



Village Christian Church



(Disciples of Christ)

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How Big is Your God?

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Friends, every Sunday we come here and focus all of our attention and energy on God for an hour or two (*at least that's the goal!*). We sing to God. We read some of God's Word. We proclaim God's mighty acts. We remind ourselves how wonderful God is. We listen to a message inspired by God. We commune with God and Christ at the table. We try to be good and treat one another and act in ways that God would be pleased with. *We become God-centered on Sunday morning...*

But I wonder. I wonder where God is the other 166 hours of our week. I wonder if, in our daily lives, God is the primary focus and the most powerful force and presence we know –

Because if God is only the all-in-all of our conscience and being for about 2 hours of the week – then that makes God about this size:

One/eighty-fourth of our existence. That's pretty small, and very sad – And it stands in stark contrast to what the scriptures tell us about God. For the scriptures tell us that God is:

Omnipotent, which means all powerful! 1 Chronicles 29:11 says:

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt yourself as head overall.

Omnipresent, which means present everywhere! We read about that in Psalm 139:

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Omniscient, which means all knowing! We read in Romans 11:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

The scriptures also tell us that God is always with us and knows us intimately. The first verse in Psalm 139 says:

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways."

The scriptures say that God is caring and active in our lives! Philippians 4:19 says:

"You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need."

The scriptures say God is loving beyond all measure! In fact, Psalm 136 repeats 26 times that *God's love endures forever!*

So, the image of God that we get from the Bible looks more like this:

Everything there is, and even we ourselves, do not exist independently, but within and under the realm of God's creation and God's power. So then, that gives us two different images of our relationship with God:

In one, God is very small. God is just a part of our existence, which is filled with many things. But in the other image, God is everything. He's huge and our lives are just a small part of everything that God has made.

I think we all know which picture is more accurate. Here at church, we remember and acknowledge that God is huge. We know that God is bigger than any of us and all of us put together. Here we know that God is the Creator of all that is and we worship him in gratitude...

But, what I want us to ask ourselves today is – are we living, the rest of the week, in reality? In our day to day lives, are we experiencing the square on the right, or the square on the left? **How big is our God?** I think that's the question we each need to ask ourselves from time to time.

So, let's take a little test right now to see how we each would honestly answer that question today. Look at the handout you found on your chair and answer the questions quickly... you don't need to share your answers with anyone.

There's nothing scientific or profound about the questions I put on that test. I was just trying to design something that could help us think about the power of God's presence in our lives. You see, it's true that God is big. God is the Alpha and Omega... the all-in-all... the Creator, designer and source of all life, including each of ours!

But a lot of the time we don't live Monday through Saturday remembering that. We go on about our lives during the week acting as if we are on our own, or as if our lives are the big thing and God just gets fit into them whenever we can make the time.

That's backward, my friends, and when we think about it, we know it! God isn't just a part of our lives. Our lives are completely dependent upon God and, in truth, are just a small part of His entire creation and plan. Our challenge is to remember that from day to day so that we are living with the right perspective.

Let me talk some more about the test we took. To be honest with you, there have been periods for me when my answers would indicate a rather small God in my life. When that happens, there could only be 2 possible reasons: One would be that God isn't very active in my life right then. The second would be that I have "tuned out", or relegated God to a smaller role in my daily existence...

And we all know which answer is true. The God we are worshiping here today doesn't shrink into a corner when we leave this place to get on with our daily lives. We can't put God into the closet with our Sunday clothes when we get home and forget about him until next week! God is bigger than that and, in reality, present in every moment and space of our lives.

So, since we know that God doesn't go away when we're busy with other things, it's up to us to get "tuned in" if we want to experience the God of the universe all week long... And it's up to us to give God enough room in our thoughts, perceptions and experiences to be as big as He truly is.

Which then begs the question: How do we do that? How do we stay "tuned in" to God all the time – or at least as much as possible? Since we are all different, I think that each person will find different ways that work best for them to increase their awareness of God's presence in their lives – but I will offer three simple practices today that I try to maintain in my life, with the hope that you might find them helpful too:

First, I work on keeping my thoughts tuned into God every day. Just like cable or satellite tv, the world offers us so many different things to give our attention to that it is mind boggling. But we don't have to fall for that and channel surf all week long.

On Sunday mornings we tune in to God and make everything else secondary. Yet, when we leave this place, the common human tendency is to turn the bulk of our attention back to worldly things and make God secondary. But it doesn't have to be that way!

There is no reason we cannot have God as our primary focus every day and still get on with the daily chores and demands of our lives. In fact, God loves us and cares about all the details of our lives so much that he wants to be a part of everything we do!

Therefore, we can keep God at the forefront of our minds and still get the things we need to do in the world done. In fact, we will probably do them better with God's help! So, let's not switch channels when we leave church today. Instead, let's imagine that God is walking out of here and getting into the car with us, eager to be a part of everything we do in the coming week.

The second thing I try to do is turn up God's volume in my life. If you are like me, and I believe that you probably are, you always have multiple things on your mind. You are thinking about something you need to get done at home. You are thinking about a person you need to call. You are thinking about what to have for lunch. You are thinking about something you heard on the news. You have the lyrics and music of the last song you heard playing over and over in your brain...

There is just a lot of noise in our minds, coming from both the world around us and from within ourselves – and it is all constantly competing for our attention! So, I find it helpful to imagine turning God's voice up every morning, and again periodically throughout the day, so that I can hear him over all the other stuff.

I know the whole idea that we can turn God's volume up in our minds over all the other stuff sounds a little crazy – but I invite you to give it a try. When you first wake up in the morning, say this little prayer:

“Good morning God. Thank you for this day. Please speak up in my mind today and be the center of my attention, so that I may know your love and peace, and be guided by your wisdom.”

If you try that, I think you will notice God responding in some wonderful and surprising ways this week!

The third thing I try to do comes naturally if I am doing the first two things - I try to talk to God a lot throughout the day. I don't mean talk to Him as in a traditional kind of prayer, but in normal, common conversations like we would have if we were spending the day with a friend.

Some of the things you would hear me saying to God if you could hear the voice in my head sound like this:

“Wow God, do you see the way that guy is driving? He almost ran into us and is going way too fast. Please make him slow down and protect those of us around him!”

or

“Wow, that's beautiful! Good job, God.”

or,

“Man am I tired. What do you think I should concentrate on getting done today, God? Because I don't think I can do it all.”

Or perhaps if I am at a store or looking at stuff online...

“That's cool. I really like it! Do you think I should get it, God?”

Talking to God throughout the day like that, as if he were standing right next to me or riding in the car or sitting at the table, helps to remind me that he really is right there!

I also use some silly things in everyday life to remind me to talk to God. Like, for instance, do you remember that silly little rhyme we heard as kids that said, “Step on a crack, break your mother's back”? Well, when I am walking on a sidewalk or anywhere with cracks, I switch it up and say, “God bless Mom” when I step on a crack. And then, “God bless Sherry” and then “Teresa” and then others in my family if it's a long walk or a lot of cracks.

And here's another one that I taught the kids in my youth groups back in the day. If one of them got hurt or startled or angry and shouted "God" or "Jesus" – we would talk about the fact that that is actually a perfect time to talk to God. So, for years now, when I've hurt myself or gotten startled or very angry and exclaimed God's name - I've let it remind me that God is indeed there and ready to comfort, help or guide me.

Those are some of the ways that I try to stay tuned in to God's presence with me when I am not worshiping with you on Sunday mornings. If you have other ways that you stay tuned in to God during the week, I would love to hear about them from you!

The important thing is not necessarily *how* we do it, but that we stay focused and not allow the distractions of the world and daily living shrink God into just a Sunday acquaintance for us. For God in reality, is VERY BIG and has endless blessings to give us when we spend all our days with him.

I read somewhere once that the size of a person's problems have a directly *opposite* relationship to the size of that person's God. Big problems equal a small God, and small problems equal a big God. I think there is some truth in that – and I also think that there are some things we can have in a directly *equal* proportion to the size of our God. Those are things like **hope, faith, understanding** and **love**.

So, friends, let's do our best to stay connected to God when we leave this place today. May we be reminded every morning that God is big, powerful and present in all the moments and places of our lives! .. And may that lead to our knowing his love, peace and joy more and more each day!