

Beginnings – ORIGIN (Where did we come from?)

- Only Two Choices
- Realize the Significance
- Is it Faith or Science?
 - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- Guess at the Evidence
- Inspect the Evidence
 - Universe = "Decay"
 - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- No Compromise
 - DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE (Why are we here?)

- Love - GOD and MAN
- Increase - GROW
- Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure
- Eternity – Past, Present, Future

Authority – POWER (Who's in charge?) A God Who is:

- Personal and Loving
- Omnipotent
- Wise and All-Knowing
- Everywhere and Eternal
- Righteous and Reliable

Standards – RULES (What are the rules?) God's rules are:

- Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason
- Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time
- Loving
- Enforced
- Steadfast

R - Righteous and Reliable

Righteous

Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you? Psalms 71:19

God is righteous. To be more accurate, **God is the standard for righteousness because whatever He does is right.** This aspect of God is related to the fact that He is personal – we wouldn't even be considering His righteousness if he was just an impersonal force. But because He has personality and character we can say that He is righteous and holy.

We tend to think of righteousness in terms of what it is not. Righteousness is the absence of wickedness and sin and evil, and that is certainly true of God. But righteousness is not just the omission of sin. It is also doing what is right. The working out of His perfect power, wisdom, and love means that God is always doing what is righteous.

All of us consider ourselves to have varying degrees of righteousness when we compare ourselves to other people, but it is only in comparison to God's righteousness that we recognize how truly worthless our self-made "righteousness" is. Seeing God's perfect righteousness versus our sinfulness shows us that **what we deserve is death and Hell – anything we get beyond that is an unmerited blessing!**

Related attributes of God include:

- **Justice** – God is just, and His justice is perfect. He will not allow unrighteousness to go unpunished forever.
- **Holiness** – God is the standard for Holiness. *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."* 1 Peter 1:15-16
 - He cannot abide with sinfulness. *You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell.* Psalms 5:4
- **Wrath** – God detests unrighteousness and will pour out His wrath on it at the end of the age. The book of Revelation removes any doubt about this.

Reliable

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. Deuteronomy 7:9

If we couldn't trust God as being reliable, none of what we know about Him would bring us comfort. Having an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present being who couldn't be trusted would be terrifying. He would be like the mythical Greek gods who used their power for selfish and arbitrary purposes. Reliability is what lets us look to the future with confidence that what God said will come true.

God will always do what He promises. God does not forget, He will not change His mind, and nothing could possibly happen that will thwart His purposed will. By contrast, we often fail to do what we promised because we forget, we change our mind, or we are prevented by circumstances beyond our control. What a comfort it is to know that God is totally reliable.

Related attributes of God include:

- **Immutability** – God does not change, so we can rely on His promises. *I the LORD do not change.* Malachi 3:6a
 - **Faithfulness** – We can place our faith in Him. *He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.* Deuteronomy 32:4
 - **Trustworthy** – We can trust whatever He tells us to be true. *The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.* Psalms 111:7
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But doesn't Scripture say that God changes His mind?

Certain passages in the Bible are said to indicate that God changes His mind about certain things or has regrets that He did something:

- ***The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.*** Genesis 6:6
- ***When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and **did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.***** Jonah 3:10

These and other examples must be examined in light of other Scripture that talks about God's firm purposes (such as Isaiah 46:10). I believe we can see that passages like these are consistent with God's unchanging nature if we look at them more closely:

- In Genesis 6:6, God expresses sorrow over man's wickedness. Yet if He truly "regretted" creating man He would not have continued mankind by saving Noah and his family.
- In Jonah 3:10, Nineveh faced destruction because of their sins (like all men), but Nineveh repented and God showed mercy (like He does with us). We know from other Scripture that God was not surprised by their repentance because He causes repentance (e.g. 2 Timothy 2:25). So there was no "change" in God.

Where is God in the Dark Times?

Sometimes when we experience disaster and tragedy and despair in our lives it is hard to remember that God is Reliable. In our pain we want to demand an explanation from God just like Job did. It's not necessarily wrong to ask questions like "why?", but it is wrong to stand in judgment of what God allows in our lives.

My favorite analogy on this is that life is like a tapestry. God is weaving a beautiful picture from His perspective in heaven. But we see only the underside of the tapestry that is full of knots and loose threads and apparently random stitches. We can't understand what He is doing when we see it only from our side.

In his book Trusting God, Jerry Bridges offers a perspective that has been very helpful to me. He suggests that **in difficult times I focus on what I know for sure** instead of focusing on what I don't know (the why of the situation). What I know for sure is:

- **God knows everything**
- **God can do anything**
- **God loves me**

I can face my troubles with the thought "I don't know what good God is going to make from this, but I know that He knows about it, that He loves me, and that He is completely able to do whatever He knows is best."

POWER Recap

To summarize the answer to the question “who’s in charge?” we use the acrostic POWER to outline a few of God’s characteristics:

Personal and Loving

God is three Persons in One and His very nature is Love.

Omnipotent

God is all powerful – nothing is beyond His ability

Wise and All-Knowing

God has always had complete knowledge, and He applies it in perfect wisdom

Everywhere and Eternal

God is omnipresent and exists in all places at all times. He has always been and always will be.

Righteous and Reliable

God is the standard for righteousness and holiness. He does not change and is always faithful to His promises.

Review

We are all biased - Our answers to life’s big questions are based 99.99% on our bias, our assumptions about the “whole ball” that we don’t know first-hand.

- If there is Someone who knows the whole ball it is logical to get our answers from Him.
- If there is no one who knows it all we have to rely on our reason, which would be the result of random, purposeless accidents.

Beginnings - ORIGIN

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- **R**ealize the Significance
- **I**s it Faith or Science?
 - LAB - **L**ookable, **A**ccessible, **B**reakable
- **G**uess at the Evidence
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- **No** Compromise - DON'T
 - **D**eath after man, not before
 - **O**rders of Creation
 - **N**ames in genealogies define timeframe
 - **T**en Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE

- **L**ove - GOD and MAN
 - **G**lory of God (right perspective)
 - **O**bedience to God (right actions)
 - **D**octrines of God (right thinking)
- **I**ncrease – GROW
 - **G**odliness
 - **R**elationships
 - **O**bedience
 - **W**ork
- **F**aithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure
 - God owns everything
 - God gives each of us unique circumstances
 - God judges us on our faithfulness with what we have, not in comparison to others
 - If we are faithful with small things, God will reward us and entrust us with even more
- **E**ternity – Past, Present, Future
 - Past - Gratefulness
 - Present - Faithfulness
 - Future - Fruitfulness

Authority – POWER – A God Who is:

- **P**ersonal and Loving
- **O**mnipotent
- **W**ise and All-Knowing
- **E**verywhere and Eternal
- **R**ighteous and Reliable

.....*still to come...*

Standards