

I. Is God Easy to Find?

Some think that God is very far away - - so far away that He can't be found, so far away that He can't even hear us.

Others think that God is always close to us and that He answers everyone's prayers.

THE TRUTH IS THE MIDDLE.

God is close to His creation, and He wants to be found. He can be found if we try. He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined . . . the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:26-27)

But when we sin, God is far away.

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

So, like the bumper sticker says, "If God seems far away, who moved?"

II. Is God Easy to Get to Know?

Some think that God is trying to keep secrets from us - - that He's trying to be vague and mysterious.

Others think that God is very easy to "read." They imagine Him as a one-dimensional character that you might read about in a paperback romance.

THE TRUTH IS IN THE MIDDLE.

God is showing Himself to us in three ways - we must simply look in the right places. We can learn some things about God by simply observing **nature**. Where did all this come from? How did dead things come to life? How does it all work so well together? Nature is far too complicated to be an accident - - it requires intelligent design. The smartest, most powerful beings we can see are humans, but nature goes far beyond human wisdom and power.

Since the creation of the world [God's] invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

But nature doesn't tell us all we need to know. That's why God sent **Jesus**.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1:18)

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:8-9)

But Jesus was only seen on earth a short time. That's why God wrote the **Bible**. He revealed His will to godly men, like Paul, who wrote it down for us.

By revelation [God] made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets. (Ephesians 3:3-5)

III. Is God Easy to Serve?

Some think of God's way of life as a difficult, rocky road. It's boring, at best, and probably not worth the effort.

Others think the Christian's life is full of joy and free of troubles. They figure that God's people never frown.

THE TRUTH IS IN THE MIDDLE.

God's way is not designed to be particularly pleasant now, but it promises a great reward for later on - eternal life.

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

God's people have always been some of the most persecuted people on earth, (Hebrews 11:35-38) but there is a real, spiritual sense in which persecution brings blessings. (Matthew 5:10-12; James 1:2-4) God does not make rules simply to make our lives difficult, ["His commandments are not burdensome" - 1 John 5:3] but "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

Some think of God as a tyrant waiting for us to slip up so He can punish us.

Others think of God as an indulgent grandfather who would never spank his grandchildren. As long as they go to church occasionally, they can pretty much think and do whatever they want. They won't mind being on the "back pew" in heaven.

THE TRUTH IS IN THE MIDDLE.

Justice demands that sin be punished, and God will punish sinners. But He's made a way to punish sin and to justify us at the same time. He wants ". . . to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier . . ." (Romans 3:26)

Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God . . . (Romans 11:22)

Some think their **SINS** are too bad to be forgiven by God, and that they can never be saved.

Others think that God's **LOVE** is so great that He's not worried about any sin, as long as their hearts are right, and that once they're saved, they can never be lost.

THE TRUTH IS IN THE MIDDLE.

No sin is too big to be forgiven. Paul had helped kill Christians, and described himself as "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man" - the "chief" of sinners. But God showed him grace and forgave him. Paul later became one of the most faithful, useful servants that God has ever had. Paul's salvation serves "as a pattern to those who are going to believe on [Jesus] for everlasting life." (1 Timothy 1:12-16) "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" and He has forgiven people for every imaginable sin. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) But God expects His people to not sin.

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone

sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

Anyone can be saved, but after being saved, anyone can be lost.

When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die. (Ezekiel 18:24; See also Romans 11:22, 2 Peter 2:20-22, and Hebrews 6:4-6.)

Some think they have to be perfect to please God. They try to earn their salvation by good works so that God owes it to them. They forget God's part in their salvation and think that it all depends on them.

Others figure that it's all up to God. They think that as long as they have faith, then God will do the rest.

THE TRUTH IS IN THE MIDDLE.

God knows that we cannot save ourselves, and will give us spiritual life when we are dead in trespasses and sins, (Ephesians 2:1-9) but He expects effort on our part. He expects us to have faith - faith from God's word. (Romans 10:17) This includes faith in God (Hebrews 11:6), and faith in Jesus as Lord and Messiah (Christ).

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31)

But He also expects us to obey Him.

Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:9)

He who believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16)

You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (James 2:24)

Conclusion

By taking verses out of context, "you can prove anything by the Bible," no matter how extreme. We have to take all the verses on a topic before drawing conclusions. This paper has tried to present a scriptural, balanced view of God - - a view that is hopeful, but realistic; a view in which God is loving, but strict; a view in which God's way is challenging, but possible.

May God bless you in your efforts
to find God, to get to know Him, and to serve Him.

The Truth Is In The Middle

Some people expect to be lost eternally, no matter how hard they try. They are too hard on themselves and their lives are filled with hopelessness and despair.

Others expect to be saved, no matter how apathetic or lazy they are. They go too easy on themselves and live with a false sense of security and undeserved optimism.

This paper looks at three basic questions about God and shows that the truth is not at either extreme.