

Preface

When I was given the responsibility of being the youth leader of my church I did not know what to do. I did not feel ready to be a youth teacher. I wasn't even ready to be a youth leader. I wasn't youth and I was not a leader. I sought the opinions of a lot many people on how to conduct a youth class, never having participated in one myself. However I know the youth of today by virtue of my experience as a teacher. Using that as my background I chalked up my own lesson plan which I believe would be beneficial to guide the youth faced with the present Socio Political conditions prevalent in in my country and in the world.

In my field of work I am noticed that adolescent children do not respond well to being treated as children. The ideal way to reach them is presume that they are adults in the making and that in a few years they will have to make adult decisions, lead an adult life. Instead of sliding their daily lives if we can enrich them with perspective and responsibility then they can show the potential that they have to be honorable citizens of this world and the next.

Something that I try with every lesson that I impart is the concept of application. Learning is pointless if we cannot apply to our lives. The same concept goes for youth lessons arranged for young Christian believers in a church. On Sundays they are coming to church with their parents but on every other day they have a life outside the church where we have to interact with people who are not condescending or accepting of their faith. You never know how much young believer needs to undermine or defend his faith in his day to day life. The application of the youth lesson is aimed to help these youth to face the greater world and the yet greater God both at the same time.

Something the youth are made to verify at a very young age is the question what would Jesus do. It is a futile question in the present world because of numerous reasons. Jesus was a Jew born among Jews who had to defend his interpretation of the scripture that others failed to understand. The average youth is not part of a group that is well acquainted with the Jewish scriptures. Someone rightly said that you may be the only Gospel that your friends get to hear; so make it a good one. A far better concept than what would Jesus do is to think what would Jesus want you to do. The concept of discipleship is pivoted on that concept of obedience. Jesus never asked you to be encapsulated within rigid boundaries of faith. Who we are is defined by the friends we keep. We do not essentially become them but our interaction with them define us. Jesus was often accused as being the friends of the tax collectors and sinners. He died for the sinners. So he will not judge your friends till the last day but he will question what you are doing with your friends today, everyday. He will look at your actions and your intentions. Partaking youth education should prepare you for the judgement not today not tomorrow but at the moment when you stand before the Throne of Jesus at a Second Coming.

Something else which I was aware of at the beginning of my youth lesson was that these young men and women hail from families that believe but they themselves may not. Then the lessons would need to educate as much as enable the believers the development of the Christian faith. Faith holds a close relationship with the stages of moral development. Morality develops with age and maturity and it grows from something that believes in a well defined right and wrong bound by rules of punishment and reward towards a deep seated conscience which in Christianity is accredited to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The youth need to be aware of the action of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the significance of the Holy Spirit existing in the world.

The youth that I deal with are going out into a world that may or may not know Jesus so evangelism is an integral part of youth education. How do you tell your non-believer friend that there are enough rooms in your Saviour's Father's house to give him or her a shelter? How do you prove that to your non-believer friend who believes in a different God in a different faith system that your God Is the only way the truth and the life? That is a big question.

Another part is apologetics. When I start with my youth lessons I cannot deny that I am teaching a group of Indian teenagers who have friends belonging to different religious groups and they need to reconcile the beliefs of each group to their own faith. Jesus is the only way the salvation and idols are blind and helpless creations of mankind but your friend may not like that idea that *his* god is a blind. How do you react to your friend's version of your gospel also needs to be a part of youth education

And lastly youth need to know the possibility of straying and the fact that god has open arms for his prodigal son. I think these facts are essential for any youth education to take place, I have tried to incorporate them in my lessons to some extent. I only hope that I am successful. Deo volente

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1. Definition of God

Why do we need to define God? The truth is we don't need it and we cannot really define God. What we need however is to know God and to form a deep and meaningful relationship with Him. For that, we need to recognize God for who He is and this is achieved through characterizing Him according to our perceptions and His revelations.

Knowing God is also important for another purpose, albeit a very personal one. God made us in His own image. We need to know and recognise God in order to acknowledge our own natural state, the state in which we were intended to be before the Fall. God's purpose of forming us was to have fellowship with Him and to achieve that we need to know Him and form a relationship with Him.

There is a number of 'words' used to describe or characterize the nature of God. God is Spirit (John 4:24a), Infinite (Psalm 147:5), Eternal (Psalm 90: 2), Unchangeable in His being (Numbers 23:19), Wisdom (Job 36:5), Power (Matthew 3:9) Holiness (Revelations 4:8), Justice (Psalm 89:14), Goodness (Psalm 86:5) and Truth (John 17:17). However, God is not fully knowable. God is infinite while our comprehensions are finite. If I imagine our minds as finite vessels they cannot hold the infinite knowledge of God.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa 55:9)

This brings us to the humble realization that all that we know of God is what He has revealed to us regarding Him. This He does through His divine revelations which are broadly divided into four categories:

1. Revelation through Nature (Psalm 19)
2. Revelation in history (Psalm 78)
3. Revelation in Jesus (John 5: 19-47, 2 Corinthian 5:19)
4. Revelation in the Bible

The Bible is the Primary revelation of God in the life of a believer and it reveals a number of things about God. These answers not only reveal the nature of God but also the Will of God. As a believer, it is important to identify the significance of these revelations not only to our faith but also to how we live. There is a lesson in every revelation of God.

Let us discuss a number of such revelations and what it signifies for the life of a Christian.

I. God is Love

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1Jn 4:16)

The Greek word used for love is ἀγάπη (agapē). In the Greek language, there are seven different words for love each having a different connotation.

- **Eros:** Love of the body. (**Eros** was the Greek God of love and sexual desire)
- **Philia:** Love of the mind

- **Ludus:** Playful love
- **Pragma:** Longstanding love
- **Agape:** Love of the soul
- **Philautia:** Love of the self
- **Storge:** Love of the child

God's love is a love of the soul and a believer is said to abide in exactly that kind of love, love the soul. The Bible gives us a very detailed account of this kind of love.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. (1Co 13:4-8a)

Again the word used for love here is agape. But how does that affect the life of a believer? That is the most important question. How do you love as a believer? You see the word is very easy to use in a sentence. But love isn't just a word. It is an action. Jesus has commanded us to love.

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (Mat 5:44)

How do you love your enemies? The most common response is that you love them by forgiving them, by not holding a grudge, by submitting to their injustice. That is not loving. That is meekness. Though the Lord has blessed the meek (Matthew 5:5), you cannot profess love by showing meekness.

You do not forgive in a feeble attempt to love. You forgive because it is the first step in loving another. When you have forgiven someone their faults you are free to care for them and think of their betterment. Being a believer is not being a doormat. When the apostles were persecuted they did not pray for endurance. They prayed for boldness.

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, (Act 4:29)

When your enemies confront you, you need to forgive them to liberate your own emotional turmoil and then you need to speak up. You need to point out their mistakes. You need to work for their betterment and improvement and pray for their conviction and repentance. That is the love a believer shows to their enemies that while the enemies plot to bring you down you pray to build them up.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this, the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1Jn 4:7-11)

II. God is Holy

For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. (Lev 11:44a)

The Word of God is often nominative and dictatorial. But a believer needs to understand the significance of the holiness of God. In Hebrew, the word used for holy is קָדוֹשׁ (qâdôsh)

which may mean sacred (ceremonially or morally). In Greek, the word is ἅγιος

(hagios) derived from ἅγος (hagos) which means sacred (physically pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially consecrated). An important part of the ceremonial consecration is the moral consecration. Let us recall the instruction of Jesus.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Mat 5:27-28)

In other words, it is not the action that only counts but also the thought behind it. Holiness is not a physical state alone. It is a mental one. The opposite, however, is also true. You cannot be ceremonially pure if your heart is full of deceit and falseness. Similarly, you cannot be morally refined while remaining covered in filth.

But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. (Isa 5:16)

So the state of holiness can be characterized by righteousness. You need to place yourself right with God, through obedience, submission and acceptance. It is not really easy. It makes you rely on the righteousness of Jesus. Romans 3:10 tells us that none is righteous on his own and is only made righteous in the reflected glory of Jesus. Holiness is intrinsically related with purification. Purification in the Old Testament occurred through the altar.

Whatever touches the altar shall become holy. (Exo 29:37b)

Purification in the New Testament is through faith Jesus.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:14b)

The lamb refers to Jesus and it is the example and reminder of His sacrifice that purifies our heart and mind making us holy. However, can a person remain holy in filth? Purification is a state of being. It is both moral and physical. The faith in Jesus not only purifies us of the unrighteousness within but also separates from the faith without. The challenge is to allow that separation and sanctification. To be sanctified means to be set apart. In this case, it means to be set apart as holy.

III. God is Spirit

The simplest application of this is that God is not confined to any physical space. God is not bounded by any physical medium. But God is Spirit not just in the sense that He remains beyond a corporeal frame.

The word for Spirit in Greek is πνεῦμα (pneuma) which by analogy or figuratively refers to a spirit, that is, (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, daemon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy spirit: - **ghost, life, mind.**

Let us discuss each one of these words:

Ghost refers to an otherworldly existence, a supernatural one. God is supernatural. Often times the Holy Spirit is referred to as Holy Ghost.

Life is in the spirit. The expression of life is in the expression of the Spirit. This grants us a very unique picture of the Spirit. When we observe the exuberance of life in action and consequence they are in fact the action of the Spirit.

Then we come to the mind. The Spirit leads to wisdom and knowledge.

And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (Isa 11:2)

IV. God is truth

The Gospel of John describes Jesus as God's spoken words. The same Gospel also describes Him as God made into flesh. Jesus is complete divinity manifest in complete human-nature. Thus what we find is a revelation of God nature. The same Gospel of John describes the nature of God's word as truth.

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (Joh 17:17)

When we realize that God's Word in the form of Jesus calls His Word as truth we realize that God is truth. That creates a special place for truth in the life of a believer. Lies are abhorrent to God. Hence a believer should adhere to the truth. Lies are a characteristic of the wicked and not the righteous.

The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies. (Psa 58:3)

That is not the way of a believer.

V. God is Eternal and Unchangeable in His Being

God is constant. That has a great significance on the action of a believer. It basically means that nothing that a believer can or cannot do will ever alter God. The nature of God does not change with the rupturing of the veil in the temple, only our perception does.

The unchangeable state of God also describes His Omnipotence. In the book of Job, we find "But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does." (Job 23:13).

Does this then invalidate the doctrine of free will? Imagine it in this way that God is so vast that the existence of the individual believer is nothing but a ripple in a large ocean of His grace that does not change with a change of the ripple. The individual wave does not have the capacity to change the ocean but the ocean has the capacity to absorb any change in the ripple and yet bring its own storm to the shore. God allows us free will but that does not invalidate predestination.

God is unchangeable, so are His promises and His covenants.

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, (Heb 6:17)

VI. God is Infinite

The image of God as an infinite ocean still limits Him within the shores of comprehension. Such limits are non-existent. His infinite existence reveals itself through His infinite power, wisdom, understanding, etc.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure. (Psa 147:5)

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O LORD. (Psa 36:5-6)

VII. God is Justice

Our God is a just God. Jesus does not tell you to offer the other cheek when one cheek is hit because God decides that some of His children should hit and others are hit. God is neither partial nor unfair. What God is, however, is that He is our Deliverer. God does not want us to take justice into our own hands because Vengeance is His.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. (Psa 89:14)

We have a righteous Judge in God. We must rely on His judgement. We must trust in His authority.

For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." (Heb 10:30)

VIII. God is Good

Lastly, we have the most defining nature of God. God is good. Goodness is one of the fruits of the Spirit. We receive it from God to exhibit into our lives.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things, there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

God cannot help but be Good. Evil is not from God. It is the absence of Him. Hence the life of a believer needs to reflect that goodness in any and every way. Goodness is not always blamelessness though. To be good in an evil world is not easy. But it is simply the mark of a believer. David believed in that goodness because God revealed it. However, the world sees goodness through the life of a believer, the ambassador of Christ. So the next time you are in prayer ask God if you reflect that goodness well enough. Then you may get to witness that Goodness in your life, action and testimony.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! (Psa 27:13)

2. The Paradox of Free Will

Fatalism vs Predestination

What is meant by Free Will?

Free will is the ability to choose between different possible courses of action unimpeded. **Free will** is closely linked to the concepts of responsibility, praise, guilt, sin, and other judgements which apply only to actions that are freely chosen.

What do you mean by Predestination?

Predestination is a **doctrine** in Calvinism dealing with the question of the control that God exercises over the world. In the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, God "freely and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass."

In any conversation about predestination, election, and God's will in the act of salvation, two verses from Romans 8 are usually cited:

For those God foreknew he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (Romans 8:29–30)

Election in Christianity involves God choosing a particular person or group of people to a particular task or relationship, especially eternal life. **Election** to eternal life is viewed by some as conditional on a person's faith, and by others as unconditional. God chose Jonah to be a messenger to Ninevah. He was predestined to be the messenger to the city of Ninevah.

If God is Omniscient does that negate free will?

Worded at it's simplest, the question is 1. Assume there's a God 2. Assume this God is "omniscient" 3. Assume "free will" means that individuals can make choices that are not wholly determined by prior influence.

Then the question becomes does "omniscience" refute the possibility of free will?

At least among different groups of Christians, there are four ways in which people resolve this debate (*Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* by James k. Beilby, IVP Academic(2001) **ISBN-13:** 978-0830826520):

1. Paul Helm and many "Calvinists" resolve the debate by rejecting this definition of free will. They are fine with our choices being only "compatible" free -- that is to say, they think we "choose" them but what we will choose is determined in advance.
2. Open Theists deny that "omniscience" includes knowledge of future choices because it denies that such things are knowable. Ergo, they would not be included in the account of knowledge. So God is "omniscient" on these views because he knows everything that is knowable which would not include the choices of free individuals.

3. Molinists has a rather complex view of how this works. They maintain that what God has is counterfactual knowledge of all possibilities. God knows what would happen *if* you were to make certain choices and what would follow from that. If I understand the view correctly, God even knows all of the dominoes that will fall but God doesn't pick any expect insofar as God chose to create a world that leads to all of that -- but does not know them factually.
4. Traditional Libertarian theism maintains that God knows what will happen but that knowledge is not determinative. On this view, the main idea is that you're still making choices but God has access to what you will choose.

I personally believe in the Molinist doctrine. That is further substantiated by my belief that God is a God of love and patience. He is like the loving Father who stands by as the child makes mistakes and learns from them. He is the Father that will not allow those mistakes to harm the child. Ultimately He allows the children to make the choice for themselves.

But when does God interfere?

When Jonah was asked to go to Ninevah he chose not to. Was that going against God? Yes, it was. When Jonah chose to go in another direction was God angry. Yes, He was. But does that negate God's will working through Jonah? No, it doesn't. God still manages to do His desired work through Jonah and He does that in a way that instils fear and respect in others. In other words, God does interfere. God interferes when there is a larger picture at stake. God interfered in the life of Saul because it was necessary to have the Gospel preached to the gentiles. God can interfere because He is Omnipotent. There is nothing that He cannot do.

God wanted to save the city of Ninevah and He wanted to save it through Jonah. It was an act of grace acting not only on Ninevah but also on Jonah because God wanted to empty His heart of hatred and fill it with reverence for Him. The first reading of Jonah often makes God sound dictatorial. When he says that something must be done, it must be done. If you disobey Him you suffer. But do you see the testimony Jonah had as a result of his disobedience? In the light of the New Testament, the story of Jonah holds more worth than a story of God's Omnipotence.

Why was Jonah reluctant to go to Ninevah?

"Nineveh, the capital of the kingdom of Assyria, is first mentioned in Gen_10:11, was founded by Nimrod. It stood on the left bank of the river Tigris, where it is joined by the Khosr, opposite to the present town of Mosul. The Assyrians had already become known in Syria. In B.C. 854 Shalmaneser II. had defeated at Karkar twelve kings confederate against him, among whom is reckoned Ahab King of Israel. Long before his time, Tiglath-Pileser I. had made a great expedition to the west, captured a town at the foot of Lebanon, and reached the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Jehu was compelled to pay tribute to the Assyrians; and Rimmon-nirari, who reigned from B.C. 810 to 781, held the suzerainty of Phoenicia, Samaria, Edom, and Philistia. Jonah, therefore, knew well what his country might expect at the hands of this people."-The Pulpit Commentary.

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. (Jon 1:1-3)

The Assyrians are powerful and they are the enemy of the Hebrews. Shall Jonah's loyalty lie with his nation or with his God? Jonah's problem was the reluctance to be used for the grace of God. Often times we desire God to act according to our will rather than the other way around. Reluctance and Desire are two sides of a coin. Both are stumbling blocks in the life of a believer and both stop the believer from submitting fully to the will of God. God grants us free will with the expectation that we shall make use of it to choose Him. That is His ultimate expectation from us. Jonah was reluctant and he tried to flee.

What is the Tarshish of our lives?

Make note that the good word defines Tarshish as lying *away from the presence of the Lord*. It is quite startling to note that you can exit the presence of the Omnipresence Lord.

"Tarshish; probably, Tartessus, a Phoenician city on the south coast of Spain, and therefore in the opposite direction to Nineveh. He was sent to the far east; he flees to the distant west."-The Pulpit Commentary.

What was the cause of exile from God's presence was not so much as the distance or the direction but the intention in the heart of Jonah! Where God desires obedience Jonah demonstrates stubborn disobedience. In showing the disobedience how is Jonah different from the rebels of Ninevah? The Assyrians, however, did not know God the way Jonah did.

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their (Jews') disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. (Rom 11:29-32)

God ultimately makes known His mercy and that was His plan for Ninevah.

Often times we harden our hearts and fail to show the mercy that we know God would want us to. Whether it be towards the poor, the sick, the elderly; it may be that we are rude to people who are unkind to us. In that, we fail to be the ambassador of Christ.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (2Co 5:20)

The Tarshish in our lives is our reluctance or our zeal. It depends on how we are inclined to disobey God.

What is the Storm that we face?

There are two kinds of storms that we face in life. One is the wrath of God and the other is the glory of God. Disobedience incurs God's wrath.

But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea so that the ship threatened to break up. (Jon 1:4)

The storm that Jonah faced was not just an obstacle. It was an insurmountable one. He had two options: to turn around and to be thrown off. To turn around meant to go back to Ninevah and his

calling. To be thrown off meant to die. Jonah was so zealous for his nation that he would rather face death by drowning than participate in the salvation of the enemy.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Mat 5:43-45)

Jonah's zeal for Israel was disobedience of God and the wrath was exhibited in the storm. Despite witnessing that wrath Jonah wished to oppose God and he chose opposition through death. In truth, he chose to flee the presence of God by incurring eternal sleep. Would Jonah have gone to heaven if he had died? It is unlikely. However, he did not die because God had other plans for it. God can do anything because He is Omnipotent. That includes sending a whale to swallow him up and spit him out on the shores of dry land.

There is the other kind of storm that the disciples faced. It was the storm meant for the glory of God.

And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marvelled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?” (Mat 8:24-27)

Are you witnessing a storm in your life right now? Decide first where you are with respect to God. Are you standing in His presence or are you trying to flee? If you are trying to flee be careful lest you have to be thrown into the depth, not just of an ocean but hell itself, in your bid to escape the Omnipresent Lord. If you are standing in the presence of the Lord and are yet going through a storm be watchful as you stand and witness and 'marvel' at the glory of God.

Can we escape the design of God?

When Jonah was in the belly of the fish he prayed for salvation. It took being in the belly of a giant fish for Jonah to see that there is no escape save for turning to God.

But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!” (Jon 2:9)

God allows us to choose our own path but He has laid out our destinies before us. The destinations of our lives are fixed but the path He allows us to choose which way we may. This is the concept of predestination.

Is it possible to submit to God unwillingly?

Jonah was displeased at the outcome of his own work. His enemies were made to see grace. They were pardoned. He felt like a traitor to his own people. Jonah knew God. He knew the gracious nature of God and it displeased him. His heart was never far from God though he tried to flee his physical presence. Jonah made the mistake of associating God with a particular region. God is not the God of Israel though. The same God can be a gracious God to the Assyrians and that angered Jonah.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” (Jon 4:1-3)

God can use whomever He chooses, willing or unwilling. That is a part of His Omnipotence. He used Jonah despite his unwillingness. But Jonah could have avoided much unpleasantness had he not chosen to flee the presence of God. His willingness could have made things easier for him. What will you choose?

Tri-Omni God as revealed through the story of Jonah

God reveals His Omniscience in knowing the heart of Jonah. God reveals His Omnipresence by hearing Jonah's prayer in the belly of the fish. God reveals His Omnipotence by stopping Jonah's journey, saving him from drowning and getting him to dry land in a miraculous way. But that is not all that is revealed through the story of Jonah.

We see the patience of God in the face of Jonah's disobedience. When Jonah tries to flee Him, God chooses to let him try. He is the patient father keeping tabs on the child while letting him play. When Jonah's antics get too much He reveals His majesty through a storm and a giant fish.

We also see the mercy of God to the people of Ninevah. We also see the compassion of God. In fact, God has to explain His compassion to Jonah and He does not hesitate to explain Himself. That shows the humility of God.

If we wish to be seen in the likeness of God, we may not be tri-Omni but we can be patient, merciful, compassionate and humble. Only then may we call ourselves children of God.

3. In Relationship with God

In his classic book [*Knowing God*](#), J. I. Packer wrote:

If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. . . . "Father" is the Christian name for God.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (Eph 1:3)

even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (Eph 1:4)

he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (Eph 1:5)

to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Eph 1:6)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (Eph 1:7)

which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (Eph 1:8)

making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ (Eph 1:9)

as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph 1:10)

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (Eph 1:11)

so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:12)

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (Eph 1:13)

who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:14)

The first few steps of the Christian walk are hard. Irrespective of background, geography, ethnicity, the first few steps into a life of the Spirit are always hard. We are used to the worldly things. Our natural instinct is for the flesh and against the Spirit. Despite that we are set right with God and that is through grace. This is Justification. Once that comes into being God forges a relationship with us. We are called to a divine Son-ship. That is the bond of adoption. God atones for our sinful nature through the blood of Christ and continues to renew our mind and body through sanctification such that on the day of his second coming Jesus may find us spotless and blameless and we may be redeemed in Him as citizens of a heavenly Kingdom. Every Christian knows this, in theory. Let us test our understanding of these four processes, namely:

- Justification and Sanctification

- Adoption and Redemption
-

Justification and Sanctification

Justification

The term justification means “to declare righteous.” The New Testament writers, specifically Paul, use the term in a judicial sense. Imagine God the judge, sitting on His throne, declaring to the believer, “In light of what Jesus has done on your behalf, you are (now) righteous. Things are now right between you and me. Court dismissed.”

What is the basis for justification?

God’s grace —Provided by Jesus Christ’s obedience to God the Father.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (Rom 5:15)

Jesus’ blood—Jesus’ suffering and death made all who choose to believe in him right with God.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (Rom 5:9)

Jesus’ righteousness accredited to believers (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21)—Those who believe in Jesus are freely given “right status” with God, not on the basis of their own works, but on the basis of what God has done in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:28; 4:5–6; Gal 2:16).

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

(1Co 1:30)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(2Co 5:21)

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (Rom 3:28)

And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

(Rom 4:5-6)

yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

(Gal 2:16)

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