time to inch forward; after many off-track diversions and non-productive journeys. He would also be a God of *remedial efforts*. He keeps feeding me with all kinds of information and strengthening. It seems like for every *rail car of coal my train moves forward a few feet*. It takes no effort for me to fall or fail; but it takes a ton of tutoring to get me to *raise my game* as a life application. It has been a demonstration that the Holy Spirit is the only one who can orchestrate kingdom activities.

Read Psalm 76:8-9: The Bible tells us that we literally have to be faced with rapid judgment; or we will continue to do evil. We need a schoolmaster to keep us on course.

Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

We mistake God's mercy with our latitude to keep sinning. Nobody can stand before God without protection.

But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." (Exodus 33:20)

That is one reason why Jesus is so important. We can look unto Jesus; and not be destroyed. Jesus is the observable version of our heavenly father. The only in-person vision of God would have to be of Jesus (unless it was a vision).

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (Colossians 1:15)

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (John 14:8-9)

God has provided a way to conclude that God is real; without even knowing or seeing Jesus.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who [d]suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is [e]manifest [f]in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [g]Godhead, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1: 18-20)

I remember a moment after Sunday School that became a significant faith decision. I was bored with Sunday School; but I respected the nice people. I concluded that I would rather be catching frogs at home. I asked myself if God was real. I looked around the church courtyard. I looked at the grass and trees; and thought: ``How could these things exist without God?'' God used nature to confirm that there is a supernatural mind bringing life and complexity all around me.

Unbelievers think that they will be free and fulfilled without God. Satan is just trying to wean everyone off of any thoughts of God. Sin is like a spiritual disease that causes you to do what you do not want to do; because it might somehow be different this time. The desire factor overpowers the logic factor. If God is love and life, there is nothing good without him. It is like looking at a street person who is afraid to come in from the cold. If you remove love and life you only have death and hate to look forward to forever. God does not want us to live a lie.

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." (Luke 21:28)

Read Psalm 76:10-12: God uses our foolish mistakes and pursuits to reconfirm his goodness. Even the crazy pursuits of our popular culture will confirm that this is the wrong way. Everything that God says will play out. We are all walking billboards for how we treated God's word. We can play the fool who confirms that this is the wrong way to go.