

GRACE

MORE THAN WE DESERVE. GREATER THAN WE IMAGINE

Part 1: Gracious Loving God

INTRODUCTION

Your picture of God is the single greatest influence on your life. If you imagine God as a strict judge, you'll likely be fearful and guilt-ridden. If you believe him to be distant or dead, chances are you'll act as a little god of your own little world. How you see him affects how you see yourself. Every religious beliefs acknowledge that God is awesome and powerful but very few people realise that God wants to have intimate relationship with us, his creation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was/is your view of God that was/is wrong? How did you come to believe that view of God?
2. Read the prophetic visions in the Bible and you will discover some truly fantastic images of God. Isaiah saw the Lord wearing a colossal robe and surrounded by six-winged singing angels (Isa 6:1-3), Ezekiel saw God as a glowing metal man wrapped in a rainbow (Eze 1:27-28), and Daniel saw a white-haired ageless figure seated on a burning throne with burning wheels (Dan 7:9). But when Jesus came along, he said we can call God "Abba Father" (Mark 14:36), how does that make you feel? Does it seem unreal to you?
3. Some people also have "false" views of God as Father. Which one of these false fathers do you tend to believe God to be? Why?
 - A. **A Punishing Father.** He continually punishes His children. Such a false God is cruel and enjoys seeing His children suffer all the time. He does not enjoy giving gifts to His children.
 - B. **Unemotional Father.** This false God does not like being intimate and affectionate with His children.
 - C. **A grandfather instead of a Father.** He never disciplines his children and allows them to do whatever they want.
 - D. **A Santa Claus Father.** He can be manipulated and bribed by His children into giving them whatever they want.
4. In the original Greek New Testament, the word for "father" is "pater". This word means "a nourisher, protector, upholder". Matthew 7:11 states: *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"* Do you see God as the One by whom all our physical and spiritual needs are met? Explain.

MOVING FORWARD

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father." James 1:17. Thank God for all his good gifts and believe that if you do not receive what you ask for, it is not good for you (at least not now).

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! 1John 3:1 (NIV)

PRAYER & PRAISE

1. Praise God for great weather and great turnout for our Father's Day Celebration (Over 500 people incl. children)
2. Pray for our Youth Pastor Kaija Leo for God to give her wisdom in leading IGNITE Youth Ministry.
3. Pray for needs in your group.