

Getting to Know God Better, Week 1

Introduction to Anthropomorphism

Types of Literature in the Bible

Question: How many types of literature are there in the Bible? Answer: Yes

Old Testament		New Testament					
Law Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Major Prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Gospels Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts of the Apostles				
				Pauline Epistles Romans 1-2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1-2 Thessalonians 1-2 Timothy Titus Philemon			
History Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther		Minor Prophets Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	General Epistles Hebrews James 1-2 Peter 1-3 John Jude		Revelation of Jesus Christ		
						Wisdom/Poetry Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	

Old Testament: Law

The Bible is filled with a variety of literature. Starting out, there is the Law (Genesis – Deuteronomy). The Jews call the Law the Torah (literally, ‘instruction’). However, it’s got more than just instruction. It’s got narrative (stories), poetry (Adam’s first words in Genesis 2), genealogies (large parts of Genesis) and much more. The Law covers the period of time from Creation to the time of Joshua (about 2,500 years).

Old Testament: History

The next section in the Old Testament is the history. From Joshua to Esther we see the reign of the judges, the kings and a very historical account of events covering small bits and pieces of ~ 1,000 years.

Old Testament: Wisdom/Poetry

The next section is the Wisdom or Poetical books. These five books (starting with Job, which some people think may be the oldest literature known to man and perhaps the first book of the Bible actually written) are written with an extremely poetical structure. Job is basically a conversation between Job and three of his friends. Psalms is a collection of poems written by a variety of authors showing the virtual equivalent of the Old Testament songbook. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are brilliant exposes on life and how to live it, and The Song of Songs finishes up the section by giving us deep drink of romance.

Old Testament: Prophets

The last section of the Old Testament is broken down into two subsections in modern scholarship—Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. Why the division? The Major Prophets are simply longer books than the Minor Prophets. Now, most of you probably don't do a lot of devotional time in the Major and Minor Prophets due to the effort necessary for understanding. It's not low-hanging fruit like Psalms and Proverbs. The Prophets require work since such a large part of so many of them are written in figurative (i.e., not literal) language. However, just because they can be a bit more challenging doesn't mean we should ignore them. All Scripture is profitable and therefore all Scripture should be studied.

New Testament: Gospels

In the New Testament, we are greeted with four accounts of Jesus Christ. We meet Jesus, we see His birth, His life, His ministry, His family, His disciples, His struggles, His opposition, His love, His patience, His teaching, His death and finally, His resurrection. The Gospels communicate the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and that He has enabled us to have salvation through His blood.

New Testament: Acts of the Apostles

The next section of the New Testament is the transitional book of the Acts of the Apostles—and that's exactly what it is—it's the history of what the apostles did after Jesus left. It literally starts out telling the story of the first few days of Christianity and what happened for the next few years. Acts communicates the first steps of the church and what worked and what didn't. It's best read with a map at your fingertips as you will be taken all over the Mediterranean on the missionary journeys of Peter and Paul.

New Testament: Pauline Epistles

The next section of the New Testament are the Pauline Epistles—letters written by Paul to the various churches that needed information, encouragement, rebuke, direction on how to pull off Christianity. Paul was prolific in his letters and was extremely practical in his advice and direction to the early church.

New Testament: General Epistles

The next to last section of the New Testament is the miscellaneous section—the section where the letters not written by Paul were put. They too, provided information, encouragement, rebuke and direction to the churches that were born in this era.

New Testament: Revelation of Jesus Christ

The last book in the Bible is perhaps the most amazing in its imagery, language, scope, size, scale and substance. It's the story of Jesus Christ coming back to finish the job and set up eternity—a great ending.

So, as you can see, there's an incredible variety in the types of literature used in the Bible—there's instruction, history, narrative, poetry, prophecy, stories and much, much more. All of these varying types of literature beg the question—how are we to **understand** it all? Are we to read everything the same—take it at face value (literal interpretation) or are there some areas of the Bible that require a different perspective (a more figurative interpretation) to understand what's going on?

Literal vs. Figurative

Fortunately, there have been many men and women who are far more learned about the Scriptures than we are to give us some guidance in these areas. Our church takes a very literal approach to Bible interpretation—perhaps you've heard Gary speak about how we at SHBC, "Interpret the Bible **literally**." This philosophy enables the average guy to read the Bible and insure that it's relevant and understandable. If, as some theologies teach, everything is to be interpreted figuratively, then it very quickly becomes difficult to know what's what. Take, for example, Genesis 49.

Figuring out the Figurative

Here are a few tips for figuring out the figurative from a book that our pastor took us through a while ago: *Living by the Book* by Howard Hendricks, pages 260-264.

1. Use the literal sense unless there is some **good** reason not to (Song of Solomon)
2. Use the figurative sense when the passage **tells** you to do so (Genesis 37 & Joseph's dreams)
3. Use the figurative sense if a literal meaning is impossible or absurd (Revelation 1:16)
4. Use the figurative if a literal meaning would involve something immoral (John 6:53-55)
5. Use the figurative sense if the expression is an **obvious** figure of speech (Proverbs 11:22)
6. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the scope of the passage (Revelation 5:1-5)
7. Use the figurative if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the general character and style of the book (Psalm 63:7)
8. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the plan and purpose of the author (Psalm 1:1, 1:3)
9. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation involves a **contradiction** of other Scripture (Mark 10:25)
10. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation would involve a contradiction of doctrine (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

So, now that we have a few guidelines and have looked at Scripture from a 10,000 foot view, let's dig into one of the types of literature that is used in Scripture—anthropomorphism.

Anthropomorphism Defined

Anthropomorphism is attributing human characteristics to the **non-human**. The word comes from two Greek words, *anthropos* (man) and *morphe* (shape or form). Anthropomorphism is literature that describes something non-human using the shape or forms typically found only in mankind.

Anthropomorphism outside of Scripture

1. Perhaps the easiest place to find anthropomorphisms is in **Greek mythology**. How many of you had to study or read some type of Greek mythology while in school? The Greeks had many gods and their gods were constantly exhibiting human behavior. Does anyone have any examples of that?

Wikipedia: Each god descends from his or her own genealogy, pursues differing interests, has a certain area of expertise, and is governed by a unique personality. . . . Most gods were associated with specific aspects of life. For example, Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty, Ares was the god of war, Hades the god of the dead, and Athena the goddess of wisdom and courage. Some deities, such as Apollo and Dionysus, revealed complex personalities and mixtures of functions, while others, such as Hestia (literally "hearth") and Helios (literally "sun"), were little more than personifications.

Wikipedia: Many mythologies are almost entirely concerned with anthropomorphic deities who express human characteristics such as jealousy, hatred, or love. The Greek gods, such as Zeus and Apollo, were often depicted in human form with both commendable and despicable human traits.

2. Anthropomorphism frequently occurs in **children's literature**. Think about *Aesop's Fables: The Fox and the Grapes, The Tortoise and the Hare, The Crow and the Pitcher* and *The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*. All of these are anthropomorphic works. Think about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. There's the Cheshire Cat who talks, the White Rabbit who worries he'll be late and Alice—who communicates with all of these anthropomorphic characters. But what does that have to do with Scripture?

Anthropomorphism in Scripture

Divine Woo from Sex God, by Rob Bell (pages 95-100)

God relates to us through anthropomorphism. We can't relate to the infinite, so God comes down and describes Himself and His interactions with us in terms that we can understand. The Scriptures describe God changing His mind (while not changing His nature)—that's week two. The Scriptures describe God's eyes watching us (even though He's a spirit)—that's week three. The Scriptures describe His outstretched hand that can save—that's week four. The Scriptures describe our prayers going up to God and that they are a, "sweet-smelling savor"—that's week five. The Scriptures describe things that we can do that please God—that put a smile on His non-corporeal face—that's week six.

The Scriptures take the out-of-this-world God and use language that allows us to know Him, to understand Him, to love Him and to seek out ways to please Him. There's a lot to learn in this study and I hope you come each week so that we can go through the process of Getting to Know God Better.

Getting to Know God Better, Week 2

Sentiment: Exploring the Emotions

Review

Last week, we looked at the various types of literature in the Bible—from the Torah to the Revelation. We saw that there is narrative, poetry, history, prophecy and more. All of these varying types of literature beg the question—how are we to understand it all? Are we to read everything the same—take it at face value (literal interpretation) or are there some areas of the Bible that require a different perspective (a more figurative interpretation) to understand what’s going on?

Next, we looked at how our church interprets the Bible—literally. Interpreting the Bible literally just means that (and I’m quoting from the *Clarifying Statement on Dispensationalism*, published by the New England Bible Conference: **The Bible must be interpreted literally which is the way language is normally and naturally understood. We recognize that the Bible writers frequently used figurative language which is a normal and picturesque way of portraying literal truth.**

We took a few minutes and looked at some guidelines of when to interpret literally vs. figuratively (from Howard Hendricks’ book, *Living by the Book*).

Then, we turned to one type of figurative language in the Bible—anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is attributing human characteristics to the **non-human**. The word comes from two Greek words, *anthropos* (man) and *morphe* (shape or form). Anthropomorphism is literature that describes something non-human using the shape or forms typically found only in mankind.

We briefly look at anthropomorphism outside of Scripture (found both in Greek mythology and children’s’ literature).

Lastly, we turned to Scripture and talked about the fact that God relates to us through anthropomorphism. We can’t relate to the infinite, so God comes down and describes Himself and His interactions with us in terms that we can understand. In this series, we’ll look at God’s emotions, His eyes, His arms, His nose and finally His smile. The Scriptures take the out-of-this-world God and use language that allows us to know Him, to understand Him, to love Him and to seek out ways to please Him. There’s a lot to learn in this study and I hope you come each week so that we can go through the process of Getting to Know God Better. Today, we’ll focus on three of God’s emotions—and they may surprise you.

1. **Jealousy**

Exodus 20:4-5: 4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—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; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of

the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me. Worshipping and/or serving anything other than God causes Him to be jealous

Exodus 34:14: (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is Jealous, is a jealous God*). 'Name' can also be translated, 'memorial' or 'reputation'

Deuteronomy 4:24: For the LORD your God *is a consuming fire, a jealous God*. 'Consuming' can also be translated, 'devouring'

Ezekiel 39:25: "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name.'" God is jealous for His name

Joel 2:18: Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, And pity His people. God is jealous for His land

1 Corinthians 10:15-22: **15** I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. **16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? **17** For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? **19** What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? **20** Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. **21** You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. **22** Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? Don't go back and forth—you'll risk God's jealousy

2. **Anger**

Numbers 11:1, 10, 33: **1** Now *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard *it*, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp. **10** Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. **33** But while the meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague.

Numbers 12:9: So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. This, I think, is one of the scariest verses in Scripture. Can this happen today? Yes (fellowship) and no (the Holy Spirit).

Numbers 32:10-13: **10** So the LORD's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, **11** 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, **12** except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.' **13** So the LORD's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone.

Deuteronomy 9:13-20: **13** “Furthermore the LORD spoke to me, saying, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. **14** Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.’ **15** “So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant *were* in my two hands. **16** And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf! You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. **17** Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. **18** And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. **19** For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me at that time also. **20** And the LORD was very angry with Aaron *and* would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

Joshua 7:1-26: **1** But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel. **2** Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, “Go up and spy out the country.” So the men went up and spied out Ai. **3** And they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for *the people of Ai are few.*” **4** So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. **5** And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water. **6** Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. **7** And Joshua said, “Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! **8** O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? **9** For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear *it*, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?”

10 So the LORD said to Joshua: “Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? **11** Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. **12** Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. **13** Get up, sanctify the people, and say, ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: “*There is* an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.” **14** In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes.

And it shall be *that* the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. **15** Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.”

16 So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. **17** He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarahites; and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. **18** Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 Now Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me.”

20 And Achan answered Joshua and said, “Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: **21** When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. **23** And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. **24** Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. **25** And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

26 Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day. God gets angry when we disobey His word (and His anger can be appeased)

Judges 3:8: Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years.

2 Samuel 6:1-7: **1** Again David gathered all *the* choice *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. **2** And David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. **3** So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. **4** And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. **5** Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. **7** Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* error; and he died there by the ark of God. God gets angry when we do not follow the details He has set forth

Romans 1:18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. God's anger is present in the New Testament against all unrighteousness

3. **Love**

Deuteronomy 7:7, 8, 13: **7** The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; **8** but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **13** And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

2 Samuel 12:24: Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him. God's love is shown to children

Psalms 42:8: The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song *shall be with me*—A prayer to the God of my life. *Chesed*, the loving-kindness of God

Psalms 63:3: Because Your lovingkindness *is better than life*, My lips shall praise You.

Psalms 103:13: As a father pities *his children*, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. God loves us deeply and has tender compassion for us (the word for pities)

Psalms 146:8: The LORD opens *the eyes of the blind*; The LORD raises those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous. God loves those that obey His law

Jeremiah 31:3: The LORD has appeared of old to me, *saying*: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." God's love (not His anger) is everlasting.

Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God loved us when we were sinners

2 Corinthians 9:7: So let each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. God loves a cheerful giver

Hebrews 12:6: For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.

1 John 3:1a: Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

1 John 4:8-9: **8** He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9** In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

Getting to Know God Better, Week 3

Sight: Examining the Eyes

Review

Anthropomorphism is attributing human characteristics to the **non-human**. The word comes from two Greek words, *anthropos* (man) and *morphe* (shape or form). Anthropomorphism is literature that describes something non-human using the shape or forms typically found only in mankind.

God relates to us through anthropomorphism. We can't relate to the infinite, so God comes down and describes Himself and His interactions with us in terms that we can understand. Last week, we looked at God's emotions; this week His eyes; in future weeks His arms, His nose and finally His smile. The Scriptures take the out-of-this-world God and use language that allows us to know Him, to understand Him, to love Him and to seek out ways to please Him.

The Eye in the Bible

The Hebrew word for eye can be used in a variety of ways that are not related to vision (the, "**face**" of the earth in **Exodus 10:5**, **Exodus 10:15**; **Numbers 22:5**, **Numbers 22:11**, the, "**color**" of things in **Proverbs 23:31** and **Numbers 11:17**). In Hebrew, the word for eye and the word for **fountain** are the same word. . **American Tract Society Bible Dictionary (Eye): Besides its common use, to denote the organ of sight, it is often used figuratively in the Bible. Most of these passages, however, require no explanation.** The English concept of, "**the apple of my eye**," is slightly different and refers to the **pupil** of the eye (the part that if damaged at all that could not be repaired).

This Week's Key Verse

Job 10:4: [And this is Job speaking—be careful about quoting the other guys as they say a lot of incorrect things that can be taken out of context very easily]**Do You have eyes of flesh? Or do You see as man sees?** [This is the best example of anthropomorphism clearly stated in the Old Testament that I could find]

God's eyes watching things

Land

Deuteronomy 11:12: **a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.**

Temple

1 Kings 8:29: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place.

1 Kings 9:3: And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

Man

Psalms 139:16a: Your eyes saw [watched, gazed at] my substance, being yet unformed.

Proverbs 5:21: For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders [literally weighs or levels out] all his paths.

Proverbs 15:3: The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Keeping watch [spying] on the evil and the good.

Jeremiah 16:17: For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes.

Jeremiah 32:19: You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

Nations

Psalms 66:7: He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious [stubborn] exalt themselves. Selah

Truth

Jeremiah 5:3a: O LORD, are not Your eyes on the truth?

Everything

Hebrews 4:13: And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

People who did right in God's eyes

David

1 Kings 15:5: because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Asa

1 Kings 15:11: Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David.

Jehoshaphat

1 Kings 22:43a: And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD.

Those who did not do right in God's eyes

I picked these verses because they clarified what the evil was to some extent or another.

1 Kings 11:33: because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David.

1 Kings 16:25: Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who were before him.

2 Chronicles 29:6: For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned their backs on Him.

Isaiah 1:15-16: When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,

Jesus' Eyes

Luke 6:20: Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.

John 6:5: Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

John 11:41: Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

John 17:1: Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

God's eye(s) not sparing/having pity

Ezekiel 5:11: 'Therefore, as I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish you; My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. [This language occurs many times in Ezekiel]

Zechariah 12:4: In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

Apple of God's eye

Deuteronomy 32:10: "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.

Psalms 17:8: Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

Proverbs 7:2: Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. [This is the only thing God tells us to keep as the apple of our eye—timely advice.]

Zechariah 2:8: For thus says the LORD of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. [Think about trying to destroy God's pupil—no way that could happen and the same thing is true of the nation of Israel]

People requesting God to **open** His eyes

1 Kings 8:52: that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You.

Nehemiah 1:6: please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned.

Daniel 9:18: O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

Key Verses

Genesis 6:8: But Noah found grace [favor, elegance—the same word we talked about in **Esther**] in the eyes of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 16:9a: For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro [the stem of this word implies that God's eyes go quickly and eagerly, not that they just go] throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal [at peace] to Him.

Psalms 32:8: I will instruct [give you attention] you and teach [point, direct] you in the way [journey, manner, road] you should go; I will guide [advise, counsel] you with My eye.

Getting to Know God Better, Week 4

Strength: Analyzing the Arms

Review

Anthropomorphism is attributing human characteristics to the **non-human**. The word comes from two Greek words, *anthropos* (man) and *morphe* (shape or form). Anthropomorphism is literature that describes something non-human using the shape or forms typically found only in mankind.

God relates to us through anthropomorphism. We can't relate to the infinite, so God comes down and describes Himself and His interactions with us in terms that we can understand. We've looked at God's emotions and eyes and this week His arms. Next week should be His nose and finally His smile.

1. Arm

The **Victorious** Arm

Exodus 6:6: **Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.**

Deuteronomy 5:15: **And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.**

Notice the fact that in both of these verses, it's not just that God's arm is mentioned, it's that it's outstretched while it's mentioned. I don't know about you, but I enjoy seeing people make an effort—show some type of involvement when help is given, rather than just directing someone else to do some work. It's almost as if the 'outstretched arm' shows God's involvement rather than His keeping a distance.

Psalms 77:15: **You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah**

Rhetorical Questions about God's Arm

Numbers 11:23: **And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD's arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not."**

Job 40:9: [God speaking to Job] **Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?**

Now, there are a lot of games that I like to play—I like to play chess, RTS computer games, basketball and a few others, but I don't want to play a game where God Himself is asking me rhetorical questions. God is reminding his creation that God is God—and sometimes we need to be reminded of that.

2. **Fingers**

Exodus 31:18: And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. God wrote on the stone with His finger. Had this been a man writing, the text would have said, 'carved on the stone.'

John 8:2-11

3. God's **Hand**

The Negative

1 Samuel 5:6: But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors [literally, hemorrhoids], *both Ashdod and its territory.*

1 Samuel 7:13: So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. Obviously, the hand of the Lord against you is not something you want.

The Positive

Exodus 7:5: And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." This language is all over the Old Testament.

2 Chronicles 30:12: Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the LORD. What a great verse for all teachers and leaders! God's hand can enable you to have a ministry such that obedience is the dominant characteristic of those that are in your care. This, to me, is the most encouraging verse this week.

Ezra 7:6: this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he *was* a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. This language is all throughout Ezra.

Nehemiah 2:18: And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to *this good work*. The hand of God upon you can inspire others to come and do good work.

Psalms 16:11: You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore. The right hand was the hand that good things came from (as opposed to the left hand) in Hebrew culture. You ate, gave gifts and greeted people with the right hand. You tended to personal bodily functions with the left hand.

Psalms 37:23-24: The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand. Note that even good men will fall down. It's great to know that God is holding us with His hand. Sometimes we think we can do things in our own strength and it's a great mental picture to see that God is holding us up.

Luke 1:66: And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, “What kind of child will this be?” And the hand of the Lord was with him [John the Baptist]. Have you ever prayed that the hand of the Lord would be with your children?

Jesus at the Father’s Right Hand

Luke 23:46: And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” Having said this, He breathed His last. (The most anthropomorphic verse ever)

Romans 8:34: Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Jesus prays to God for us and it’s interesting to note that both pleasures forevermore and Jesus are at God’s right hand.

4. Jesus’ Hand(s)

A. Healing

Matthew 8:3: Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. An example of the many times Jesus healed with His hands.

Mark 6:5: Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. This one makes me laugh—it’s almost as if healing people was the normal with Jesus.

Mark 8:23-25: So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. Why did Jesus have to lay his hands on this man twice?

B. Blessing

Mark 9:36-7: Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Mark 10:13-16: And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Luke 24:50-51: And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. Have you ever had someone bless you or put their hands on you to pray for them?

Getting to Know God Better, Week 5

Smell: Noticing the Nose

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: **Acceptable** sacrifices . . . are called a "sweet smell."

God Smells **Offerings**

Genesis 8:21: And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

Exodus 29:18; 29:25; 29:41; Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9; 3:5; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18; Numbers 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24; 18:17; 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27; 29:2, 6, 8, 13, 36: "sweet **aroma**"

Ephesians 5:2: And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

But Not All Offerings . . .

Leviticus 26:31: I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. One of the ways that God shows His displeasure is by stating that He will not smell the fragrance of an offering. This is illustrated in stronger language in **Amos 5:21:** I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.

A **Long** Nose for Anger (Al Hsu)

What helps me is an image from scripture of the nose of God. Of course, God doesn't literally have a physical nose. But in several places in the Old Testament, God is described with nostrils flaring at injustice. Psalm 18:8 says, "Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth."

A second image balances the first one: Exodus 34:6 says, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth." The Hebrew word for "longsuffering" is literally "long of nose." Anger shows in flared nostrils and snorting, like enraged people with reddened noses. But God is "long of nose," meaning that it takes much longer for his wrath to kindle. The same word for "long of nose" is in Psalm 103:8: "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

So consider what it means to follow our long-nosed God. Yes, He bristles at injustice, and rightfully so. But He is long of nose, longsuffering, slow to anger. And He does not hold to resentment indefinitely; Psalm 103:9 continues, "He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever." If we would be more like God, we would be slow to anger; we would be cautious to express our anger and direct it only against those things truly unjust, not petty annoyances that rub us the wrong way. And we will

not harbor our anger forever; once a situation is resolved, we move on. May our noses be long like God's!

Exodus 34:6: And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

Numbers 14:18: 'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generation*.'

Psalm 86:15: But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

Psalm 103:8: The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

Psalm 145:8: The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.

Joel 2:13: So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

Isaiah 48:9: For My name's sake I will defer My anger, And *for* My praise I will restrain it from you, So that I do not cut you off.

Smoke in God's Nostrils

2 Samuel 22:9: Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. (see **Psalm 18:8**)

Isaiah 65:5: Who say, 'Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These *are* smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.

Blasts from God's Nostrils

Exodus 15:8: And with the blast of Your nostrils The waters were gathered together; The floods stood upright like a heap; The depths congealed in the heart of the sea.

2 Samuel 22:16: Then the channels of the sea were seen, The foundations of the world were uncovered, At the rebuke of the LORD, At the blast of the breath of His nostrils. (see **Psalm 18:15**)

Conclusion

2 Corinthians 2:15: For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

Philippians 4:18: Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

Getting to Know God Better, Week 6

Smile: Seeking the Smile

This is the last week in our anthropomorphism series. I pray it has helped you to get to know God better.

Numbers 24:1: **Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times, to seek to use sorcery, but he set his face toward the wilderness.** The word for ‘pleased’ is the combination of the Hebrew words for **eye** and **good**. Literally, it was, ‘good in the LORD’s eyes.’

1 Samuel 12:22: **For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.** A different Hebrew word is used here—it’s the word for, **resolved** or **determined**.’ God was resolved and determined (and at the same time pleased) to make the Israelites His people.

1 Kings 3:4-10: **4 Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask! What shall I give you?” 6 And Solomon said: “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” 10 The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.** The word for ‘pleased’ is the combination of the Hebrew words for eye and good. Literally, it was, ‘good in the LORD’s eyes.’ Solomon could have asked for anything and he asked for an “understanding heart” (also translated as an, “inner man that hears and obeys”). Solomon’s request is rooted in God changing **him**, not Solomon changing the people. Solomon already had some wisdom when he asked for God to change his own heart. When we ask for help from God and acknowledge that we cannot do things on our own, it is, ‘good in the LORD’s eyes.’

1 Chronicles 17:27: **Now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You have blessed it, O LORD, and it shall be blessed forever.”** A different Hebrew word is used here—it’s the word for, ‘resolved or determined.’ God was resolved and determined (and at the same time pleased) to bless the house of David.

Psalms 51:19: **Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering, Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.** This Hebrew word for pleased has two meanings—the first is, ‘to delight in, to take **pleasure** in.’ The second is to, **bend** down.’ God is pleased with our sacrifice (offering) of righteousness (what is right). Do right and you please God. It’s very simple.

Isaiah 53:10a: **Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him.** God was pleased to bruise **Jesus** ('crush' or 'be broken' are better words to use than 'bruise'). This ties in nicely with the concept of God being pleased to make Israel His chosen people—you cannot have a chosen people who are sinful without a savior to save them. Which of the Hebrew words do you think is used here? The one for, 'resolved or determined,' 'good in the LORD's eyes,' or 'to delight in, to take pleasure in?' The word used here is the word that means **to delight or take pleasure in**. God delighted in crushing Jesus. God delighted in the cross because He delights in us and that was the only way to complete His plan.

Matthew 3:17: **And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** We see this same language in **Matthew 17:5**, **Mark 1:11** and **Luke 3:22**. The first thing I want you to notice about this word is its **tense**. This tense does not exist in English—it's the aorist tense and the idea behind the aorist tense is that the concept of the verb is considered without regard for past, present, or future time. So let's apply that concept to this verse. God is pleased with Jesus without regard to **time**. He is always pleased with Him. That's why Jesus is our perfect sacrifice—He always pleases God. That's why Jesus is such a good example for us to imitate—He always pleases God.

The second thing I want you to notice about this word is the **meaning**: "to be well pleased with, take pleasure in, to be favorably inclined towards one." God is favorably inclined toward Jesus. Is He toward us? Is He pleased with our actions? What's keeping Him from being pleased with our actions?

1 Corinthians 1:21: **For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.** This verse teaches us that God is favorably inclined toward the foolishness of preaching. He enjoys it. Imagine that . . . God enjoys preaching. That's a new concept, eh?

1 Corinthians 12:18: **But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.** This is a new Greek word that means, 'to will, have in mind, or **intend**.' God intended to put you in the body of Christ just as He did. Find your place and do the work. God intended it to be so, so glorify Him by performing the thing that He has placed you to do.

Galatians 1:15-16: **15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.** It pleases God to reveal Christ in us. When we picture Christ and show Christ by our actions, God is pleased. According to this definition, when was the last time that we pleased God?

Colossians 1:19: **For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.** It pleased God the Father that Jesus would have the fullness. And that's the whole point of this entire series—that Jesus is the epitome of the **incarnation**—the in-flesh-ment of God among us. Jesus is the ultimate in anthropomorphism because He was (and is) fully God and fully man. And that's what we had to have before understanding God. We had to have God in the flesh to show us, to speak to us, to walk among us, to lead us, to guide us, to direct us, to illustrate for us (for we are forgetful and we are weak) how to live this life in such a manner that it would put a smile on the face of God. Make God smile today.