



PART 1: Connecting with God

CHAPTER 10

**A Comprehensive Bond**

Fully God and fully man, Jesus died for our sins and then rose from the dead for our salvation. No other provision allows fated sinners to reconnect with their Heavenly Father. Without exception, alternate claims are bogus counterfeits. Despite pious rhetoric and pompous promises, imposters never come close to reconnecting us with our Heavenly Father.

Ravi Zacharias points out that Christianity, like every other religion, asserts a clear point of exclusion. Jesus Christ personifies that point with unequivocal veracity. Apart from Christ, the restoration of our relationship cannot proceed. Jesus said:

*"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". (John 14:6 NIV)*

**The Lord is One**

*Jesus answered, "The most important [commandment] is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, **the Lord is one**. And you shall love the Lord your God **with all** your heart and **with all** your soul and **with all** your mind and **with all** your strength.'" (Mark 12:29-30 ESV, from Deuteronomy 6:4-5)*

We cannot abbreviate or amend the attributes of Christ because He is neither a philosophical argument nor a mathematical postulate. Fully God, He insists on being a cohesive whole. Picking and choosing to abridge any trait, would disqualify Him from divinity. Subtract any fea-

ture by any degree and He no longer fulfills the sacred benchmark. Without exception, God always remains omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, transcendent, and holy.

Some have tried to hack God apart into discrete pieces. All have failed. Propaganda experts attempt to assassinate His image with lies, politicians attempt to limit His influence with legislation, and religious directors seek to regulate His behavior with edicts. Despite these efforts, God will not slice apart. He remains intact and undiminished. Dicing Jesus into culturally acceptable pieces and rearranging the fractions to fit our preference yields an inferior deity.

Despite diverse interests and divergent doctrines, God continues to be all that He is; He always has been; He always will be. With flawless integrity, God never changes.

### **All or Nothing**

Human ingenuity did not devise a clever theology and label it as God. Jesus is neither an academic convenience nor a sophisticated contrivance. His profile extends far beyond the collective insight and foresight of creative human minds. Being inseparable from the truth, God is bigger, stronger, and more complex than anyone can imagine or describe. Compromised by sin, finite human brains cannot possibly understand all there is to know about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

No matter how discerning or clueless we may be, God comes as a complete package. He brings all of Himself wherever He goes. Our limited perception of God's presence does not affect His performance. When we connect with God, He chooses the terms, He arranges the times, and He sets the conditions. God defines us—we do not define Him.

Opening our heart to one part of God will not exclude His other parts from participating. We cannot choose to embrace His love and then filter out His holiness. Jesus comes integrated as a complete package. He holds Himself tightly together at all times. We do not have the option of

customizing divine attributes independently from one another. Try as we might to partition God, when we embrace one aspect, we cannot expect Him to withhold another.

God does not offer Himself through a multiple-choice menu with distinct flavors of divinity. When we embrace Jesus Christ, we embrace Him entirely without substitutions. Connecting with one part opens the door for all of Him to enter. We cannot regulate His influence at any given connecting point. Jesus connects all that we are to all that He is. This union exposes us to the full scope of His authority and the full advantage of His influence.

### **Exposing all that we are to all that He is**

Connecting with God involves more than barely touching index fingers as Michelangelo's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel depicts. It means opening the portals of our soul and letting God flood every crevice of our being with His fullness. It means striding across the threshold of time and space and diving completely into His realm. By plunging into God's domain, we encounter the truth with undiluted certainty.

Herein lays our fundamental problem: we do not have enough room in our life for God. It is not that we are just too busy that we cannot squeeze more Jesus into our schedule. Appointments with Jesus do not fit into anyone's schedule. He immerses Himself into every facet of our lives. He approaches the present comprehensively—with an invasive regard for the future.

Jesus does not want to move Himself to the top of our priority list. He wants to permeate every aspect of every list. He expects to influence every preference and inspire every desire. As our heart expands Godward, we fit into His schedule and follow His agenda. Eventually, our Heavenly Father aims to infuse every part of our being with the full passion and significance of His eternal purpose.

Introducing the prophetic books in the Bible, Eugene Peterson asserts the following:

For a people who are accustomed to “fitting God” into their lives, or, as we like to say, “making room for God,” the prophets are hard to take and easy to dismiss. The God of which the prophets speak is far too large to fit into our lives. If we want anything to do with God, we have to fit into him.<sup>1</sup>

God has room for us but we will never have enough room for His infinite presence. He always lives everywhere, fully committed to His eternal purpose. Ultimately, we must accommodate God’s reality because there is not enough room in our reality. We are too finite to contain an everlasting presence that never changes.

For us to connect with God’s transcendent presence, we must accommodate Him. We will never rest content unless we find our place submitting to His sovereign authority. God leads and we follow.

Peterson conveys “one of the bad habits” prevalent in the human race:

We assume that the secular is what we are more or less in charge of: our jobs, our time, our entertainment, our government, our social relations. The sacred is what God has charge of: worship and the Bible, heaven and hell, church and prayers. We then contrive to set aside a sacred place for God, designed, we say, to honor God but really intended to keep God in his place, leaving us free to have the final say about everything else that goes on.<sup>2</sup>

The priority of God is more pervasive than we could ever imagine. Jesus is Lord of all. In His mind, sacred and secular distinctions do not exist. Natural and spiritual boundaries are irrelevant because every-

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 1197-1199

<sup>2</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 1197-1199

thing captivates His concern. Almighty God reigns over all. He always has and always will. Jesus refuses to behave as a good luck charm dangling from a predictable religious system.

Our connection problem is so much more extensive than time management. Jesus designed men, women, and children to immerse all that they are and all that they have, do, think, and feel in Him. He does not simply want more quiet times from us. He wants all our time—quiet, loud, conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. That adds up to 100 percent of all of us all the time. According to Peterson, “God has something to say about every aspect of our lives” because, *“Nothing is hidden from the scrutiny of God, nothing is exempt from the rule of God, nothing escapes the purposes of God.”*<sup>3</sup>

## **Light and Darkness**

Forcing the light of Christ and the darkness of Satan to reside in one human heart at the same time presents an inescapable dilemma. Spiritual adversaries occupy mutually exclusive domains—they diverge with contentious strife and combative discord. We must disconnect completely from one to connect fully with the other.

- To connect literally means to bond, unite, join, fasten, link, or tie together
- To connect relationally means to establish personal rapport with a heightened degree of awareness
- To connect in a material sense involves a physical interface, an electrical contact, or a wireless link. For example, plugging into a power outlet or connecting by mobile phone or Wi-Fi.

## **Disconnecting from Sin**

If we are going to embrace the truth about God, we must deal with the truth about us and our sin. God’s invitation to connect invites a

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<sup>3</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 1197-1199

two-fold response. First, we must agree to disconnect from sin through repentance. Repentance unplugs our heart from Satan's deadly bondage. Second, we must agree to embrace Jesus as Lord and Christ.

*In the same way, count yourselves [1] **dead to sin** but [2] **alive to God** in Christ Jesus. (Rom 6:11 NIV)*

After responding agreeably to these two choices, God formally revokes the sin penalty that had separated us. Being dead to sin, we break our agreement with Satan and activate our communion with God. This union fastens us together through an invincible bond of faith and an inseparable bond of love. The Holy Spirit seals these bonds by filling our soul with God's presence. Henceforth, our connection is official. By severing our union with sin and Satan, our propinquity with God (i.e., our relational nearness or kinship) may activate.

