

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD **(Luke 15:11-24)**

1. He is the One who talks with man.

- a. This parable tells us about God's relationship with man.
 - i. He is shown to be a loving Father.
 - ii. The prodigal son represents rebellious man.
 - iii. Notice that the Father and son talk with one another.
- b. Man is separate and distinct from God.
- c. However, God is not some aloof being looking down on His creation and having nothing to do with man.
 - i. God is not the Great Unknown as some have described Him.
 - ii. God can, and wants to, be known.
- d. God has revealed Himself to us in His word (2 Corinthians 2:9-13).
 - i. We can know what God wants us to know about Him (Ephesians 3:3-4).
 - ii. He has made it possible to know His will for us.
- e. He is the God who knows us by name (John 10:14-15).
- f. God has always revealed Himself to man (Hebrews 1:1-2) and He does today through His word.

2. He is the One who respects our freedom of choice.

- a. God is seen by some as a Being who moves man against man's will.
 - i. Calvinism sees God as sovereign, which He is, and as such, moves man where He wants man to go.
 - ii. In other words, He has removed all choice spiritually from man.
 - iii. Some are saved and some aren't and there is nothing that can be done about that.
- b. That is not the way that Jesus presents God in this parable.
- c. The prodigal made the choice to ask for the goods that were to come to him.
 - i. It was his decision to take those goods and head out on his own.
 - ii. It was also his decision to come back home.
- d. You and I have the freedom to choose (Joshua 24:15).
 - i. The apostles said, "We ought to obey God rather than men".
 - ii. This indicates they understood they had a choice in whom they would obey.
- e. The personality of God is such that He respects our ability to choose to either serve Him or not serve Him.
- f. His will is going to be done no matter what, but we get to choose (Acts 10:34-35).

3. He is the One who is involved in the lives of His creation.

- a. In a report based on the American Religious Identification Survey of 2008, there are some alarming numbers.
 - i. The number of people who identified as "None" when it came to religious affiliation, had grown sharply.
 - ii. While some of those numbers have changed through the years since, what those numbers showed is that the idea of deism was and is growing.
- b. A significant percentage of people have moved from a particular religious

group to none, but still believe in God, just an impersonal one.

c. On a website that promotes deism, this was found about the survey: "A recent survey on religion shows there are 34 million Americans who are classified as "Nones", that is they do not embrace any of the "revealed" religions and the vast majority of them are not Atheists. In actuality, the vast majority of the "Nones" are actually Deists".

d. As we mentioned earlier, this is a group who believes in God, just not a God who is involved in His creation.

e. Jesus pictures God the Father as a God who is very involved.

i. He deals with His son by giving him what belongs to Him.

ii. The Bible tells us that God is giving us things all the time (James 1:17).

iii. We receive spiritual blessings from this ever-present God (Ephesians 1:3).

f. He is the God who will never leave us (Hebrews 13:5).

g. The Psalmist understood that a long time ago (Psalm 23).

h. God is present in our lives and He has revealed that fact to us.

4. He is the One who cares for man.

a. No doubt that each one of us can visualize the image of a father looking longingly in the distance for his son.

i. I've talked with people who had children leave home in a bad way.

ii. They've said they look out windows or turn and look when they hear a car door.

b. This father, who is a picture of God, is seen caring for his son who is lost.

c. God cares for all of us, and in a special way, those of us who are His spiritual children.

i. God sends the rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45).

ii. However, His spiritual children are told to give Him their cares (1 Peter 5:7).

d. God cares enough about the spiritual state of all men that He sent His Son for all men (John 3:16).

e. He cares enough about man that He wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

f. He cares enough about man that He has shown His grace to all men (Titus 2:11).

g. He is not some far off God looking down and laughing at the plight of man or who does not even bother to look down on man.

h. He cares for all mankind.

5. He is the One who forgives.

a. Forgiveness can be defined as restoration of lost fellowship.

i. Forgiveness is needed when a breach of fellowship has occurred.

ii. There was an act that hurt the other party and forgiveness is needed to remove the barrier that now exists.

b. The son hurt the father by, in essence, desiring him to be dead.

c. When the son came to his senses and went home, the father is shown as quickly and permanently restoring that lost fellowship.

i. He did not make his son become one of his servants as the son desired.

ii. The son was completely restored to his former position as son.

d. The giving of the robe, ring, and shoes all show the forgiveness of the father towards the son.

e. God wants to forgive us of our sins and made that possible through the giving of the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5).

From an article by Virgil Trout found on biblecourses.com