

A God Who Is and Does



Surveying the Site

Read the Blueprints. Listening to children and gazing at the night sky helped the psalmist think of God.

What makes you think of God? Answer that question quietly within yourself, then share your response with the group.



Checking Your Toolbox

In the United States, the bill we hand to the clerk reads, "In God We Trust." At the opening of the club meeting, we face the flag and recite, "one nation under God." When the screwdriver we're using as a chisel slips and digs into our flesh, the air may resound with a vigorous "God bless!" (or something "similar"). Whether or not we discuss it, we acknowledge the existence of something or someone called God.

"Who or what is God?" We seldom ask that question. We typically assume that, like the air we breathe and the ground beneath us, God simply exists. We can, however, breathe without knowing that the air is approximately twenty percent oxygen, and stand without knowing of microbes and minerals under our feet. Can we, in the same way, assume that we can have a relationship with God about whom we know little or nothing? Even if we admit that there is no definitive definition of God, doesn't our claim and longing to believe in God make it essential to know and say something? Doesn't a God of revelation invoke a response?

- Unlike the sun and wind, no one can prove the existence of God. Even scripture says, "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18). God is something to believe, not to prove. Some even say that believers make proof unnecessary! What difference does it make to believe that God exists?

What can we say about God? First, we can say that God is. God is. God was the first one to say, will be the last one to say, and is the only one always able to say, "I am."

God was the first one to say, "I am." God existed before anyone or anything could know God existed. God is the being that makes "being" possible.

God will be the last one to say, "I am." Everyone and everything comes to an end: our best friend, our family, an oak tree, our nation, and our universe. But God will not end. God always will be.

God is the only one always able to say, "I am." Everyone and everything comes from something else. Children come from their parents, who come from the earth, which comes from the elements that comprise it, which come from other elements. But who or what caused or created the first elements? To that we answer, "God." God doesn't need anything else in order to be. In the name given to Moses, God says, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Only God always is.

That is a start, but to say that God is, is not enough. There is more to God than that. We can also say that God does. God acts. God creates, destroys, sustains, directs, forms, transforms, despises, loves, and more. God does. That is good news! A God who only is might choose simply to be.

Because God does, God interacts with other things that are—such as the universe, Moses, and us. Just as God is the being that makes “being” possible, God’s doing makes “doing” possible. Apart from God nothing could be or do.

God is and does. That may not sound like much, but what else is there?

■ If only God always is, has been, and will be, why would God choose to relate to us?

We cannot know God completely. God remains a mystery. We believe that this mysterious God who is and does chooses to be with us and calls us to do. God invites us into a relationship. God says, “I who am and do, choose to be and do with you.” We can be and do with God. Imagine that. Imagining that marks the beginning of a life of faith.

■ We believe that God chooses to invite us into a relationship. We can accept or reject that invitation. What do we have to gain and to lose by choosing “to be and do with God”?

In Isaiah, the prophet says that God declares:

*My thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

(Isaiah 55:8–9)

■ Even in our deepest faith and most profound knowledge, God remains a mystery. How does that affect our attempts to believe in God and have a relationship with God?

Blueprints

O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

Psalm 8:1–4



Conversation with the Master Carpenter

Close your session with prayer. Lift up any prayer requests or insights. Also, ask God to help you understand God more fully as you reflect on a God who is and does. Ask God to bless the group and to deepen your understanding of God.



On-the-Job Experience

In the next week, in your pocket notebook, keep a list of where and when you think of God. Notice how this simple practice can increase awareness of God. Ask a friend to keep such a list as well. Compare notes and experiences. As this assignment becomes a habit (a way of life), we “see” God more often and become more aware of God’s constant being and doing.