

ing the Lord if something didn't change!

How my heart aches for every one of God's dear children who find themselves in such a predicament. But, let me assure you, it isn't necessary. Not at all!

### **He Loves Us So Much, Nothing Is Too Much**

Your God doesn't have it in for you: He has it all for you. Everything you need, He has for you. Better still, He Himself is it for you. He is all you need.

God is not the source of your condemnation, but of your supply. He is even the source of your approval, not the approval of your sin, but of you in Christ Jesus. This God of love, and forgiveness, and mercy, and grace, this God is your loving heavenly Father.

I asked that dear lady what she did when her children did wrong. She said, I discipline them.

Then what? I asked.

Before I could get the question out, she was replying, I love them. As I asked her if she thought the Lord is a poorer parent than she, the smiles were obvious through her tears, even across the miles.

I reminded her that the Father's love sent His only, perfect Son to suffer indescribable agony and shame for us. He sent Him to buy us back from eternal separation from Him to eternal fellowship with Him. What then can He be unwilling to do for us, to give to us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32).

### **You Really Can Trust Him**

You need to continue correcting the terribly dis-

torted picture you may have of the Lord, especially to come to see Him as totally trustworthy. You must see Him as always having in mind your ultimate good in every circumstance He allows.

This dear one had to be willing to accept even what seemed to be His withholding of Himself from her. She had to be willing to see this experience, too, as part of His doing the very best for her.

We need to see Him as the One of infinite perfection beyond all that the human mind is able to comprehend or human imagination devise. We were created to honor, worship, and adore Him through time and eternity. When we begin to see Him even a little like He really is, we can't do otherwise than worship.

May He enable us to see Him increasingly as He is in all His wonder and glory. May we stand in awe of Him. May we joyfully repudiate all that is not of Him, that we might begin enjoying Him forever.

*"This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking."*

Ezekiel 1:28

*"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."*

Job 42:5-6

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ChristLife  
PO Box 1033, Niagara Falls, NY 14304  
Ph: (716) 622-7320  
E-mail: [Christlife@Christ-like.net](mailto:Christlife@Christ-like.net)  
Visit us at [www.Christ-like.net](http://www.Christ-like.net)



By: Pastor Ron Marr

*"For of Him and through Him and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."*

Romans 11:36

*"Even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made [you], and I will bear [you]; even I will carry [you], and will deliver you."*

Isaiah 46:4

Hopefully we have begun to see how essential it is for us to be needy, dependent, humble, and hungry toward our God. We need to pursue the question: how is our need to be met, our hunger satisfied? How are we to get close to the heart of God as we long to? How does this Christianity that works function?

Even though every true child of God wants to be close to the Lord deep inside, one of the great disappointments for most Christians has been the lack of that intimacy. Why is this?

Unfortunately, to say we want to be close to Him isn't to say we are responding to the wooing of the blessed Spirit as we ought. In fact, most of the Lord's dear ones have long since given up any idea they ever had of really being close to Him. They feel it just hasn't worked. They're deeply disappointed, hurt, and if the truth were known, angry.

**Substitutes for God**

## GOD IS ALL WE NEED

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We've largely substituted something less than God Himself for our aim. Ask yourself, "How are we generally expected to live the Christian life, grow in grace, know our Lord, have Christian victory? Three common answers come to my mind immediately: obedience to external commands, correct doctrine, and religious experiences. Legalism, doctrinalism, and experientialism have probably touched all believers at some point in their Christian walk.

No matter what helpful instantaneous experiences may be ours, the relationship we seek with our Lord is a continual development, a moment-by-moment spiritual transformation. It's not a once-in-a-lifetime experience, nor is it arrived at through simply believing or even acting on biblical truth. As for external self-disciplines, self-denial, and self-imposed external obedience, only disappointment awaits those who expect these to be adequate to lead them into dynamic spiritual living.

None of these substitutes for God, nor any others we manufacture, will ever satisfy the hunger in our needy hearts for God Himself. None of them will ever provide a Christianity that really works.

### **Not by Works**

God's commands are to be fully obeyed. Correct doctrine is not inconsequential. Valid Christian experiences do occur. However, many of us have allowed these to replace the Lord Himself as our hope. In New Testament terms, this amounts to legalism or fleshly works.

In his epistles, Paul had to give special attention to correcting this spiritual aberration. (See Galatians 3:1-5 and Philippians 3:3.) From the little attention given it today, one would think it scarcely poses any danger to us. In fact, however,

it characterizes the carnal church in our day just as disastrously as it did in Paul's.

### **The Lord Our Hope**

Now, we've already said it repeatedly and will continue to do so. Only our wonderful Lord Himself is our hope, as He is our life and our all. (See Colossians 1:27; 3:4, 11; 1 Timothy 1:1; Romans 15:13.) This is the one reality of overriding importance to all Christians. Whatever it is we need must be received from no other source than the Mighty One Himself. After all, He is all we need.

To look to any other source is idolatry, which is the worst sin against our God. Yet it has been possessively and obsessively ours since our birth. We're so accustomed to it that it seems natural and even comfortable, like an old shoe. We may find it difficult to recognize the very limited extent to which we abandoned it when we came to Christ for eternal salvation from our sin, its guilt, and punishment. We've still a long way to go.

### **Who Is Your God?**

When we declare this wonderful reality that God Himself is all we need we may be lampooned as trite and simplistic. That accusation may prove to be correct unless we show how He actually becomes our life and all in daily practice, and unless those of us who proclaim Him alone begin showing Him in our daily walk to be genuinely all we need.

For this to happen requires that we have a new God! Now, please forgive me for this overstatement. But there's a sense in which it really is so. We need to see our God as He is, not as we've been seeing Him. When our view of Him has been corrected, we'll have quite a different God than we had before.

So many of us view Him like the law really is, a hard

taskmaster. Instead, He's our loving heavenly Father, always there for us, to soothe the hurt, to bind the wound, to encourage, and to uplift. He's always there loving, caring, giving, helping; He is eternally present not to condemn, but to transform.

Our condemnation was placed on our lovely Lord Jesus Christ at the cross. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1). The Christian is freed from condemnation for sin through the finished work of Jesus Christ alone. But we insist that we get in on the act that somehow our acceptance with God depends at least in part on us.

### **Is This You?**

A long-time supporter of the ministry had written, "Please pray for me finally to break through this barrier which keeps me from having a personal relationship with God." Now, I couldn't stand the idea that this hurting heart was feeling shut out from God, so I called her. After I got an idea of her problem, I read her the whole first chapter of this manuscript!

How appreciative she was. She cried almost the whole time we'd talked. Her God had always been angry with her. She said, I keep hearing, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me. I feel separated from God, and I wonder what use there is in spending all the time I do in prayer. I keep hearing, Be perfect as I am perfect. I know I'm anything but perfect. I listen to your tape about passionate love for the Lord, but I haven't any.

She didn't want to give up. She was desperately sincere. She was spending time trying to seek the Lord, but she was getting no place. She was in danger of sooner or later entirely giving up seek-