

Desiring and Finding the Ideal God

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Desiring God - the world offers many different versions of God - is the God revealed in the Bible the ideal God?

By EveryStudent.com

Many of us have in mind the "ideal" God. Maybe we think God should be capable, able to relate to us, care about us. The following qualities are pretty much what the Bible tells us about God...

#1: A God Who Is Greater Than We Are

Humanity has made some great strides in recent years. We can live longer than our ancestors, communicate with others faster, and gain helpful information in seconds.

But while we've progressed in some ways, we seem to be digressing on many others. Every decade we see rises in violent crime, the divorce rate, and teenage suicide. Thousands of people die daily due to sectarian hatred. Hundreds of millions of people experience chronic hunger.

The list could go on. Some say that we ourselves are God. Masters of our own destiny. If humanity is God, it doesn't appear that we're doing a very good job of it. Therefore, wouldn't it be better to have a God who is greater than humanity, a God who has the ability to take us beyond where we can go on our own?

The God described in the Bible is that God. He claims to be the Creator of the universe -- a transcendent, all-knowing, all-powerful being who has always existed and is the sustainer of all things. He says, "It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens."¹ "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me."² "I am...who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."³



#2: A God Who Can Be Known Personally

It's popular these days to think of God as some kind of force-field that exists in all things. But even if all things exist and are sustained, moment by moment, by God's power, there can be more to God than that. For example, wouldn't it be better to have a God who is more like a parent, sibling, or friend? Someone you could talk to, share your problems with, receive guidance from, experience life with. What's so special about a God that's impersonal, unknowable, distant?

In spite of his grandeur and "otherness," the God of the Bible is knowable and wants to be known. Though God is not visible, we can talk with him, ask him questions and listen to him, and he will give us answers and guidance for life. He often gives those answers and guidance through his Word, the Bible, which many have called God's love letter to us.



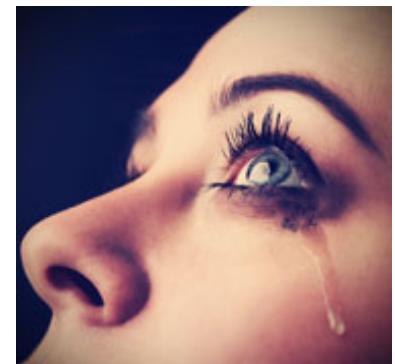
A person can have the same kind of relationship with God that he or she has with a close family member. In fact, those that know him, he calls his children, bride, friends. So the God of the Bible is anything but impersonal. He gets angry and sad, shows mercy, kindness and forgiveness, and is a wholly emotional being. He is highly

intellectual, having personality and wit. We can know more than just merely *facts* about him, we can actually know him *intimately* like a best friend. "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God."⁴

#3: A God Who Can Relate to the Human Experience

Some think of a God as being remote and distant, like he created the universe, then left it alone to operate on its own. Wouldn't it be better to have a God who *is* involved in the universe, and specifically, in what's happening here on Earth? And what about the unique difficulties, responsibilities and challenges that we face as human beings? Wouldn't it be better to have a God who could understand those things, a God who somehow knows what it's like to endure life in the harsh world he's allowed to exist?

The God of the Bible knows what it means to be one of us. Jesus Christ was not only God's Son, he was God who had taken on a human form and a human nature. "In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word [Jesus] was with God, and the Word [Jesus] was God. The Word became flesh [human] and made his dwelling among us."⁵



Of God's Son, the Bible says, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being."⁶ He is "the image of the invisible God."⁷ He is the "Mighty God, Eternal Father"⁸ who was "made in human likeness"⁹ and "found in appearance as a man."⁹ In him "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."¹⁰ And "by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible."¹¹

Jesus said of himself, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."¹² "He who beholds me beholds the One who sent me."¹³ And, "I and the Father are one."¹⁴

Though he was fully God, Jesus was also, somehow, fully man. He hungered, slept, wept, ate. He endured every kind of difficulty we face, and then some. Therefore, the Bible says he is not "unable to sympathize with our weaknesses."¹⁵ He was "tempted in every way, just as we are -- yet was without sin."¹⁵

So the God of the Bible didn't remain aloof from the pain, suffering and evil in our world. He endured life as we must endure it. In fact, he had a very humble time while on this planet. He was born into a poor household, was not physically attractive, encountered prejudice and hatred, was misunderstood even by family and friends, and was wrongfully executed.

#4: A God Who Really Cares About Us

Most of us want to be accepted and loved. We want people to really care about us, and not just with superficial words. We want their care and concern to be proven by their actions. Wouldn't the same be true for God? Meaning, wouldn't it be ideal if God really cared about us and then gave us tangible proof of that love?

The God of the Bible really cares. He has said so in words. In fact, the Bible says that "God is love."¹⁶ But words don't communicate care and concern as much as actions do. That's where the God of the Bible is so unique and awesome. He really *showed* us how much he cares...



"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."¹⁷ "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."¹⁸

The God of the Bible claims to be a perfect and holy being. "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all." ¹⁹ As such, he desires relationships that are clean and pure. Therefore, God sent his own Son to make a way for us to become clean before God. Jesus lived a morally perfect life and then was beaten, tortured, and crucified as "payment" for all the wrongful things we've said, done, or thought (called "sins"). In a sense, he died in our place, on our behalf -- "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."²⁰ "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity [sins] of us all."²¹

God cared for us enough that he sent his Son to die in our place, for our sins. That's how much God wanted to know us. He was willing to do whatever was necessary...dealing with our sin was necessary. Now we can be fully forgiven and begin an unhindered relationship with God.

#5: A God Who Has Things Completely Under Control

All the terrible things in the world prove that a good, all-powerful God doesn't exist, right? Not necessarily. Even a perfect God might *allow* bad things to happen for a time, as part of some higher plan. God could know exactly what's going on all of the time and only allow so much, all as part of his grand scheme.

The God of the Bible is that God. He claims that nothing on Earth happens without his say-so. He is completely sovereign over all things. "Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?"²² "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."²³ "The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."²⁴ "It is the Lord's purpose that prevails."²⁵



This does not mean, however, that everything that happens is something God likes. For example, Jesus told his disciples how to pray; in that prayer, one of the key statements is: "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."²⁶ God's moral will is always done in heaven, but not on Earth. While God is sovereign over all things, he doesn't like everything that takes place on Earth. But for some reason, he allows those things to happen (his permissive will), maybe as part of the freedom of choice we have as human beings.

But the God of the Bible does have a plan, and he will not rest "until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart."²⁷ What is that plan? God's ultimate goal is to dwell with people in a totally different environment than what we presently experience. Of that next world, this God says, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. I am making everything new!"²⁸

#6: A God Who Gives Meaning and Purpose to Life

If you think about an important task or project you completed, you probably recall the sense of purpose you had when it was all over. Is that what you want your overall life to be like? To amount to something? Could there be a God who created your life with purpose, and can lead you to experience that purpose?

Yes. The God of the Bible can. He promises that he can make our lives meaningful and purposeful. Through a relationship with him, we can "do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."²⁹ We can make a positive difference in the lives of others. We can become part of his master plan.

The God of the Bible also says that, in a moment-by-moment relationship with



him, he can direct our steps so that we can do what pleases him, and what's in our own best interest at all times. "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."³⁰ This is not to say that life becomes perfectly wonderful. There is still illness, problems in life, and personal failures. Life does not become perfect, but it becomes more enriching. The benefits of knowing God, he says, are "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."³¹

#7: A God Who Offers True Fulfillment

Like love and acceptance, most of us want to find fulfillment in life. There seems to be something akin to a thirst within us that yearns to be quenched. But that thirst -- even though we try -- does not get satisfied by things such as money, possessions, romance, or even fun. Therefore, wouldn't it be great if there was a God who satisfies that "thirst," a God whose presence brings a constant level of satisfaction to life?

The God of the Bible offers the most fulfilling life possible. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."³² He also said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."³³ So, the God of the Bible promises to quench that inner longing that nothing else seems to satisfy. (And he has probably made us in such a way that that is exactly the case!)



Desiring the Ideal God

According to the Bible, there is only one true God, only one Creator of all things. But that God is an ideal God. We cannot wish another God into existence, but even if we could, why would we want to? The true God is already the best possible God.

This article has just scratched the surface on what the God of the Bible is like. If you have a desire to investigate the matter further, you can read the Bible section called "John." If you are sincere, and if the God of the Bible is real, wouldn't it make sense that he would reveal himself to you? He says, "I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me."³⁴ "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."³⁵

"The true God is already the best possible God."

Are you wondering how you can know this ideal God? Basically, beginning a relationship with God is a lot like beginning a marriage. There is a decision to willfully enter into this relationship. Similarly, with God, it's a matter of you saying to him, and sincerely meaning, "I do."

Jesus Christ died for our sins, rose from the dead three days later, and is alive and well today. He now offers new life to us if we trust in him for the forgiveness of our sins: "My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."³⁶

God is no respecter of persons. All people have been created in his image. Thus, his eternal family is described as "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language."³⁷ And no sin in your life can bar you from beginning a relationship with him. He took care of the sin issue on the cross, where Jesus was crucified. Now it's a matter of you putting your faith in Jesus' death on your behalf, no matter what you've done in the past.

Once you begin a relationship with God, that relationship is meant to last for all eternity. But it is also meant to be a living and vital relationship today, in this life, a relationship that will grow over time. Like any relationship, it will have its ups and downs, its highs and lows, its joys and pains. But you will be in a relationship with the God who created you for just such a purpose (to know him).

Do you feel God tugging at your heart? Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him."³⁸ If you would like to invite God into your life right now, here is a suggested prayer to guide you (what's important, though, is not the exact wording but rather the sincerity of your heart):

Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner. Thank you for taking all of my sin upon yourself in the person of Jesus Christ on the cross. I want to receive your forgiveness and enter into a relationship with you. I ask you to come into my life as my Savior and Lord, to be my God from this day forward, and to make me into the person you've intended me to be.

- (1) Isaiah 45:12
- (2) Isaiah 46:9
- (3) Revelation 1:8
- (4) John 17:3
- (5) John 1:1, 14
- (6) Hebrews 1:3
- (7) Colossians 1:15
- (8) Isaiah 9:6
- (9) Philippians 2:8
- (10) Colossians 2:9
- (11) Colossians 1:16
- (12) John 14:9
- (13) John 12:45
- (14) John 10:30
- (15) Hebrews 4:15
- (16) 1John 4:8, 16
- (17) 1John 4:9-10
- (18) John 3:16
- (19) 1John 1:5
- (20) 2Corinthians 5:21
- (21) Isaiah 53:6
- (22) Lamentations 3:37
- (23) Isaiah 46:10
- (24) Psalms 33:11
- (25) Proverbs 19:21
- (26) Matthew 6:10
- (27) Jeremiah 23:20
- (28) Revelation 21:3-5
- (29) Ephesians 2:10
- (30) Proverbs 3:6
- (31) Galatians 5:22-23
- (32) John 10:10
- (33) John 6:35
- (34) Proverbs 8:17
- (35) Matthew 7:7
- (36) John 6:40
- (37) Revelation 7:9
- (38) Revelation 3:20