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What You Need to Know about ... Him (Part Six)

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIM

Dr. H. L. Willmington

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This is the **sixth** in a series in regard to basic facts about the God of the Bible!

GOD IS A PERSON

One of the greatest books ever written on the person of God is entitled *The Pursuit of God*, by the late A. W. Tozer. In this book Dr. Tozer wrote the following:

In this hour of all but universal darkness, one cheering gleam appears. Within the fold of conservative Christianity, there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself. They are eager for spiritual realities, and will not be put off with words, nor will they be content with correct "interpretations" of truth. They are athirst for God, and they will not be satisfied until they have drunk deep at the fountain of living water.

The modern scientist has lost God amid the wonders of His world. We Christians are in real danger of losing God amid the wonders of His Word. We have almost forgotten that God is a person; and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can. It is inherent in personality to be able to know other personalities, but full knowledge of one personality by another cannot be achieved in one encounter. It is only after long and loving mental communication that the full possibilities both can be explored. (*The Pursuit of God*, pp. 7, 13)

I first became acquainted with A. W. Tozer's books while as a student at the Moody Bible Institute in the early 1950s. Today, over a half century later, upon again reading the above material the following sentences suddenly struck me:

"We have almost forgotten that God is a person; and as such, can be cultivated as any person. It is inherent in personality to be able to know other personalities, *but full knowledge of one personality by another cannot be achieved in one encounter.*"

Soul searching, indeed, soul rebuking work, especially the last three, "in one encounter."

To explain:

Since joining Liberty University faculty in 1972 to serve as dean of our Bible Institute, it has been my great honor to both meet and shake hands with any number of famous individuals, a few of which were:

- President Ronald Reagan
- President George Bush and wife Barbara
- Senator Ted Kennedy
- Francis Schaeffer
- Jesse Helms
- Clarence Thomas
- Colonel Sanders
- Chuck Swindoll
- James Dobson
- Billy Graham
- Bill Bright
- Newt Gingrich

Then, there were the following I met at the NRB (National Religious Broadcast) sessions:

- Jim Baker
- Jimmy Swaggart
- Norman Vincent Peale

WOW! Heady stuff indeed! But then came the cold reality that probably none of these could have picked me out in a police lineup 24-hours after we had met! How painfully true Tozer's observation – one, or even a few encounters won't do the job! One passing thought: I will in the near future (God willing) observe my 40th anniversary here at Liberty University.

During these nearly four decades I believe it can be said my knowledge in regard to the *Word of God* has increased ten-fold! But, a disturbing question: Can the same be said in regard to the *God of the Word*?

And the bottom line of all the above? Simply this: God is a person and we can only know what He desires to reveal about Himself through repeated encounters! As can be seen by the following, God exhibits all these elements involved in personality:

- He creates:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

- He destroys:

"Then the Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave. . . Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground" (Gen. 19:24, 25).

- He provides:

Here, this provision is two-fold:

1. For our needs

“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

2. For the needs of brute creatures

“You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work... The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers... O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great... These look to you, to give them their food in due season. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things” (Psa. 104:10-13, 18, 24, 25, 27, 28).

“He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry” (Psa. 147:9).

“Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!” (Luke 12:24).

Probably the classic example of the Creator’s concern for His creatures can be seen in the little Old Testament book of Jonah. You may remember the story. God had warned the wicked city of Nineveh through Israel’s preaching that it would be destroyed unless the people repented, which they did. But the carnal prophet became angry with the Lord and still desired for divine judgment to fall from heaven. The very last verse in this book gives us God’s response:

“And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?” (Jonah 4:11).

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