***How Can We Serve a Holy God?***

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***Introduction:*** The essence of Christianity is coming to know God.

A. Jesus wanted all men to find eternal life. **(Jn 17:3-4)**

**John 17:3-4**  3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

1. This life can only come when men know God and His glory. **(Jn 14:6-7)**

**John 14:6-7**  6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. 7 " If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

2. The basis of all that we do comes from this knowledge.

3. Look at how Jesus instructed the apostles! **(Jn 17:6-8)**

**John 17:6-8**  6 " I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them,* and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

B. God wants us to know Him so that we might have fellowship with Him.

1. Consider how you might begin a relationship with another. What must you learn?

2. God wants us to know what He is like so that *we might change*! God has let us   
 know that *He cannot change*! **(Mal 3:6; James 1:17; Heb 13:8)**

**Malachi 3:6**  6 "For I *am* the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

**James 1:17**  17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

**Hebrews 13:8**  8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.

3. Many of the moral and doctrinal compromises men make has its root in a lack   
 of knowledge of God. Changeable men want to speak for God.

***I. God’s personal introduction to Moses***

A. God first wants Moses to know that He is holy. **(Ex 3:1-5)**

**Exodus 3:1-5 -** Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." 4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground."

1. God tells Him to take off his shoes. Holiness demands a special approach.

2. There is a paradox to having a relationship with a holy God just as a fire can be   
 burning in a bush without it being consumed!

B. What does it mean for God to be holy?

1. Consider the perfect holiness of God in three verses.   
 **(1 Sam 2:2; Isa 40:25; Hosea 11:9)**

**1 Samuel 2:2 -** "No one is holy like the LORD, For *there is* none besides You, Nor *is there* any rock like our God.

**Isaiah 40:25 -** " To whom then will you liken Me, Or *to whom* shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.

**Hosea 11:9 -** I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I *am* God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror.

2. “In the Old Testament, the verb holy in the Hebrew is “quodesh”, meaning “to   
 consecrate, to sanctify, to prepare, to dedicate, to be separate.” The noun   
 holiness means “apartness, sacredness, separateness.””

3. “In the New Testament, the words holy, holiness, sanctify, and sanctification all   
 come from the same Greek word “hagious,” which means “sacred, (physically)   
 pure, morally blameless, consecrated, innocent, modest, perfect, clean, pure.””

C. God appealed to His holiness to teach His people how to have a relationship with   
 Him. **(Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26)**

**Leviticus 11:44-45**  - 'For I *am* the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 45 'For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

**Leviticus 19:2**  - "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy.

**Leviticus 20:26**  - 'And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD *am* holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

1. Fire represents the purity and Holiness of God and also the dread brought on the   
 unholy one who is brought into his presence.

2. As God delivered His holy word on Mt. Sinai there was fire, lightning and a   
 display of God’s power. God wanted His people to see this and tremble.   
 **(Heb 12:18-21, 29)**

**Hebrews 12:18-21**  - For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

**Hebrews 12:29**  - For our God *is* a consuming fire.

3. God wants us to show us how to have a relationship with Him and live!

***II. How God’s holiness changes us***

A. We will have a dread of facing a Holy God unprepared.

1. Fear can be a great tool to open a heart. **(Isa 6:1-7)**

**Isaiah 6:1-7 -** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; The whole earth *is* full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: "Woe *is* me, for I am undone! Because I *am* a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth *with it,* and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

2. We need to remember that our sins separate us from a holy God.

3. God’s holiness should humble a man so that he might open his heart to change.

B. We will value the love and mercy of God as a great treasure.

1. Men may ridicule us but God considers us a treasure. **(Deut 7:6-9; 1 Pt 2:9)**

**Deuteronomy 7:7-9 -** "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

**1 Peter 2:9 -** But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

2. How can a holy God love us so? He does!

3. With God’s love and forgiveness I see God’s holiness as that *which I desire*   
 rather than that *which I dread*. **(1 Jn 3:1-3)**

C. We will find God to be our faithful rock in looking after His people. **(1 Sam 2:1-9)**

**1 Samuel 2:1-9**  And Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation. 2 "No one is holy like the LORD, For *there is* none besides You, Nor *is there* any rock like our God. 3 "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the LORD *is* the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed. 4 "The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, And those who stumbled are girded with strength. 5 *Those who were* full have hired themselves out for bread, And the hungry have ceased *to hunger.* Even the barren has borne seven, And she who has many children has become feeble. 6 "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. 7 The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. 8 He raises the poor from the dust *And* lifts the beggar from the ash heap, To set *them* among princes And make them inherit the throne of glory. "For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's, And He has set the world upon them. 9 He will guard the feet of His saints, But the wicked shall be silent in darkness. "For by strength no man shall prevail.

1. Remembering God’s holiness gives us a great confidence in the power of God!

2. We can smile at our enemies!

3. We find the humility that comes from knowing God to be the source of His   
 power working in our lives. **(1 Pt 5:5)**

**1 Peter 5:5**  5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

4. We know God’s promises to be true! He will never forsake us.

***III. The blessings produced by knowing the God who is holy***

A. It humbles a man and allows him to open his heart to hear and change.

1. Fear can be a great tool to open a heart. **(Deut 5:23-24, 28-29)**

**Deuteronomy 5:23-24**  - " So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 "And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he *still* lives.

**Deuteronomy 5:28-29 -** "Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken. 29 'Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

2. The challenge for the people would be to remember that day and also to instill   
 this fear of God in their children.

3. The great challenge we face is in willingly forgetting these truths and being   
 draw away by the temporary.

B. It lets us know that all that God does is perfect.

1. Anything that comes from God is holy. The scriptures are *not a mere product of* *men* influenced by past cultures. **(Rom 1:2; 2 Tim 3:15; 1 Thess 2:13)**

**Romans 1:2**  2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

**2 Timothy 3:15**  15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13**  13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

2. God’s people are set apart to His holy ways. **(Deut 14:2-3; 1 Pt 2:9)**

**Deuteronomy 14:2-3**  2 "For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth. 3 " You shall not eat any detestable thing.

3. God’s instructions and ways are holy. Consider a “holy tithe.” **(Deut 26:13-14)**

**Deuteronomy 26:13-14 -** "then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy *tithe* from *my* house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten *them.* 14 'I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed *any* of it for an unclean *use,* nor given *any* of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me.

4. Were the things collected in the tithe “holy?”

C. It brings a reverence for God and His ways. **(Isa 48:17-18)**

**Isaiah 48:17-18**  - Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I *am* the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go. 18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

1. Since God had a complete instruction in how He was to be approached, then   
 those who out of a lack of reverence changed God’s instructions received God’s   
 condemnation. **(Deut 4:2; 1 Chron 15:12-13)**

**Deuteronomy 4:2**  - "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

**1 Chronicles 15:12-14 -** He said to them, "You *are* the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to *the place* I have prepared for it. 13 "For because you *did* not *do it* the first *time,* the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order." 14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

2. Consider how Moses explained the death of Aaron’s sons to Aaron.   
 **(Lev 10:1-3)**

**Leviticus 10:1-3**  Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace.

3. How should we approach God today? **(Rev 22:18-19)**

**Revelation 22:18-19**  - For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

D. It produces a distinctive faith and thus a distinctive people.

1. Many become concerned about offending others and turn away from the   
 holiness of God.

2. There must be a distinctive preaching that affects our conduct and our thoughts.   
 **(2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Heb 12:10-17)**

**2 Corinthians 6:15 - 7:1**  15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among *them.* I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." NKJ **2 Corinthians 7:1** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

3. Men may ridicule us but God considers us a treasure. **(Deut 7:6-9; 1 Pt 2:9)**

**Deuteronomy 7:7-9**  7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

**1 Peter 2:9**  9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

4. All is done to glorify God and not you! **(1 Pt 4:11)**

**1 Peter 4:11**  - If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

E. It makes us glory in and be thankful for the goodness and mercy of God.

***Conclusion:*** Let each of us glory in the Lord and in His perfect ways for our good.