

Popular Myths About God

ILLUS – Tom, Dick and Harry all signed up to join the police force. They were being trained by a detective who had a photo of a man. He showed it to Tom for 5 seconds and said, “Take a good look.” Then he took it away and said, “What did you notice about this man? How would you describe the suspect?” “That’s easy,” replied Tom. “He only has one eye.” “Don’t be silly. It only looks as if he has one eye because it’s a profile.” He showed the photo to Dick. “What did you notice about this man? How would you describe the suspect?” “That’s easy,” replied Dick. “He only has one ear.” “Don’t be silly. It only looks as if he has one ear because it’s a profile.” He showed the photo to Harry. “Now think before you say anything silly. What did you notice about this man? How would you describe the suspect?” “That’s easy,” replied Harry. “He’s wearing contact lenses.” The detective looked puzzled. “Just a moment,” he said, and walked out of the room. He checked the man’s file, and found that he did wear contact lenses. Returning to the room, he said, “That’s amazing. How on earth did you do that?” “It was easy,” replied Harry. “He couldn’t possibly be wearing glasses, because he’s only got one eye and one ear.”

Life is all about perspective, the way you look at things.

In this message we’re going to look at some myths about God, because these myths are all about perspective.

Popular Myth #1 – God is not necessary in my life.

The attitude is: I can get along just fine without Him – what do I need God for?

ILLUS – A few years ago, I bought an electric shaver. One good thing about the shaver is that it has a rechargeable battery, meaning you can use it unplugged. But when you do, it gives a low buzzing sound. But if I plug it, it gives a high buzzing sound. Unplugged it does a passable job. But plugged in it does a very good job, it works the way it was meant to.

If you don’t know Jesus, you can get along in everyday life without ever acknowledging Him.

You can be an atheist, and get along fairly well.

Before I knew Jesus Christ, I thought I was fine – but that’s because I didn’t know any better.

I was like the unplugged shaver.

I could never really do what I had been designed to do.

I could never really fulfil my full potential, the plan of God for my life.

Hoads of people are getting by, but don’t realise they’re not plugged into the power source.

ILLUS – A logging foreman sold a farmer a chainsaw guaranteed to chop down 50 trees a day. A week later, the farmer returned the saw, grumbling that it was faulty – it did only 3 trees a day. The foreman grabbed the saw, pulled the cord, and the saw went, “Bzzzzzzz.” The farmer jumped back, eyes wide open: “Hey, what’s that noise?”¹

1 Cor 1:23-24 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, (24) but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

If you want to be everything God wants you to be, you have to be plugged into the power source – Jesus Christ.

Popular Myth #2 – It’s enough for me to believe that God exists.

A lot of people think that.

Somehow they seem to think that God is in heaven jumping and skipping around singing, “Hooray, hooray, he believes that I exist. He believes that I exist.”

But do you know what the Bible says about that?

Ps 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” ...

Do you understand what that means?

The person who doesn’t believe in God is a fool – because God has left more than enough evidence.

And if you believe in God, that just proves that you’re not a complete fool.

You see, the issue is not whether you believe that God exists.

The issue is do you know him personally, do you have a personal relationship with Him?

After all, James says, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble!” (James 2:19)

There’s a difference between knowing about Him, and knowing Him.

ILLUS – If I ring up the Prime Minister, I get to talk to his staff and get the royal runaround. “Who are you? Where are you from? What is the nature of your inquiry? Can anyone else help you?” But when the Prime Minister’s son calls him: “Oh yes, I’ll put you right through.”

I don’t just know that God exists, I have an ongoing rock-solid relationship with Him: I am His son.

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Popular Myth #3 – God is just waiting for me to make a mistake / do the wrong thing.

ILLUS – The Turtle Picnic². A turtle family went on a picnic (turtles are very slow). They prepared 7 years for the outing, and left home searching for a suitable place. During the second year of their journey, they found it. They took 6 months to clear the area, unpacked the picnic basket, but then they discovered they’d forgotten the salt. All agreed that the picnic would be a disaster without salt. After a long discussion, they decided the youngest should return for the salt since he was the fastest. He whinged, whined, cried, and agreed to go only if the rest promised they wouldn’t eat till he got back. Three years passed, five, six, and in the seventh year the eldest turtle could no longer contain himself. He announced he was going to eat, and grabbed a sandwich. At that point, the little turtle suddenly popped out from behind a tree and shouted, “See! I knew you wouldn’t wait! Now I’m not going to get the salt.”

How many people think that God is just like that little turtle?

Just waiting for people to make a mistake – do the wrong thing – and then, “Aha! Gotcha!”

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

What God is saying is that He is offering us the opportunity to live under a different scheme.

We can live under a system of rules, where our relationship with God depends on our works, on the things we do.

This is a system where our perception is that God is just waiting for us to fail.

If we want to live under that arrangement, that would be our choice – but we would be destined to repeated failure.

Or we can live under His grace.

Under this arrangement, we can live a life of trust in Him; it's a relationship based on love, not rules.

And this is only possible through the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Through Him only, God gives us the opportunity to be reconciled with God, and become a part of His family.

God is offering to you and me His grace.

Popular Myth #4 – God has a set of scales.

People who believe this think that when they die, God will take all of their good deeds in one hand and all their bad deeds in the other hand.

And that's how their future will be determined.

ILLUS – When my daughter was in grade 1 or 2, the teacher asked the kids what their dads did for a living. “My Daddy is a carpenter ... My Daddy is a plumber ... my Daddy is an accountant.” “And what does your Dad do?” “He finds things.” “What do you mean?” “He goes into people's houses at night and finds things.” He was a professional burglar. Imagine this guy has broken into a house, and on his way out of the window, two policemen appear from nowhere, jam a gun into his ribs: “Get down on the ground! ...” They slap the cuffs on him and shine the torch into his face. “Well, if it isn't Light-fingered Lennie. Take a good look around you Lennie, because you're going away for a loooong time.” Suddenly he cries out, “Hold on officer! I think you ought to know that I gave \$50 to charity this morning. And not only that, I helped a little old lady change her flat tyre. Then I visited my old Aunt Bertha in hospital.” “Well, I didn't know that. Why didn't you say so in the first place? That's three good deeds, and only one bad deed. You're free to go.”

Does any country in the world work like that? I don't think so.

The policeman doesn't care which laws you've kept; he's still going to arrest you for the one you broke, and you're going to pay the price.

So why in the world would we expect God to weight up our good deeds and our bad deeds?

The Bible says: “The wages of sin is death ...” That's **all** sin – **all** sin is under God's judgment.

God sees all sin – everything you do, say and think.

How many of you would like your thoughts for a day to be thrown up on a video screen in the main city square?

This is how it really works:

ILLUS – My mother had a dog named Beauty [not quite sure how she got that name because she was a Bull Terrier]. Can you believe that people talk to their dogs? I sometimes wonder what would happen if the dog talked back. “Where have you been, Rover?” “Well, actually George, first I went over to that tree, and I ... well, you know how it is with us dogs. Then I went to that tree. It smelled good, so the same thing. Then I went to that tree. Say George, you need to get out in the yard more. There are some really interesting trees out there.” Anyway, my mother had a mulberry tree, and she would tell Beauty, “Don't you eat my mulberries. You stay right away. Or else!” And the dog would just wag her tail, panting, because all the dog hears is “blah, blah, blah...” because she's not big on English. Then she'd go out and eat all the mulberries she could reach, roll around on the ground and have a great time. And she'd come back in and my mother would say: “Where have you been? You've been eating my mulberries, haven't you?” And the dog was there: “Who me? I didn't eat your mulberries. I don't even like mulberries.” But there was the evidence – purple blotches all over her back, her legs, her sides, even a purple mouth.

It's a bit like us and God: “Who me, a sinner? I'm not such a bad person.”

And yet God looks into our hearts and sees the stain of sin that has been building up for years.

And to make things worse, God has put His secret agent inside each one of us – our conscience.

Our conscience says, “Hey, you shouldn't have done that.”

A little inner voice; we all experience that voice telling us when we've done the wrong thing.

So if we've **all** sinned, and God judges **all** sin, what's the solution to our sin problem?

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

But we need to respond.

ILLUS – It was a dark and foggy night. The Captain of the warship strained his eyes looking for any danger. Dead ahead he saw a light and thought, "Oh, no, that ship is going to collide with ours." He radioed the oncoming vessel: "This is Captain Jeremiah Smith. Please alter your course ten degrees south. Over." Amazingly, the oncoming ship didn't budge. Instead, he got a radio message: "This is Private Thomas Johnson. Please alter your course ten degrees north. Over." The Captain was appalled. A private with that kind of impudence should be thrown out of the military. He radioed again: "Private Johnson, this is Captain Smith, and I order you to immediately alter your course ten degrees south! Over!" The reply came back: "With all due respect, Captain Smith, I order you to alter your course ten degrees north! Over!" By now the Captain was very angry. He radioed back: "Private Johnson, I can have you court-martialled for this! For the last time, I command you on the authority of the United States government to alter your course ten degrees to the south! I am a battleship!" The private radioed back: "Captain Smith, sir. Once again with all due respect, I command you to alter your course ten degrees to the north! I am a lighthouse!"³

We can argue with God if we want to.

But it will never change the spiritual laws and truths that He has set in place.

Every one of us is a sinner – God judges all sin – and the only solution to sin is Jesus, who died for us, paid the price for our sin, and rose again from the dead.

He offers us the gift of eternal life.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

¹ Hodgins, Michael *1001 Humorous Illustrations For Public Speaking* No. 710

² Rice, Wayne *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* p 212

³ Rice, Wayne *Hot Illustrations For Youth Talks* p 24-25