

What is God Like?

(Part 3)

Set the Stage

Read Exodus 34:6-7, 14

- God reveals His name Jehovah and then begins to tell us exactly what He is like:
 - Merciful and gracious
 - Long-suffering
 - Abundant in goodness and truth
 - Forgiving
 - Just

- Then God makes an interesting statement at the end of declaring His name. A statement we need to look at and clarify to make sure we truly understand who God is.
 - Does God punish kids for the sins of their parents?
 - Does God punish grandkids for the sins of their grandparent?
 - Does the Bible teach that God enforces generational curses?
 - If so, It sounds completely unfair.
 - Like God is a mean bully extending the punishment through multiple generations.
 - Placing a curse upon a family that the children or grandchildren just can't break or didn't even cause.

Taking it to the Next Level

As we continue learning what God is like, first, we see that that...

1. Jehovah is Merciful and Just

A. What God is not saying:

- What does it mean that God visits the iniquity of parents on children?
 - “Visit”- God is paying attention to people, either to do them good or to bring punishment.
 - God acts according to our free-will choices.

- God does not punish an innocent generation for the sins of their parents.
 - “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death **for his own sin.**” Deut. 24:16*

- God does not have generational curses.
 - Everyone is responsible for their own actions.

B. What God is saying:

- God visits sin in every generation.
 1. Sin of the parents has consequences in the life of children.
 2. Sin runs in your family.
 3. Sin is punished by God in every generation.
 - In His mercy, He doesn’t just turn a blind eye.
 - In God’s justice, sin must be punished in every generation. In every person’s life.
 - Well, they just learned it from their parents or friends so I will just let it go.

- We see God’s mercy and justice play out in Numbers:
 - 14:2-5 - The people sin and deserve justice.
 - 14:11-12- God declares justice.
 - 14:15-19 - Moses intercedes for the people.

-Moses quotes Ex. 34:6-7 back to God and we see God give mercy and justice together.

- 14:20-23 - God gives mercy and justice together.
 - Mercy first by pardoning them.
 - Mercy first by allowing them to tempt Him 10 times. (Long-suffering)
 - Mercy first in that He does not destroy the people for their sin.
 - Justice second by not allowing them to enter into the promised land.
 - (Will by no means clear the guilty)

- 14:30-31 - God allows their children to enter into the land. No generational curses.
- 14:33- Though they still suffer the consequences of their parents decisions.

-God says, that I am just, but I am also merciful!

-I am so merciful that it can seem to outweigh my justice but remember I am still Just.

-If there are consequences for sin then there are positive outcomes for obedience.

-Flip it around. God will visit the blessings of the fathers unto the children to the third and fourth.

-What God is also saying:

1. Mercy has positive outcomes in the life of children.
2. Mercy runs in your family.
3. Mercy is promoted by God in every generation.

- Be the change.** Be the fountain where the blessings start to come out. Purpose to be obedient, lean into God's mercy and goodness. *How can you change it?*
- You don't have to repeat the sins of your mom & dad grandma and grandpa.
- Jesus provides the way out. It is absorbed and broken on the cross. The resurrection of Jesus breaks its hold on you.

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

2. Jehovah is Jealous

A. What being jealous means.

- This is not referring to negative jealousy - "overly possessive selfishness" or "envy that creates resentment."
- Not the jealousy of a selfish boyfriend, controlling and insecure.
- But the righteous jealousy of a loving, faithful husband keeping intruders away.
- The mother fighting to keep her teenage son off drugs or away from porn.
- Jealous means that God is serious about His name.
- He is not going to share it with another.
- What you know about Him matters.
- His reputation matters.
- God wants people to know Him for Who He really is.
- Don't misrepresent me because you misunderstand me.**
- Truly understand me, so you can truly represent me.
- Represent me not only by what you say, but by how you live.
- People who are merciful, gracious, patient, slow to anger, forgiving, abounding in love and truth.

- Know me, so you can proclaim me.
- Display my name
- Everywhere we go, we carry His name.
- We are living, breathing examples of who Jehovah is.

-God is perfect and thus He is justly protective of His name and reputation. It is important to Him!

B. God shows what being jealous looks like.

- Don't worship a false god.
 - What are examples of false gods?*
 - Anything that takes the place of God or you put into God's place in your life.
 - Idols, statues, things, career, degree.
 - Our version of God we create.
 - Worship belongs to no one else.
- Don't use His name in vain.
 - As we know now, His name has meaning.
 - We are to share Him with the world.

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.
- 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 will eventually meet up.

How can we use God's name in vain?

1. By not telling the truth about God.

- This would be us complaining against God.

 - He has forgotten me.

 - He doesn't love me. He doesn't care about me.

 - He is not good. He is not fair.

- When we say these things we are breaking God's command. We are taking His name in vain.

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