

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S HEART

Exodus 34:5-7

The major truth of this brief series concerning "grace" is that you can never get closer to God than your concept of Him will allow. If you don't believe God loves you and desires the best for you, then you are simply not going to come close to Him. Instead, you're going to stand at a distance. You are not going to seek a God who is mad at you, doesn't care about you, and doesn't want to be personally involved with you.

Much of our timidity in going to God with all the bothers of life and much of the resistance to what God is doing in our lives is caused by the lack of understanding God's heart. Moses had seen and performed more miracles than any man alive, but he really didn't know God. He had seen the power of God, but he didn't know God's heart. God is going to give Moses a direct revelation of His heart, because Moses is struggling with his mission, his people, and himself.

FOUR STEPS TO A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

Step 1: Realize that your understanding of God has been shaped by your past.

Exodus 33:1-5

Moses is still looking at God through old eyes. The threesome of God, the children of Israel, and Moses have not gotten along since the day they met. When God came to Moses and called him to be the deliverer of Israel, Moses said, no! The children of Israel, since the day they left Egypt, have constantly accused God of bringing them into the wilderness to kill them. God has been severely disappointed with Israel's stiff-necked disposition.

Step 2: Ask God for a fresh revelation of Himself.

Exodus 33:18-19

There is this back-and-forth between God and Moses, and Moses realizes that there is obviously something that he is not seeing here. So, he asks God to reveal Himself. Would You please show me Your glory? God is about to make all His goodness pass before Moses.

Step 3: Receive from God's Word a divine revelation of His goodness.

Exodus 34:5-7

This is the greatest passage in the Bible concerning who God is. This is not a man telling us who God is; this is God telling us who He is. God is going to let all His goodness pass before Moses and proclaim His name.

THE SEVEN ATTRIBUTES OF GOD'S GOODNESS

1. Merciful

Hebrews 4:14-16

This is amazing, because God knows everything about us. He doesn't just see in the now; God knows the pains of our past. He understands the devil's attacks against us. God understands the corruption of the world around us. He understands our sin nature and fallen and weak flesh. God understands our lack of understanding and the capacity to change on our own. Knowing all this, He still wants to help! He's compassionate!

2. Gracious

II Corinthians 9:8

Grace: free help on every level that is granted without merit or performance. God is able to make “all grace abound toward you.” What does that mean?

It means:

Mental Grace – John 16:13

Physical Grace – Romans 8:11

Emotional Grace – Galatians 5:22-23

Spiritual Grace – Acts 1:8

Financial Grace – II Corinthians 9:8

There's only ONE condition for grace. – Ephesians 2:8-9

3. Long-Suffering

Hebrews 13:5

When God says, “Never,” He means never. When people say, “Never,” sometimes they change their mind. God never changes His mind. He's not frustrated with you. The day you got saved, He knew that you were a long-term project. He's not surprised!

4. Abounding in Goodness

Jeremiah 29:11

Every thought that God has toward you is good. God is not just good when you're good. God's even good when you're bad!

5. Abounding in Truth

Matthew 24:35

God never lies, deceives, breaks promises or in any way misrepresents Himself in dealing with a person. God not only tells the truth, He is the truth.

6. Forgiving

Psalms 103:12-14

God is always peace seeking and willing to forgive even the worst of circumstances and afterward keep no record of wrong.

7. Just

Hebrews 12:7-9

God has rules, and there are consequences for us and those around us when we break them; but, even when we break God's rules, He loves us, and His discipline in our lives is motivated by His love and our good.

Step 4: Release through your life the reflection of the change God has made in you.

Exodus 34:8-9, 29

1. His worship has changed. – (v.8)

2. His self-worth has changed. – (v.9)

3. His witness has changed. – (29)