

24 Day Wordless Book Devotional. Week #1

8/25.--GOLD

GOD IS GOD. HUMANS ARE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE. HEAVEN IS A GIFT; IT IS NOT EARNED OR DESERVED

- *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*
- *...The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*
- *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

8/26. GOD IS GOD! Part 1

God is God, infinitely valuable; God is the source and sustainer of value. Metaphorically, God is inconceivably much more valuable than gold, makes things He created golden, and is necessarily involved to keep them golden.

In our current culture, we attempt to reduce God to something smaller than us, to something we can manipulate, a thing that can be taken or left. As a result, the God Who is, Who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead becomes a little idol for our back pocket to be pulled out when needed.

Have you dumbed-down God? Have you fallen for a cultural lie? Ask the God Who is God as you go through this list of lies:

Lies: God is a take or leave opinion. I define God in my image. God is what I feel God is.

In reality, we make idols of God, but the God Who is God has created all things including us:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

This God has revealed His reality and nature through all of creation and especially to human beings in history.

God is the God Who is eternal. God created everything that has a beginning. Before God created, there was only God.

God is the God Who is Holy: transcendent, pure, loving, righteous, and sovereign—all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever present.

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!” Isaiah 6:3 ESV*

And this Holy God is not some unconscious or self-preoccupied force or power for you to meld with, tap into, or manipulate. The God Who is God is personal.

Imagine yourself as a Jewish priest named Isaiah. You serve the Temple in ancient Judea. One day the God Who is God breaks into your religious patterns and overwhelms you:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”*

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. Isaiah 6:1-4 ESV

How would you respond to God experiencing you like this?

Isaiah did not comfortably sit back, and say, “Wow! This is cool”. He was shut down. Instead, Isaiah declared, “Woe is me...” (v.5) God was experiencing Isaiah and Isaiah’s senses were overwhelmed; he was more than just experiencing God.

What is the point here? God is God and God is Holy. This God who is God is so much more than what we can experience or conceive. If God had

revealed more of Himself to Isaiah that day, Isaiah would have disintegrated.

You should not and cannot mess with God.

God is to be received on God's terms.

Our culture wants to take God on our terms. As a result, God is treated as an opinion—remade into a private thing, a codependent toy for our back pockets.

In what ways do you treat God like a severely co-dependent friend or parent?

This surfaces a foundational reality: God made you. Without God, there is no you. You did not make God.

Holy God became very personal with a reticent Moses, and revealed His Name: Yahweh. Yahweh means, "I am Who I am and I will be Who I will be. You will not Define Me, box Me in, or control Me."

God spoke personally with Moses and His people whom He had recently liberated from slavery in Egypt. He came overwhelmingly close to them as He revealed the Ten Commandments:

And God spoke all these words, saying,

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them... Genesis 20:1-5 ESV

What is God saying to you through the first two of these Ten Commandments? If you don't know, ask God. Listen.

God had brought these people out of Egypt. Before this, God created all things. Later, God raised Jesus from the dead. The God Who is God is

powerfully active in the world. Only God could do these things. This is not some matter of how we interpret events. God is God, not your interpretation or opinion.

Also, these Commandments constrain our tendency to remake God in our own image.

During these ancient times of Moses and Isaiah, every culture had their own gods, tribal notions and stories of the divine, with idols and rituals. Such idol carving was the norm! God exposed this lie and revealed His determination to rescue us from our idol carving hearts. God showed and commanded a new, sustainable normal based on His reality and our rescue. We need new hearts.

Regarding this in our time, what do you hear in the following? Ask the Holy Spirit.

*And there is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none besides me.*

*“Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!*

For I am God, and there is no other. Isaiah 43:21-22 ESV

8/27. GOD IS GOD! Part 2

In our modern culture, we continue to want other gods. We tend to wrap our controlling minds around what God has revealed in nature and His Word and create idols out of our own self-serving notions.

Like us, the Apostle Paul struggled to understand God at times. Yet, at the end of such mental efforts, Paul knew that God is God and that Jesus has been raised and is Lord:

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

*“For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor?”*

*“Or who has given a gift to him
that he might be repaid?”*

*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory
forever. Amen. Romans 11:33-36 ESV*

Remember a time in which you struggled to understand what was happening and how God was involved. Did you try to wrap your mind around things, become frustrated, and then just walk away? Remember that time and the point at which you walked away. Go back to that point. Give over those people and that situation to God. Then, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and prayerfully re-read and take in Romans 11: 33 – 36 above. Afterward, what did you feel? What did you see? What did you hear? What word or phrase lingers. Preciously keep this word or phrase as God's gift to be open whenever this episode comes into your heart again.

Now, go back to the lies list. Go through them again.

What are the lies that you have believed about the God who is God? Having engaged today's Scriptures, what is God's truth that addresses your lie(s)? Write it down.

Then, renounce the light out loud. Afterward, declare the truth aloud.

8/28. CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE. Part 1

God made all human beings with an equal value rooted in Him. Thus, each human being is a golden person. When we devalue others or ourselves, we devalue the God Who made us all equally golden.

We live with a great social contradiction. On one hand, you are just the product of mindless, purposeless matter and energy. As sarcastically stated, it was from goo to you. On the other hand, society says that you as an individual are special, entitled, and autonomous. In a sense, the society makes you out to be a little god propped up in the midair.

Under what conditions do you especially believe one or more of these lies:

Lies: I am a molecular accident. I am an overgrown animal. I am essentially worthless, but I make my value. I am my own. I come from nothing, but grow into my own image of what I want to be. When I feel I do

not have any value, I am free to end my life. I can have sustainable self-esteem without God.

In contrast, what does God's Word say about you?

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

*So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27 ESV*

God did not just get things started long ago, and now you just happened to emerge out of the goo. God was intimately involved in your personal formation. What does God's Word say about God and you?

*For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them. Psalm 129:13-16 ESV*

8/29 CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE. Part 2

Did you know that the Son, a Person of the Triune Godhead—Who took on flesh and became the Lord Jesus Christ, was intimately involved in the creation of everything, including humanity, and you your personhood?

What does God's Word say about God, the Son (Word), and you?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1–5 ESV

Notice more fully the nature of the Son, and His ongoing relationship with all of the creation. Ponder how he may be involved intimately in sustaining your humanity, personhood, and value.

In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. Hebrews 1:1-3 ESV

Now, consider what the Son (Word) became-- and did not become:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 ESV

In response, do not look inside yourself or outside to our culture find yourself, your value and your identity as a human being. Instead, praise upward and worship the God Who has given you humanity, personhood, value, and identity.

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him*

*Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.*

*You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth! Psalm 8:3-9 ESV

Now, DECLARE: Abba Father, You made me in your image. You made me a valuable person to be respected and loved and to respect and love others who are just as valuable as me.

8/30. ETERNAL LIFE

Heaven is metaphorically a place with streets of gold because of the direct presence of God. Only people and things they have been purified, made holy, and are purely golden exist in heaven.

Since God is reduced to an opinion in our culture, any post mortem existence is just another opinion. Even as Christians, we are prone to this skepticism about afterlife certainty because of the culture.

What untrue notions have you nibbled on if not swallowed?

Lies: No one can know what happens to you after you die. When you're dead you're dead. Everyone goes to heaven. Heaven is a boring place where you sit around.

Jesus reveals that eternal life is much more than just going to heaven:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:1-3 ESV

What does this say to you about eternal life and the authority behind it?

What is eternal life?

Jesus makes it clear that when we have decisively transferred our trust to the Father and Him, we immediately are given eternal life; this is not just a future experience.

Christ establishes a relationship with those the Father has given him—including you. This relationship with Jesus is the gift of eternal life. Notice is also and what follows;

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. John 5:24 ESV

You have heard and believed. In what ways have you passed from death to life? Picture this crossing over and describe it.

As related throughout the Gospel of John, not everyone hears and believes Jesus. When Holy Jesus rubs against them and they resist, the stench from their rebellious friction exposes their deadly condition and future condemnation.

There is a separation. Some as prepared by the Father hear and believe, but others, who are not prepared, do not. What does the Holy Spirit say to you about this through the following:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. John 5:25 – 29 ESV

This is heavy. Perhaps it is troubling you.

Have you truly heard and believed? Have you transferred the weight of your trust to the Lord Jesus? If so, He actually commands you to transfer your fears to faith in Him and his promises as you ponder the future:

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you

that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. John 14:1-3 ESV

The path to Heaven is a person; the fearless and clear way there is to follow Him. Be loved, follow, and fear not! See *1 John 4:16 – 19*

Having received the gift of eternal life, you will come to know him more and more as you follow. Unless Jesus returns beforehand, you will reach that point of departure-- physical death. Jesus reveals that we will go to a place which he calls Paradise. See Luke 23:29-43 for a portrait of a cross-over from death to life and Paradise.

What does this paradise look and feel like? The Book of Revelation paints a picture:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place^l of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:1 – 4 ESV

Go through this passage again. Ask the Holy Spirit to personally enter into the scene. Who are you seeing? What are you feeling?

You will experience this...

During Jesus's final return, after the judgment upon those who refuse to hear and believe, you will receive a new eternal body and live in the new Heaven and Earth.

After you die, as you await this final, culminating Day, you will get to know Jesus more and more—His person, His ways, and His purposes. You will not be unconscious. Notice what God through Paul reveals about this:

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 ESV

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 ESV

What do these passages say to you about the difference between your pre-death and post-mortem conditions? What do things feel like now? What will they feel like after you die? Can you picture this future condition?

After we die and before Jesus' final return, everything truly will be much better than at the best times in our pre-death lives:

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. Philippians 1:21 – 23 ESV

Now, go back to the lies list. Go through them again.

What are the lies that you have believed about eternal life? Having engaged today's Scriptures, what is God's truth that addresses your lie(s)? Write it down.

Then, renounce the light out loud. Afterward, declare the truth aloud.

8/31 FAITHFULLY HANDLING GOD'A GOLD: Them & Me

Created in God's image, we are to treat others as God treats us. This is the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12) Notice that this is in an active and positive

sense. We do not just honor the gold in others, we enhance their goldenness.

Who have you devalue? Which individuals or groups do you view as less than human? What does your attitude in language about them say? Which of the following lies come out of your heart?

Lies: I feel and realize my own consciousness, so I'm the most real thing in the whole universe. Some people are more valuable than others. People just like me, especially those I know, are more valuable. People who do more good things are more valuable. People who have more money and stuff are more valuable. People who are smarter are more valuable. People who are great athletes are more valuable. People who get the spotlight are more valuable.

Read the following first part of the Whiz Kids pledge:

The Whiz Kid Pledge (Updated)

You are a Whiz Kid. You are God's golden child.

I will listen to you.

I will build you up; I will not put you down.

I will tell you the truth to build you up.

I will keep my promises to you.

I will be honest.

.... I will not quit! I will go all the way, all the way, in Jesus Name Amen!

Now, out loud, picture an individual or group that you are honestly viewing as less than human. As you picture them, say The Whiz Kids Pledge out loud.

Go back to the list of lies. Which truths address these lies? Consider the scriptures that you engaged this week.

Write down the truths that address these lies.

Declare these truths out loud.

Finally, what lies have you believe about yourself because of growing up in a shame culture, due to things that you have done or that were done to you, or stemming from deeply rooted lies about yourself?

Read these truths about yourself.

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. Galatians 4:6-7

Abba Father, in Christ You have adopted me. I am your son or daughter. This is who I am; this is my identity. I can and will be who You've made me to be, Your son or daughter.

Abba Father, in Christ You have accepted me. I am accepted. I am acceptable. I can and will accept the person You have accepted, that is me.

Abba Father, in Christ You have valued me. I am valuable. I will respect and treasure the person that You have valued, that is me.

Abba Father, in Christ You have loved me. I am lovable. I can and will love the person that You love, that is me.

*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. 1 John 3:1-3
ESV*

Now declare these statements out loud.

To conclude the week...

When questions are asked amid a culture not truly committed to sound answers, it's hard to imagine a land more confusing. The confusion tends to swirl around certain questions: What does it mean to be human? What is

human freedom and is it the same as autonomy? Do our rights have limits? Is there a transcendent meaning and purpose to human existence, or are we the measure of all things? We need clarity in our day to rightly answer these questions, to be informed individuals, honest scientists, and fair politicians. Abdu Murray, [Saving Truth: Finding Meaning and Clarity in a Post-Truth World](#)