

Paradise Lost and Restored: Who is God? (Part 3)

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I. Introduction

Some things in life are a must, without them we die: oxygen, water, food. Is it possible to survive without a relationship with God? Some think you can, in fact, some think life is much better without God; it's a life less restricted. But what if EVERYTHING, not just the oxygen you breathe, but everything, every decision, every relationship, depended on whether or not you were connected with God? Wouldn't you like to know if this is true? And if it is true, wouldn't you like to know how to have such a relationship with God where He guides you and helps you every step of the way?

II. God is Relationship, thus, EVERYTHING He Made has Built-in Relationship

God embodies Relationship, there is only one true God. And Scripture affirms this: Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4–6. But Scripture also affirms that God is made up of three distinct Persons. We get a glimpse of this right in the beginning. When God made everything, He said, “Let us make...,” Genesis 1:26. This tells us that God is made up of more than one Person. Scripture later reveals who the “us” is: John 6:27 shows that God the Father is God. Colossians 2:9 shows that God the Son (Jesus Christ) is also God. And Acts 5:3–4 shows that the Holy Spirit is God and a Person. So even though God is one, He exists in three distinct Persons. Thus, His very essence, the fact that God exists as three Persons united in One, reveals that at the core of His being God is relationship. And it's an inseparable relationship which is defined by love: John 1:1; 5:16–23; 6:37–39; 8:16, 18, 29, 38, 42; 10:15–18, 29–30, 37–38; 17:1–5.

Everything God made comes with built-in relationship, since God is relationship, it's no wonder that everything He made has this built-in feature. The universe has relationship. For example, the moon and the sun play a crucial role in the existence of life on earth. But if the relationship between the moon and the earth is off in the slightest, entire cities would be submerged under water. Likewise with the sun, if the earth's relationship to the sun was farther apart or closer together, then the earth would either freeze or burn up. The earth has to maintain a perfect relationship with both the moon and sun in order for life on earth to survive.

Mankind was also created with relationship. Everything God made reflects Him, especially those things made in His image, which is why when God made man, He didn't just make Adam. Adam was incomplete until Eve came along. Now there could be relationship. And from that relationship grew many others: parents to children, family to family, friend to friend, employer to employee, even stranger to stranger. Mankind must also have a proper relationship with the earth. If mankind mistreats the other inhabitants of earth (vegetation, land, rivers and oceans, animals and fish), then life on earth will be gravely affected. In short, without relationship, planets, people, and things die. It is the essence of the Creator and it is the essence of everything He made.

If the things God made step outside their built-in relationship...with Him, they will die, there is no danger in planets stepping outside of God's designed orbits. Thus, they cannot break their relationship with God. In fact, God guarantees every celestial body's continual and proper relationship to one another, Colossians 1:17. Likewise with animals, they too follow God's design. The reason some animals attack others now is because of man's sin. But before man's sin, it was not so. Animals were always meant to live in harmony (they didn't eat each other, they ate vegetation, Genesis 1:30) and they will live in harmony again, Isaiah 11:6–9.

However, mankind is a different matter. Man has the ability to step outside of the relationship he has with his Creator. And every time he does there is death and destruction:

Adam and Eve had a harmonious relationship with God and it blessed every aspect of their lives. Their relationship with the earth, the animals and each other was absolutely marvelous. But when they decided to step outside their relationship with God, everything changed. Their relationship with each other, the earth, the animals, and God was devastated, Genesis 2–3.

Cain and Abel, stepping out of God's relationship caused the first murder in history. After Cain and Abel were born eventually they both brought an offering to God. However, there was a problem with Cain's offering. Some think he failed to bring a meat offering. But God also accepted grain offerings, in fact, when He gave Israel His Law He required grain offerings, Exodus 23:19. Perhaps it was that Cain failed to bring his offering from the firstfruits (that is, the first and best of his grain) as Abel did, Genesis 4:4. Regardless, the important thing is that Cain knew that what he did was wrong, Genesis 4:7. Like his parents before him, he wanted to dictate the relationship with God and by doing so, he stepped out of it. But what we don't realize is that when we step outside of our relationship with God, it devastates every other relationship we have, which is why Cain killed his brother, Genesis 4:8.

Ten Commandments, if you think about the Ten Commandments, each one of them deals with relationship. They tell us how we're to relate to God and to each other. In the first four God is telling us not to worship anything else, not to misuse His name and to make sure we honor Him by resting on the seventh day. In the last six commands, God tells us how to get along with each other: we're supposed to honor our parents, not murder one another, we're not to have sex with someone else's spouse, we're not to steal each other's stuff or lie about each other and we're not to lust after anything that belongs to someone else.

Are the first four commands related to the last six? When Jesus was asked by one of the experts of the Mosaic Law which one of the 613 commandments was the most important, Jesus gave an interesting answer. Instead of naming just one command, He named two. He told the expert that there were no greater commands than (1) love God with everything you've got, and (2) love your neighbor as yourself, Mark 12:28–34. Jesus is telling us that there is an inseparable connection between our relationship with God and how we'll treat each other. If you want every other relationship to go well, then your relationship with God must not be severed. But if we walk away from God, then our lives will be severely affected, Romans 1:20–32.

Jesus and the Cross, He didn't just die on the Cross to save you from hell, He died to restore your relationship with God. He came to reunite you with your Father. And as close as the relationship is between the three Persons of the Godhead, that's how close God wants to be with you. He wants to be part of every thought, every action, every heartache, every moment of your life, John 17:3, 20–26. Look at how close He is with Peter, how Peter walks away and is devastated, and then how the Lord restores him, Luke 5:1–11.

III. Conclusion

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.