

Psalm 99

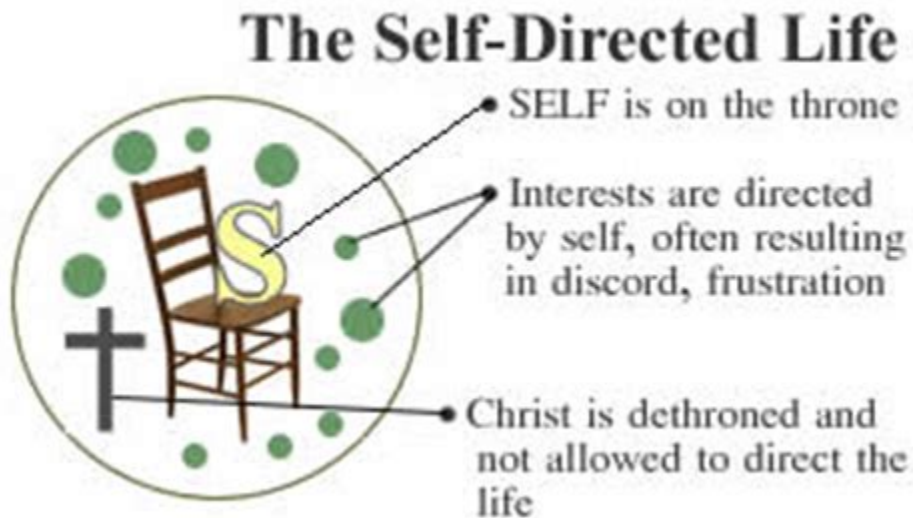
There are two realities in the bible. There is the reality in heaven and the reality on earth. God is great; but he is invisible right now. His awesome nature will be more obvious when Jesus comes back. He came to Mount Sinai; and the mountain top was charred black from the fire of his presence. We do not have to look at him face to face; so we become pretty relaxed and we take liberties. Mount Sinai is translated to be: Mountain of thorny bushes. It is a perfect representation of us. We are the burning bush. That bush is a thorny bush. We are hard to get close to without having a painful or regrettable experience. Jesus became the king of the thorn bush people.



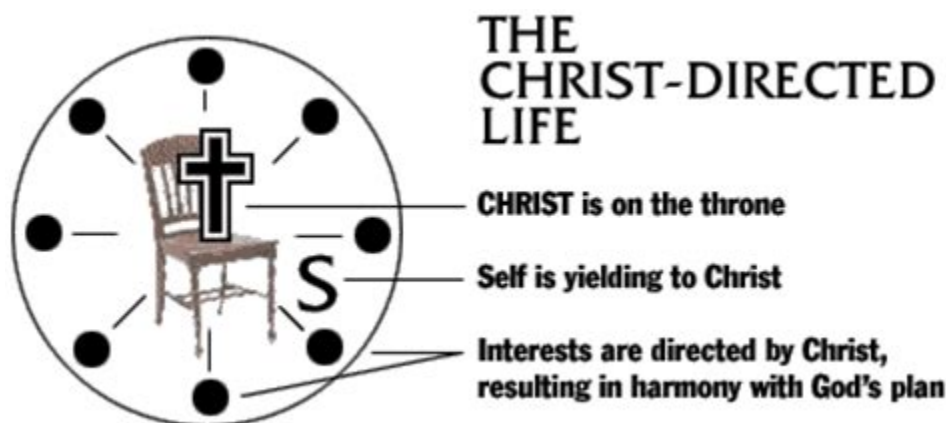
He deserves to be recognized according to his real nature and goodness towards us. We also need to embrace the truth that loving us is very hard. What is endearing about a thorny bramble? It is what the ram got his horn stuck in at Abraham's sacrifice. Jesus got stuck with us; and was killed.

God is giving us a little latitude to handle our own affairs. We can take his lead; and duplicate his love, forgiveness, fairness and justice towards others. We will only be so successful at this. We can also get bent out of shape and moody when we face daily tests. God does not expect perfection. He is a forgiving God. We are to be available to our struggling neighbors. We are wounded healers. There are lying voices on earth. We need to hang on to the truths of heaven to successfully maneuver down here. There are a few examples in the bible of people who stood out by seeking God above all things.

Read Psalm 99:1-3: We serve a God of divine order. He has laid out how things flow from his throne. Verses 1-3 begin with God on the throne. Men without God in their lives are essentially on their own throne. This is called *the self-directed life*. This is different than *the God-directed life*. All men are acting as their own God; until God is their Lord. Even the various religions appeal to the value of the good works (humility, service, and excellence) of men to become worthy of recognition.



Christianity lays out how we are essentially depraved; and ultimately self-defeating. God loves us for his own perplexing reasons. We cannot become worthy, or earn a place in heaven. God had to do it all for us. We do have to acknowledge and embrace the fact that it is all on his shoulders; and we must faithfully do our best to follow his lead.



God simultaneously directs his angels. The 6-winged 4-faced cherubim are immediately surround his throne. They stare at God, and at us and all around at the same time. In fact, angels are sometimes called *watchers*. They wait on God's every word; while fulfilling their responsibilities towards us.

But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:13-14)

We do not direct angels, worship angels or necessarily communicate directly with them.

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." (Revelation 22:9)

This psalm is talking about the millennial reign. It is also a little bit about who God is; and who we are. God will be visibly large and in charge. It will no longer be a voluntary compliance system. The invisible attributes of God will become visible.

You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' " Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. (Psalm 2:9-12)

The sheer power of the LORD will make the earth tremble.

*Then the Lord will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And **the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley**; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You. (Zechariah 14:3-5)*

God's throne on earth will be on Mount Zion. That is the temple mount area. This mountain will elevate to be much higher than it is now.

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, (Isaiah 2:2-3)

If we are loved and protected by such a powerful and all-knowing God; why do we worry? Why do we wonder about how well we can maneuver through life's challenges?

Read Psalm 99:4-5: We have a part to play in all of this. We are to follow God's lead; and provide the same kind of love and care for our neighbors. God loves justice and fairness, and those who look out for others' interests. We are given a tiny amount of power and freedom. We need to align ourselves with God's priorities and plans to thrive. The only mutually-viable plan for man to dwell together in harmony is to concern ourselves with our neighbor's well being.

Jesus said to him, "‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Mathew 22:37-40)

We do not serve a mean and capricious God. God wants to bring us into his dwelling place. He does not want people who are disruptors or who are cold and indifferent. That would give heaven a completely different vibe.

The Old Testament is really about people who did not follow God. The New Testament is about God's followers. The Old Testament's judgements and harsh realities characterize life outside of God's will. The New Testament's sharing and healing and love are about being in relationship with God. There are not two God's in the bible. It is the perspective of the two different groups.

Read Psalm 99: 6-9: Exodus 15 lays out a key point to successful christian living. God told Moses that the people would have ongoing testing. They would be spared of the plagues of the world if they would respond to daily challenges rightly and prayerfully. If they got ugly and whined, they were showing that they were not trusting God.

It is amazing that so few people really were in relationship with God in the Old Testament. God had to treat men like parolees until they could be trusted to not destroy themselves. Young Samuel was surrounded by priests, who went through the motions. Their appetite

was for pleasure. They had no conversation with God. They were serving their flesh; and calling it obedience.

Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord’s people transgress. If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?” Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them. (1 Samuel 2:22-25)

Moses recorded the Law. The Law of Moses was written to unbelievers and law breakers, in order to protect the innocent. We think of God’s harsh penalties. Think of it instead as the consequences for those who would kidnap your children or take your possessions or your life.

knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, (1 Timothy 1:9-10)