



PART 3 - INTRODUCTION  
THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

**“What comes into our minds  
when we think about God is the most  
important thing about us.”<sup>1</sup>**

**A.W. Tozer**

# God's Call to Obedience

## INTRODUCTION: THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

### INTRO

### Introduction to Part Three: The Gospel and Our Relationship With God

In *Part One: The Gospel and Our Relationship With Others*, you learned how to forgive those who have sinned against you and how to seek forgiveness from God and others. This is necessary because of sin that is a result of the Fall. The gospel changes all of your relationships, including your relationship with God and your relationship with others, and should now reflect the reality of your new life in Christ.

In *Part Two: The Gospel and Our Relationship to the Fall*, you looked at the specific ways the fall has impacted your system of beliefs and the self-protective strategies you developed. You discovered the heart issues that are keeping you from living an obedient, surrendered life and began to identify the unbelief, pride and fears that motivate your desire and demand to control your world on your terms.

Hopefully, you have reconciled many of the key relationships in your life and have begun to view life from God's perspective, seeing the call to suffer as a follower of Christ. To continue to grow in your love for God and others, you must develop greater dependence upon Him. That is why *Part Three* is so important!!

In *Part Three: The Gospel and Our Relationship With God*, you will examine your view of God and establish what is necessary to continue walking with Him in His power with His resources. As you gain understanding of what it means to walk with God on His terms, you will also identify the many perceived rights, which may have become your demands. As you grow in living a more surrendered, dependent life, you will experience the power of God to deal with sin, love difficult people and face painful situations with grace and gratefulness.

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**Every problem you create in your life is the result of a wrong view of God or a wrong view of the gospel.**

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You must lay a new foundation of thinking biblically about God. This involves more than not only knowing the facts about Him, but also knowing Him relationally. (John 17:3; 2 Pet. 1:3)

“WHAT I THINK ABOUT GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT ME... I BELIEVE THERE IS SCARCELY AN ERROR IN DOCTRINE OR A FAILURE IN APPLYING CHRISTIAN ETHICS THAT CANNOT BE TRACED FINALLY TO IMPERFECT AND IGNOBLE THOUGHTS ABOUT GOD.”<sup>2</sup>

A.W. TOZER

**“ Thus says the Lord, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving-kindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the Lord.”**  
**JER. 9:23-24 NASB**

Your life must be built on a solid biblical foundation of right thinking about who God really is. That is why CTO is based on the truths that God is great, gracious, good and glorious.

### **God is Great:**

**“ To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ‘To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?’ says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”**  
**Is. 40:18,22-26,28**

James MacDonald points out that “God’s awesomeness takes you to your knees in total reverence, to worship without self-consciousness and to walk in glad surrender.”<sup>3</sup> God’s *greatness* is seen through a number of His attributes:

- He is Holy. (Is. 6:1-8)

Holiness is the characteristic of God that sets Him apart from His creation. The fact that God is holy should control the way you think and the way you live. A glimpse of God’s holiness shows you who He is and who you really are. Until you get a glimpse of the holiness of God you will not understand your severe need of His grace.

Yet, God calls you to “be holy, as He is holy.” God saved you to change you and to “set you apart” to be like Him and serve His eternal purpose. Your “small” view of God has produced little sense of your need to be holy as well as an insensitivity and indifference to your sinfulness.

“ UNTIL WE HAVE SEEN OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US, WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE MUCH DISTURBED OVER CONDITIONS AROUND US AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT GET SO FAR OUT OF HAND AS TO THREATEN OUR COMFORTABLE WAY OF LIFE. WE HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE WITH UNHOLINESS AND HAVE COME TO LOOK UPON IT AS THE NATURAL AND EXPECTED THING.”<sup>4</sup>

A.W. TOZER

- He is Majestic. (Is. 40:10-11,25-26)

“ GOD IS MORE MASSIVE THAN OUR WILDEST IMAGINATION, BIGGER THAN THE BIGGEST WORDS WE HAVE TO DESCRIBE HIM. AND HE’S DOING GOOD TODAY— SUSTAINING GALAXIES, HOLDING EVERY STAR IN PLACE, STEWARDING THE SEEMINGLY CHAOTIC EVENTS OF EARTH TO HIS CONCLUSION WITHIN HIS GREAT STORY.”<sup>5</sup>

LOU GIGLIO

On one hand, God is not at all like us. We cannot even begin to comprehend His power and might. This should produce a healthy *fear* or *awe* of who He is which should change how we live and how we view ourselves. (Is. 40:26) John Calvin writes, “Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God.”<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, God is near to His children and cares for us deeply. You can rest in the reality that God knows, God cares and God is in control!!! (Is. 40:11)

- He is Sovereign. (Dan. 4:35)

“ SOVEREIGNTY MEANS GOD IS IN CONTROL OF IT ALL. HE’S OVER THINGS WE SEE AND THINGS WE DON’T SEE. STUFF WE UNDERSTAND AND STUFF THAT IF WE EVEN GLIMPSED IT FOR A SECOND WOULD BLOW US AWAY. SOVEREIGNTY MEANS IT’S ALL HIS. NOTHING CAN STOP WHAT HE PURPOSES FROM HAPPENING. NOT PEOPLE, EVENTS, OR TIME. GET IT? WHAT GOD PLANS, HE DELIVERS. WHAT GOD WANTS, GOD GETS—HIS WAY AND HIS TIMING ON TIME, EVERY TIME.”<sup>7</sup>

JAMES MACDONALD

In your desire for control, you want a God who is manageable and with Whom you can be comfortable. You don’t want a god who is the ruler of all, answers to no one and can accomplish whatever he wants—in all things.

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**You must understand that a loving, sovereign God orchestrates and ordains all the circumstances of your life for your good and His glory. (Rom. 8:28-30)**

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God always knows what is best and He never makes a mistake. It is crucial to come to grips with the sovereignty of God otherwise you will continue to see yourself as a victim of your painful past, difficult people or ongoing trials.

“WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T TRULY TRUST GOD'S SOVEREIGN CONTROL? YOU MIGHT TRY TO TAKE CONTROL YOURSELF IN HARMFUL WAYS, THROUGH MANIPULATION OR DOMINATION. YOU MIGHT WEAR YOURSELF OUT WITH BUSYNESS OR FRUSTRATION. YOU MIGHT MAKE YOUR SECURITY AND WEALTH A BIGGER PRIORITY THAN GOD'S KINGDOM (LUKE 12:22-31). OR YOU MIGHT WORRY (PHIL. 4:6-7). WE BECOME PREOCCUPIED WITH THE BILLS, AND MONEY BECOMES OUR MAIN OBSESSION. ALL BECAUSE WE DON'T BELIEVE OUR FATHER KNOWS WHAT WE NEED.”<sup>8</sup>

TIM CHESTER

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**B**ecause God is great – you don't have to try to control the people and circumstances in your life.

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#### God is Gracious:

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

EPH. 2:4-7

- He shows you mercy. (Micah 7:18-20)

Mercy designates that quality in God by which He faithfully keeps His promises and maintains His covenant relationship with His chosen people despite their unworthiness and unfaithfulness. It is evidenced in that God does not give you what you deserve and promises to never hold your sin against you. It is because of mercy that the wrath of God is appeased.

- He gives you grace. (Eph. 2:8-9)

You can do nothing to earn God's favor. God's love is totally unconditional: your performance does not influence God's love for you. It is because of His unconditional election that He has saved you – it is His unwavering grace that keeps you!!

- He grants you forgiveness. (Ps. 103:10-12)

God forgives you all of your past, present and future sins. Mercy is not giving you what you deserve; grace is giving you what you don't deserve. You do deserve Hell; instead you have been granted forgiveness and the promise of eternity with God in heaven.

The forgiven must forgive. Because you have been given mercy, grace and forgiveness you are to forgive and forbear with others, just as God in Christ has forgiven you. (Col. 3:12-14)

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**B**ecause God is gracious – you don't have to perform to gain His love, forgiveness and acceptance.

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#### God is Good:

“ The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”  
Ps. 145:8-9

- He is loving, compassionate and patient. (Ps. 119:68)

Out of His patient love, He forbears with you. Out of His great compassion, He cares tenderly for you, providing all that you need. Therefore, life's blessings and adversities are designed by your loving Father to conform you into the likeness of Christ.

- Because God is good you know that...

- All good things come from Him. (Jas 1:17)

- He will provide all that you need. (Matt. 7:9-11)

- He causes all things to work for the good. (Rom. 8:28-30)

“ ALL THAT EMANATES FROM GOD—HIS DECREES, HIS CREATION, HIS LAWS, HIS PROVIDENCES—CANNOT BE OTHERWISE THAN GOOD.”<sup>9</sup>  
ARTHUR W. PINK

- He is faithful. (Lam. 3:22,23)

The faithfulness of God can be defined as His “unimpeachable reliability” – what He says He will do – 100% of the time. His faithfulness is never ending and endures forever. His faithfulness is also often connected to His compassion and loving-kindness.

- He is faithful to fulfill all His promises. (Ps. 100:5)
- He is faithful to fulfill His purpose in saving you. (1 Thess. 5:24)
- He is faithful to forgive. (1 John 1:9)
- He is faithful in the midst of temptation. (1 Cor. 10:13)
- He is faithful in the midst of suffering. (1 Pet. 4:19)
- He is faithful even when we are not. (2 Tim. 2:13)

Because His goodness endures forever, you should never be discouraged: *“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him”* (Nah. 1:7). Because He is faithful, you can trust Him and surrender the difficult circumstances and difficult people in your life to Him, knowing that He has eternal purpose behind everything that comes into your life.

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**Because God is good –  
He is all you need, so you can trust Him with your life.**

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### God is Glorious:

God’s glory refers primarily to His majestic beauty and splendor and the recognition of it by mankind. He deserves that all glory be given exclusively to Him. Therefore, life is not the story about you – it is the unfolding story of God revealing Himself and establishing His Kingdom.

- All of life and creation is about the glory of God. (1 Chron. 16:23-32)

“ IT IS NOT ABOUT YOU AND MAKING YOUR STORY BETTER, BUT ABOUT WAKING UP TO THE INFINITELY BIGGER GOD STORY HAPPENING ALL AROUND YOU. AND GOD’S INVITATION TO YOU TO JOIN HIM IN IT. IT’S ABOUT LOOKING UP TO SEE THAT THERE’S A STORY THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON LONG BEFORE YOU ARRIVED ON THE PLANET AND ONE THAT WILL GO ON LONG AFTER YOU’RE GONE. GOD IS THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF THIS STORY...HE COMMANDS CENTER STAGE IN EXISTENCE, CREATION, TIME, LIFE, HISTORY, REDEMPTION, AND ETERNITY.”<sup>10</sup>

LOU GIGLIO



- Your goal is not about finding worth in yourself, gaining acceptance from others or pursuing a life full of possessions or pleasure.

“WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE? FIRST, WE NEED TO NURTURE OUR TRUST IN GODS’ GREATNESS, OUR FEAR OF GOD’S GLORY, OUR DELIGHT IN GOD’S GOODNESS, OUR LONGING FOR GOD’S FUTURE, OUR REST IN GOD’S GRACE. SECOND, WHEN WE FACE TEMPTATION WE NEED TO SAY NOT ONLY ‘I SHOULD NOT DO THIS,’ BUT ALSO ‘I NEED NOT DO THIS.’ WHEN TEMPTED TO ENVY ANOTHER’S POSSESSION, WE SAY NOT ONLY ‘I MUST NOT ENVY,’ BUT ALSO ‘I NEED NOT ENVY BECAUSE I HAVE CHRIST.’ WHEN TEMPTED TO WORRY WE SAY NOT ONLY ‘I MUST NOT WORRY,’ BUT ‘I NEED NOT WORRY BECAUSE GOD IS IN CONTROL.’ WHATEVER SIN OFFERS, GOD IS BIGGER AND BETTER...TO SAY TO TEMPTATION, ‘I MUST NOT DO THIS’ IS LEGALISM. TO SAY, ‘I NEED NOT DO THIS BECAUSE GOD IS BIGGER AND BETTER’ IS GOOD NEWS.”<sup>11</sup>

TIM CHESTER

- You are to do everything to put Him on display and bring Him the glory only He deserves. (1 Cor. 10:31)

“SEEING HIS TRUE FAME MAKES ME WANT TO LIVE FOR A BIGGER PURPOSE, DOING EVERYTHING I DO IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT ON HIM... LIVING FOR GOD’S GLORY IS NOT SO MUCH ABOUT WHAT YOU DO AS IT IS ABOUT DOING WHATEVER YOU DO IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT REFLECTS JESUS CHRIST TO THOSE AROUND YOU AND ULTIMATELY POINT PEOPLE TO HIM.”<sup>12</sup>

LOU GIGLIO

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**B**ecause God deserves all glory—  
 life is all about Him not about you.

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*Part Three: The Gospel and Our Relationship With God* is designed to help you maintain a vital relationship with God by correcting some of the areas where you are not thinking biblically about Him. As you put God in His rightful place you will begin to be overwhelmed that He loves you. This should produce brokenness and gratefulness in response to your loving, gracious Father. Loving Him more intensely is what should produce a greater desire to obey Him. A growing, intimate relationship with God is necessary to continue on the path of obedience as your life unfolds. God wants to transform you from the inside out. He has given you all the resources necessary to experience life with Him and to live a life for Him and His glory.