

What is God Like?

(Part 1)

Set the Stage

- When we introduce ourselves we typically begin with our name and then share some things that are important about who we are.
- We will start with the most important things first. What we want people to truly know about us.
- God reveals his name to Moses and to us
 - I AM THAT I AM
 - Jehovah or Yahweh
- Now God begins to tell us what He is like or who He is.

Read Exodus 34:6-7

- When you proclaim your name, you are letting people know how you want to be known.
 - It may be your first name, nickname, middle name, or shortened version of your name.
 - This is important for you. **You want to be known for who you truly are.** You don't want anyone else to define you.
- God proclaiming His name means...this is how God wants to be known. This is how He wants you to think of Him.
 - First and foremost...this is my name and this is who I am.

Taking it Further

Lets examine just how Jehovah wants to be known. First He reveals that...

1. Jehovah is Merciful and Gracious

A. What mercy and grace means.

- Merciful** means full of compassion. He doesn't give people what they truly deserve.
 - Every use of this word in Scripture is about God.

- Gracious** means abounding in compassion. Showing mercy.
 - This word is used only as a descriptive word about God.

- God is saying He is doubly merciful and compassionate.
 - He wants us to get this about Him.
 - My nickname is merciful but people also call me gracious.

- God begins, I am THE eternal, self-existent, all powerful creator God of the universe.
- Now let me tell you more about my relational side.
 - I am merciful and gracious. This is where God begins. This where God wants you to start with Him.

B. God shows what mercy and grace look like.

- Jehovah runs over with mercy and compassion.
 - Jehovah shows mercy and grace:

- 1. By giving the law
 - Showing people the right and wrong way to live.
 - The law not just about the "don't do's." It is also about all the do's.
 - We typically think of the law in a negative way but that is missing its true nature. It comes out of God's mercy.
 - The law protects and provides a society where there can be peace, community, safety, and harmony.

-God is up front with the expectations and guidelines. We don't have to guess what we should be doing and how to honor Jehovah the Mighty Creator God.

2. By not giving people what they deserve.

-These people deserved judgment.

-This was the second time God gave the law tablets.

-Moses broke the first ones in righteous anger when the Israelites worshipped a golden calf while He was gone.

-They immediately broke their agreement with God and the commandments.

-The shattered tablets revealed how they had shattered their agreement with God.

-The disobedience of Israel represents our disobedience.

-The broken tablets represent our sin.

-God is merciful and gracious by giving us Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of the law.

-God overflows with mercy and grace by giving it to **thousands and thousands** of people **over and over** again.

-How many times does someone have to wrong you before you are done? How many times do you have to forgive before you are just done?

-In contrast, do you see the abundance of mercy and grace that God gives?

-The Christian life is a life of new beginnings.

-God gives us the gift of a new day, a new week, a new month, a new year.

-God's mercies are new everyday. He allows us to experience His mercy everyday.

-He allows us not to be held by our past, our mistakes, or our failures.

-He gives you a completely new day to start fresh,
to start over, that is God's mercy!

-Read Lamentations 3:21-23

-*What other characteristic of God is His mercy
rooted in?* His faithfulness.

-*Why is this important? What does this mean?*

-God's not going to change one day to a
grumpy God who is no longer
merciful.

-God's mercy is founded on a God who is
faithful and will always be faithful.
God will always be merciful.

As Jehovah continues making Himself known, secondly, He reveals that...

2. Jehovah is Long-Suffering

A. What long-suffering means.

-An adjective meaning long, drawn out, or slow.

-To show patience. Long drawn out patience.

-When used to describe God, it means slow to anger and is
immediately contrasted with God's great love,
faithfulness, and power.

-God is provoked everyday! Yet He is patient.

-In contrast to hasty, impatient, impulsive humans.

-God waits by being merciful. Why? He is
compassionate.

B. God shows what long-suffering looks like.

-God could have acted in anger when the children of Israel
made the false golden calf.

-He could have given them instant justice and
judgment. Rather He was extremely patient
with undeserving people.

- He made a second tablet and gave them a second chance.
- God waits to be gracious.
- God waits to give out mercy.

-Where have you experienced the patience of God?

- How many times have you sinned? How many times have you not been faithful to God? Broken promises? Doubted or complained against Him?

-God has been true to His name!

- He has been merciful and gracious to you.
- Stop and recognize His patience in your life and just how far that goes!

Taking Your Next Step

Read Exodus 20:6-7

- God expects that since He shared His name, His children would use His name.
- One of the commandments on the tablets deals directly with God's name. He tells us not to take His name in vain.
- What does this mean? What do we first think of when we hear this commandment?*
- God's name is so important, that He commands us not to take it in vain.
- Vain means empty, useless, or without meaning.
- It is the opposite of *"Hallowed be thy name"* in Matthew 6:9
 - "Hallowed"* means holy, set apart from common to holy.
- There is a severe penalty - *"God will not hold him guiltless"*
 - God does not take this lightly and will hold us accountable.
 - He is merciful but He is also just. Those two truths eventually meet up.

-We typically think of taking God's name in vain when a person cusses using God's name or flippantly says, "oh my God", "my God", "Jesus Christ." It goes so much deeper than just this.

How can we use God's name in vain?

1. By not attaching God's name to His character.

- This is committing identity theft. It is stripping away the value that is connected with His name.
- By using His name to receive benefits.
 - We attach His name to what we are doing but in reality don't care. Using His name lightly and without regard to who He truly is.
- By being a hypocrite. We claim the name of Jesus but live a life completely different than Him. We say we are a Christian but live completely different.
- Living a double life or living on the fence.

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