

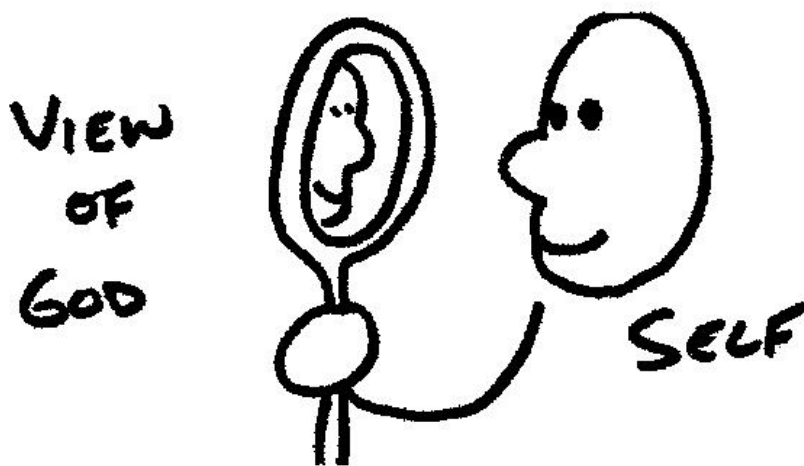
“WITH”: REIMAGINING THE WAY YOU RELATE TO GOD

A STUDY OF “WITH” BY SKYE JETHANI

LESSON 4: A LIFE FROM GOD

I. Introduction

- A. Projecting our (or someone we respect) characteristics unto God – making God in our image.
- B. Consider the assumptions we then make: “Well, my God would not....”
- C. We project our “own consumer values and identities onto the divine.”
- D. We are primarily concerned with our own happiness “in contrast to focusing or glorifying God, learning obedience, or serving others.” (p. 63)



II. Let's acknowledge that everything does come from God.

Isaiah 42:5 “This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:”

James 1:17 “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Luke 11:11-13 “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are

evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

But receiving gifts from God should not be the sum or total of our relationship with Him. God is a supreme vending machine.

III. Life from God

A. Characteristics

1. It's very appealing – it doesn't require us to change
2. It is driven by consumerism
 - a. Industrial revolution – mass production – advertising – capitalism – insatiability – lack of self control – debt
3. Our belief system: consumption

“Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction and our ego satisfaction in consumption.”
(p. 67)
4. It is very narcissistic: It's all about me!
 - a. Everything is disposable
 - b. We have a utilitarian mind set.
5. It does not remove our fears – it just tries to distract us from them. We become amused and maybe anesthetized from anything unpleasant.
6. God's value is determined by His usefulness.
Religion is a means to an end.

B. Its weaknesses

1. Life from God does not address the whole gamut of life's experiences. It just makes us comfortable.
2. Being distracted is not the same thing as being delivered.
3. Life from God skirts the “necessary skills” needed to deal with pain and sorrow. It isolates us. We need pain...it is instructive.

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience but shouts to us in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” CS Lewis

Pain: makes us uncomfortable with this life and long for something better. It is unsettling and makes us search for our true home.
4. With this perspective, we too easily forget who God really is. We settle for lesser things.

Look at Deut. 8:11-14 and Isa. 29:13

5. “Good things turn into ultimate things” (Tim Keller). We become idolaters.

Look at Matt. 10:37 (families)

Look at Matt. 6:19-24 (money)

Look at Luke 9:58 (homes)

Look at Matt. 6:1-4 (reputations)

IV. Consider the prodigal son

Treated his dad as a vending machine...but came to his senses and went home.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you been guilty of projecting your own set of characteristics onto God? Does it make you more comfortable to do so?
2. In what ways do we treat God like a vending machine? How does the modern church perpetuate that “disease”?
3. In our culture, how can we effectively fight against the tide of consumerism?
4. Are there any “good things” that have become “ultimate things” for you and your family? How can you “dethrone” that idol?