

Cicero Christian Church Men's Breakfast*
The PAPA Prayer: Part Two

"Attending to God"



C.S. Lewis was a mere child when he lost his mother to death. Later in his years he wrote about his childhood view of God during this critical time of grief and suffering:

“The belief into which I had hypnotized myself was too irreligious for its failure to cause any religious revolution. I had approached God, or my idea of God, without love, without awe, even without fear. He was, in my mental picture of this miracle of resurrecting my mother, to appear neither as Savior nor Judge, but merely as a magician; and when He had done what was required of Him I supposed He would simply—well, go away. It never crossed my mind that the tremendous contact which I solicited should have any consequences beyond restoring the *status quo*. I imagine that a “faith” of this kind is often generated in children and that its disappointment is of no religious importance.”¹

There many men, women, and children that have an unclear picture as to the reality of the God that is actively pursuing a relationship with them. There are many people that have a negative picture of God due to past experiences of pain and grief. There are also people that simply refuse to believe in God or acknowledge that he exists due to hardening of the heart or an infiltration of Satan over a period of time.

The fact is that many times we pray to a god that might not be anywhere close to the picture of the God we have devoted our lives to and the one that we find described in the Bible. This is not an uncommon trait among humans as we see examples of this throughout Scripture.

Luke 18:9-14 – ⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ¹⁴ “I tell

¹ **The Quotable Lewis**, Tyndale House Publishing, 1990.

you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- *Describe how the Pharisee views the God he is praying to? The Tax Collector?*
- *Does this affect the way they pray? Explain.*

Next, read the passages below and answer the questions:

Psalm 46:10 – "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Revelation 1:8 – “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Isaiah 40:28 – Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Exodus 3:14 – God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

- *After reading these passages as a primer: Describe the attributes of God.*
- *Why should we understand these Biblical attributes of God?*
- *What could warp the picture or idea that we have engrained in our heart and mind of God?*
- *What are some examples of a warped image of God?*

Picturing God

We must always understand that the way we picture God truly effects the interaction that we will have with the Creator. Larry Crabb states that there are ten common images of God² that are in people's minds when they pray. Check each image or images that describes the God you pray to.

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|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smiling Buddy | <input type="checkbox"/> Stern Patriarch | <input type="checkbox"/> Cruel Tyrant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backroom Watchmaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Kindly Grandfather | <input type="checkbox"/> Moral Crusader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preoccupied King | <input type="checkbox"/> Impersonal Force | <input type="checkbox"/> Romantic Lover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vending Machine | | |

- *How does the way we view God affect the way we pray?*
- *Why is awareness of our view of God even important?*

² **The PAPA Prayer.** Larry Crabb, p. 104-105. Integrity Publishers, 2006.

- Describe the God that you worship.
- Would people you come into contact with describe the God you worship in a similar way?

Read Revelations 1:10-18 and answer the following questions:

Revelation 1:12-18 – I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

- Describe the attributes of God, in your own words, mentioned in this text.
- What does this picture of God invoke in your heart, mind, and soul?
- How would your prayer life be different if you pictured this God when you prayed?

Picture God Correctly, Picture God Passionately, Picture the God that Transforms!

It all starts with the PAPA Prayer!

Present Yourself to God Without Pretense
Attend to How You Are Thinking of God
Purge Yourself of Anything Blocking Your Relationship with God
Approach God as the “First-Thing” in Your Life

Ponder these Questions this Week

How Am I Picturing God Right Now...

- As I'm asking Him to bless me?
- As I'm facing this trial?
- As I'm sitting in church?
- As I'm arguing with a friend?

* Lesson in Conjunction with Core Practice #9 = Equip the Head of the Household



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