

# God Cares for You

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It is amazing how the sermonette and sermon link together quite often. [The last speaker] and I did not talk about this but it fits in perfectly with the sermon and it's encouraging to know that God takes His kids and pats us on the back and points us in the right direction—it's very encouraging. My grandad on my father's side, Cole Railston, was a very well-known rancher in central New Mexico. He's mentioned in several of the histories of New Mexico at that time, and he was acquainted with Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid, and they came through the ranch from time to time. As a little kid I remember him and he was very serious—he was a serious man—didn't smile much. As the time required, he was very tough—he was gruff and tough. He wasn't very affectionate with his kids, with my dad (they had four kids—two girls, two boys). Dad would tell me that around the ranch house if one of the boys lipped off or said something inappropriate, they got a backhand from their dad that would send them flying, tipping over the chair and they would be down on the floor—he didn't put up with any lip from anybody, much less his own kids.

The cowboys called my dad “the judge” and they did so because he said so little, he was so quiet, and the reason he was so quiet was he was afraid of *his* dad. He learned if you didn't want a backhand, the best thing to do was keep your mouth shut and that's what he did as a young kid. I remember my dad had a very short fuse on his temper. He could just explode without much; you didn't see it build up, it just exploded. All he had to do was give us a look or a little bark—just clear his throat in a certain way and my brother and I would start heading for the exits—it was just that way. He struck fear into my brother and me.

The reason I mention this is maybe you have had similar experiences with your dad. Maybe your dad was harsh or maybe your dad was distant. Or maybe your dad wasn't even around—maybe that was the case. Before conversion, before we came into God's Church, maybe we came out of a church that preached fire and brimstone and all we heard, if we went Sunday, was somebody out there pounding the lectern that somehow God took perverse pleasure in blasting sinners, or God was just watching for us to step out of line, and the hammer would come down.

In the early days of Worldwide, the Church—in order (I think) to move away from Protestantism—emphasized God's wrath on mankind. How many sermons about the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, and then in the Plain Truth and the Good News, Basil Wolverton's drawings about emaciated people or corpses and all of that. There was little emphasis on God's love for mankind because, again, we were moving away from Protestantism and we didn't even want to be associated with the syrupy kind of love that was common then and is so today regarding people's view of God. All that I've

mentioned so far influences us on how we view our heavenly Father—our background, our upbringing, the example our father set with us—it influences how we view God.

So let me ask some questions. Do you feel that you can never measure up in God's sight? That no matter how hard you try, how much you do, it's never quite enough? I've talked to many of God's people over the years and they feel that way in part because they never were able to please their dad and that transfers over to God the Father. They feel that no matter how good they are, it's never quite enough. Maybe you feel that God somehow makes your life an obstacle course—constantly putting hurdles in front of you to have you jump over them, and watching you if you trip and fall—waiting for you to fall—some people feel that way. Or that God gets some kind of pleasure out of watching us suffer.

Sad to say, some of God's people feel that way—that God somehow wants us to suffer and likes to see us suffer. Sometimes during a trial, God's people can say (and I think we've all done it if we're honest with ourselves), God, why me? Why are you doing this to me? It's easy, if we have a wrong picture of God, to come up with the thought that somehow God is picking us out for persecution, punishment, pain or what have you. In addition to that some people think that God is a distant God—that He has so many important things to do that He can't pay attention to me as an individual because I'm way down here, God's way up there, and He's running the universe so how on earth could He pay attention to me. Maybe some people feel (I think they do) that God is not all that interested in us as individuals personally making His Kingdom. Yes, He wants us to be in His Kingdom but some people think, yeah, as part of a big group making God's Kingdom, but to look at *me* and want *me* to make God's Kingdom as an individual, some people have a hard time wrapping their head around that.

The point I'm making by way of introduction is many people misperceive or misapprehend God as a harsh, cruel, distant, uncaring God that's too busy for any single individual, to pay attention to any single individual. So the question is, is this true or is God the perfect, loving Father that all of us have always wanted? All of us want to have the perfect, loving Father and the question is, is God that perfect Father who individually cares for us, who individually looks after us as a loving, perfect Father would?

What we're going to see today is the Bible confirms the fact that God is the perfect, loving Father that all of us want. So the title of the sermon is:

### God Cares for You

We're going to look at five areas in the Bible and in our lives that demonstrate this fact. It ties in with the sermonette because friends care for friends and fathers care for children—a perfect father does—and we're going to see that that happens over and over again—has happened in God's Word, and we can take comfort from that, especially as we go through trials. The first point, the first area is:

## 1. You are an important person to God.

You—meaning all of us (me, too)—are an important person to God. Sometimes it's hard for us to understand that—God being God, we being us, and billions of people that have existed on the face of the earth; how can I be an important person to God? Let's get some background. Let's notice God's attitude towards Ancient Israel, toward his people Israel. Let's go to Deuteronomy 7:7. Notice how God views this ragtag group of people. These were physical humans beings, God's Spirit was not present at that time, and yet He called them and notice His love for them.

**Deuteronomy 7:7** [Moses is telling them, this is what God says] *The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:* (KJV)

Nobody regarded you—except God, of course.

*8) But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.* (KJV)

We've talked about that during the spring holy days. Because God loved them, He brought them out. He did it personally, as we proved out of scripture. God personally brought Israel out of Egypt.

*9) Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;* (KJV)

What a concept—this ragtag group of people that He brought out from slavery. Now look at chapter 32; Deuteronomy 32:9-10. God uses a colloquialism to describe how He views His people.

**Deuteronomy 32:9** *For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance* [God's inheritance].

*10) He found him* [His people] *in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about* [in the wilderness], *he instructed him,* [notice this last sentence] *he kept him* [referring to Israel] *as the apple of his eye.* (KJV)

There's one Hebrew word that's translated "apple of his eye" and you can check that in [Strong's #0380](#), but it means *the pupil of the eye*. The apple of the eye was denoted as the pupil of the eye. Baker and Carpenter, in their [Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament](#), say this, "The pupil was considered the lamp or the light of life." Israel is depicted lovingly and caringly as the pupil of the LORD's eye. You could say

Israel is the light of the LORD's eye just as our children are the light of our eye or the light of our life. What we're being told is that God so loved Ancient Israel that they were the light to His eyes, the apple of His eye. To think that God Almighty would view this group of people that way tells you a lot about God. That notion about God continues into the New Testament. Let's go to 1 Peter 2:9. I'm going to read this out of the New King James—very familiar scripture. Peter is reminding the New Testament Church of how special and important they are to God.

**1 Peter 2:9** *But you are a chosen generation [picked by God], a royal priesthood [we know that when we come into God's Kingdom we will be kings and priests], a holy nation, His own special people, [the New International says a people belonging to God, chosen—why?] that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness [and what did He call us into?] into His marvelous light; (NKJV)*

What a thought, what a fact, that God Almighty would call us and say, you're My people and I chose you, and I'm calling you into light to get you out of darkness. Then look at 1 John 3. The New Testament follows the theme of the Old of how important God's people are to our Father. 1 John 3:1, talking about God's love.

**1 John 3:1** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, [he said, understand it, realize it] that we should be called the sons of God [what honor!]: therefore the world knoweth us not [why?—because we belong to God and the world hates us as a result], because it knew him not. (KJV)*

The world does not know God.

**2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, (KJV)**

We know how we feel about our sons and daughters. Now given God has perfect love and we have imperfect love, how much love does God have for us—each one of us? As part of this first point we need to understand how important we are to God. Does God notice us—does God take note of us as individuals? Yes, he takes note of His people, of the Church, but does God take note of us as individuals? Let's go to Psalm 115 and see Old Testament examples that apply to us today because we are spiritual Israel. Psalm 115:12; it's very interesting I came across this verse and I never thought about it that much but it takes on a new meaning.

**Psalm 115:12** *The LORD hath been mindful of us: (KJV)*

Stop and think about that—what does that mean? The LORD has been mindful of us. The Hebrew for mindful is Strong's #02142 and it means *to mark so as to be recognized*. We would say today, you put a highlight on it or you put a flag on it to make sure you recognize it. *To mark so as to be recognized, to remember*—what this tells us

is the LORD has been mindful of us—we are on His mind, we are in His thoughts, He is looking after us and watching us.

*12 continued) ... he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.*

*13) He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great. (KJV)*

It's interesting that God chooses to put in there people both small and great because God is not a respecter of persons. It doesn't make any difference what our intellect is, what our IQ is, how much money we make, what our education is—God is not a respecter of persons. You can check Romans 2:11 as a reference or Ephesians 6:9. Peter has something to say about that, too. What we're told here is that God blesses us equally—He doesn't play favorites. Maybe you grew up in a household where your dad played favorites and maybe you weren't the favorite. So we can easily transpose that to God the Father, that God plays favorites, too, but that isn't the case.

God equally blesses us regardless of our circumstances, our background. As we see here, our part is to love Him and to respect Him and to honor Him, and if we do that then God will look with great favor upon us because we are a child who honors and respects our Dad—God the Father. One more Old Testament example; let's go to Isaiah 51:7. This is important for our children. It's important for us, too, when people turn against us, when people criticize us, when people look down their nose upon us; God says, don't worry.

*Isaiah 51:7 Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness [meaning you that follow me and want to obey Me], the people in whose heart is my law; [listen unto to Me—notice what He says] fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. (KJV)*

Don't be afraid of what people say about you; it doesn't make any difference because only God counts.

*16) And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand [God says if the sun is blasting on you or people are blasting on you, I'm going to put My hand between you and them and I'm going to cover you and protect you], that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people. (KJV)*

That applies to us as spiritual Israel. Today, we are God's people. Sometimes we have a hard time getting our head around that—that we're special to God. It's not because we're great, we're the weak of the world, but we should be so thankful that God has called us to give us His Spirit and thereby we become very special to Him. I ask the question, does God take notice of us? Well, we just read it in Psalms and Isaiah, but what about Jesus Christ? Let's go to John 10. This is the parable of the sheepfold, and

Christ is drawing an analogy between Himself and a good shepherd, and at the end He says, I am the Good Shepherd. Notice what He says:

**John 10:1** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold [if you don't come in the door of the sheepfold], but climbeth up some other way [come over the wall—the sheepfold was generally enclosed by a rock wall; they didn't have chain link fences in those days and they had plenty of rocks so they made walls out of rock], the same is a thief and a robber.*  
2) *But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*  
3) *To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep [notice this] by name ... (KJV)*

The implication is that once God calls us, the scripture says God does the calling and He turns us over to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, but we are called by the Father by name, individually by name, and then we're turned over to the Good Shepherd who looks after us.

4) *And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*  
14) *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep [that's a promise, God says He knows us, each one of us, every one of us], and am known of mine. (KJV)*

What this tells us is Christ is head of the Church, knows each member of the Church by name, and is familiar with each one of us, individually—He cares for us individually, by name. The firstfruits are God's special people—we have to get our head around that. Not that we should be puffed up about it, because 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 tells us we are the weak of the world, and none of us are brilliant and none of us are the geniuses of the world. God called us out of the world as the weak of the world, as He called Israel because they were fewest in number and had the least power. You see, because God did this, we should be humbled that God would take notice of us and would care about us, and would deal with us on an individual basis. That's one of the hardest concepts I think God's people have to understand, that God looks at us as individuals, that He fully understands, and that He is intimately involved in our daily life. As was mentioned [in the sermonette], we have to let Him do that, we have to ask Him to do that, and we have to have that relationship with Him. God is there and that's what He wants.

The second area that shows God is for us—and we celebrated and memorialized this in the spring holy days—is:

## **2. God sacrificed His Son for you and for me.**

God sacrificed His own Son. As I've said before, I can't imagine sacrificing my son and watching him be tortured and then die—I just can't imagine that—but God did. On top of that, Christ willingly offered His body to be brutalized and tortured and killed because of His love for us. The sacrifice involved both of Them and what a sacrifice that was.

Let's go to Romans 5:8. God is for us, so much so, that He gave His Son for each one of us. The basis for all of this is because God loves us, because He cares for us.

**Romans 5:8** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (KJV)*

While we were sinning, Christ died for us.

9) *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him [through Christ and His sacrifice].*

10) *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life [by His resurrection]. (KJV)*

If God had the power to resurrect Jesus Christ after being dead for seventy-two hours, He certainly has the power to resurrect each one of us. Notice an Old Testament scripture regarding this; let's go to Psalm 149:4. Notice God's attitude towards His people, Old Testament or New Testament. This is what God's aim or goal is for us.

**Psalm 149:4** *For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people ... (KJV)*

He takes pleasure in us. That's a hard concept for us to understand—God takes pleasure in us. Sometimes we say, I don't take pleasure in myself, how can God take pleasure in us?—but He does.

4 continued) *... he will beautify the meek [the humble] with salvation [that is a promise]. (KJV)*

You're going to see as we go through this, humility keeps being mentioned, and that's our part: humbly looking to God. This theme, as far as God's ultimate purpose for us—what was God's ultimate purpose in sending Jesus Christ to this earth? What's the point? Let's go to John 3:16. I remember when I first came in the Church, this scripture was hardly mentioned because it was mentioned so often with the Protestants, and it was over-emphasized (maybe) by them, and the Church, sadly, did not emphasize this enough—this very famous scripture. What is the ultimate purpose for God sending His Son to the earth?

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world [that's not just us, that's every human being that's ever lived], that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

17) *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (KJV)*

In the Church we stressed the condemnation in the Day of the Lord or in the Tribulation, but we ignored verse 17. The focus wasn't on obliterating people and wiping people

out, no, the focus was that God could save the world through His Son, Jesus Christ. We know Christ says—something to put it in focus, in Luke 19:27—Christ does say, there are some people out there who aren't going to want Me to rule over them. There are some people there that don't appreciate the sacrifice that I made. Christ does say that this is what's going to happen to them.

***Luke 19:27*** *But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. (KJV)*

Those few—I hope it's few—who would rather live a satanic lifestyle or a perverted lifestyle than follow God's ways, and the example Jesus Christ set, and they have a clear choice, and they demonstrate they don't want any part of it, then Christ is going to say, okay, your choice. The world is going to be better off, My family is going to be better off, if you don't exist. After a time, they will not exist, because they spurn Christ's sacrifice, they spurn God's way of life. We were, as a church, way off balance when we stressed the wrath of God and not the love of God. Even God punishes out of love and we punish our children out of love. The fact is that the love God and Christ have for each one of us is demonstrated by our Father's willingness to offer His Son, and His Son's willingness to give His own life for each one of us, as an individual, by name. So let's not forget that.

The third area that shows God is for us:

### **3. God promises always to take care of us.**

He promises always to take care of us, and when you think about the world we live in, it is just amazing (my wife and I were talking about this, as we were watching the news the night before); it seems like every day there's a new shooting. Every day there's a van driving down the sidewalk and running over people, or some kid walks into a school with a gun and starts shooting people, and basically God is allowing mankind to go forward, following Satan, and mankind is going to learn that nobody is safe—Third World, First World, doesn't make any difference—nobody is safe apart from God. This point, that God promises to always take care of us, is going to be more and more important as we go forward, as this world becomes more and more dangerous. Let's start in the Old Testament, Isaiah 41:8. This directly applies to Ancient Israel but it applies to us today (the Church, which is spiritual Israel), so as we read this, in your mind, plug in us—the Church, as individuals.

***Isaiah 41:8*** *But thou, Israel [and today, spiritual Israel], art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*

*9) Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.*

*10) Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God [We can count on that]: I will strengthen thee ... (KJV)*



Here in the last few months, we've marveled amongst ourselves about how God strengthens weak people and God strengthens the Church and strengthens us as we face trials.

*10 continued) ... yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (KJV)*

He says, I will uphold you. The Hebrew word for "uphold" is Strong's #8551 and it means *to sustain*. As we get older, we understand that our stamina weakens and we don't have the wherewithal that we used to when we were in our twenties, thirties or forties. God is saying, I will sustain you. I'll give you energy when you don't have any. I will prop you up when you need it. It goes on, *to sustain figuratively, to help or to follow close by*. Remember in the pillar of the cloud and of the fire, God was close by Ancient Israel, and what He's saying to us is, spiritually, I'm right with you, I'm there, I'm right beside you, and as we're going to see in just a little bit, I'm going to take you by the hand and I'm going to lead you through the minefield of life, if you will let Me.

Notice what the New Testament says about God's attitude toward Israel. Hebrews 8:8. When we get into a trial, it helps me to view this analogy that God draws here. It helps me understand God better and it helps me understand His love for me and for each one of us. Talking about Ancient Israel but a lesson for spiritual Israel.

**Hebrews 8:8** *For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:*

*9) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers [notice what He did with their fathers] in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; (KJV)*

Let's stop and think about that because this principle holds true for us today. God says, you're my children, Ancient Israel, and He says, I took you by the hand to lead you out of Egypt. One of the cutest things in the world is to see a little kid, three, four, five years old, walking down the sidewalk and they just instinctively raise up their hand with Mom or Dad walking right beside them. They instinctively raise up their hand and Mom or Dad grabs the hand and they walk together down the sidewalk. Kids do that instinctively, watch that sometime.

What God is telling us is, Israel, I brought you out of Egypt like a father that grabs his little kid by the hand and walks him out of Egypt. What He's saying to each one of us is, I will do the same for you when you go through trials; put your hand in My hand and I will lead you through the minefield of life. I will keep you out of danger and if you yield to Me and worship Me and obey Me, I'll take you by the hand as a dad leads his little kid, and I'll keep you safe—I will watch over you. Let's take that attitude of God taking His children by the hand and contrast that with the world we live in today. The most

pregnant example is the military because in the military all soldiers are expendable. They are all expendable.

Let me give you an example from World War II—the dark days of World War II, 1943. Germany had just conquered all of Europe and Britain stood alone. Yes, the U.S. came into the war but their presence had yet to be felt, so in 1943 Germany was bombing Great Britain—the Blitz—daily bombing, night bombing. Britain, to their credit, mounted a campaign against Germany with their bombers, but they bombed only at night because if they went in the day they'd be obliterated, so England bombed Germany by night. Then the U.S. entered the war and we began supplying airmen and airplanes—B-17's, B-24's—to England in early 1943. The U.S. began a campaign (it's a scary thing) of daylight precision bombing. England had a bomber force; they were used at night and the U.S. airmen and the airplanes were tasked with bombing Germany during the day when [targets] could be seen.

Remember, the planes back then didn't have any on-board radar at that time, so night was relatively safe. This was viewed as suicidal by all the experts but it had to be done—Germany had to be bombed and it was a suicide mission. There were no long-range fighters that could escort the bombers that left England, went across France, went across Belgium and deep into Germany. The fighters could only go about half way and when they got over France they would have to peel off and have to go back because they didn't have enough fuel to go all the way into Germany. So the Luftwaffe had their planes ready, circling overhead, and when the U.S. fighters turned and went back, they pounced on the bombers and it was carnage. The U.S. suffered terrible losses in the summer of 1943—the Eighth Air Force. Many missions, thirty to forty percent of the planes, did not return—thirty to forty percent per mission. The worst was called Black Thursday—there's a book about that. It was October 14, 1943—that's almost seventy-five years ago, it's hard to believe it's that long but it's almost seventy-five years ago. There was a raid over Schweinfurt, Germany, and they lost on that one raid sixty-five bombers and their ten men on each bomber—650 airmen, one raid, one night. Talk about expendable. The rule was then that after twenty five-missions the crew could go home. If they endured twenty-five missions without being shot down then they could go back stateside for some rest and recuperation and maybe another assignment. During 1943, seventy-five percent of the crews never made twenty-five missions. Think about that. You go over there and you start bombing and your goal is to get home after twenty-five missions and seventy-five percent of you are not going to make it—talk about expendable.

In those few months in 1943, the U.S. Air Force lost more men, the Eighth Air Force lost more men than all the marines lost in World War II—total—in a few months in 1943. Those poor boys were brave boys but they knew they were expendable. Germany had to be bombed regardless of the cost and the cost was thousands and thousands of U.S. boys never making it back. That was a cost of war and that's the way the world looks at human life. We can easily transpose that to God and say, this is the world we grew up in and I wonder if God does that, or maybe God views us that way. But it's different with

God because no one, not one of us, is expendable. Not one. Let's go to Luke 15. Christ is speaking a parable and we're going to read this in detail because it gives us an idea of how God and Christ view us, with the understanding that no one is expendable. God doesn't want one lost.

**Luke 15:3** *And he [referring to Christ] spake this parable unto them, saying,*  
4) *What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*  
5) *And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.*  
6) *And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.* (KJV)

Christ is now speaking, the parable is over; He's relating this to God the Father:

7) *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.* (KJV)

Does this sound like God is indifferent to each one of us? Remember Christ is speaking and He says there's rejoicing in heaven, and who's in heaven?—God the Father and all the angels and the twenty-four elders, and Christ is saying, I'm telling you, up in heaven if one of you repents, if one of you turns around, there is rejoicing up there. That tells us that God looks at us as individuals who are very important to Him.

8) *Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?*  
9) *And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.*  
10) *Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* (KJV)

What this tells us is when one human repents, one of us repents, there is great joy in heaven. That tells us a lot of things. God is watching us, God cares about us, He's waiting for us to turn around, He's waiting for us to ask for help, He's waiting for us to discipline ourselves and when we turn around, there is rejoicing in heaven. If that wasn't enough, verse 11:

11) *And he said, A certain man had two sons:*  
12) *And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.*  
13) *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.*

14) *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want [he was suffering].*

15) *And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.*

16) *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

17) *And when he came to himself [when he came to his senses], he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*

18) *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

19) *And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. (KJV)*

Finally, humility comes into play. What a thought. This tells us that we have a part to play, when we come to ourselves, we humbly turn to God with all humility and say I'm not even worthy to be called by You, but please help me. It also tells us that God works with us individually as Christ's example here of this prodigal son.

20) *And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, [notice the father's attitude] his father saw him ... (KJV)*

So this is important, the son is coming back to the father—the father isn't going to chase the son but the son turned around and is coming back to the father.

20 continued) *... and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

21) [The son made true to his word:] *And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. (KJV)*

Humility—I'm not worth it. Notice God's attitude, the father in this analogy.

22) *But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:*

23) *And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:*

24) [Why?—verse 24 tells us directly] *For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. (KJV)*

The implication is that God is so concerned about an individual that when that individual turns, there is rejoicing, having a big feast in this parable—but in heaven, real rejoicing.

25) [Had a problem with his older son] *Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.*

26) *And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.*

27) *And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.*  
28) *And he was angry, and would not go in: [he was in a snit] therefore came his father out, [his father reached out to him, as we would say] and intreated him.*  
29) *And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment [or your wishes]: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:*  
30) *But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.*  
31) *And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*  
(KJV)

Remember, the reprobate son has already spent his inheritance so everything left belongs to the oldest son.

32) *It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.* (KJV)

Does this sound like a God or a Father that doesn't care about His kids, even when kids, for a time, go the wrong way?—of course not! Does this sound like a God who is remote or distant and not involved? This is one of the things that burns me up when people say God is not involved—God's not involved in the Old Testament, He's not involved in the New Testament—this is absolutely not true, that is a heresy. The fact is God and Christ have been involved with us, with God's people, from day one and He is a loving Father to each one of us. God knows and cares deeply about each one of us. He rejoices when we turn to Him, and the angels rejoice, and Christ on His right side rejoices when we turn to Him. Let's go to Matthew 7:7. God promises to take care of us. Christ is speaking here.

**Matthew 7:7** *Ask, and it shall be given you [when we need help]; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*  
8) *For every one that asketh receiveth;* (KJV)

Maybe we don't receive it the way we want but we receive it because that's what's best for us.

8 continued) *... and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*  
9) *Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*  
10) *Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*  
11) *If ye then, being evil [have human nature], know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father [Christ is speaking, He's talking about His Father] which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*  
(KJV)

What love God has for each one of us because He promises to provide for all of our needs—not our wants, our needs. When we are in a tight spot, when we need rescuing, when we need help when it's beyond our capabilities, all we have to do is go to God and He promises to take care of us.

The fourth area, and this is one that I certainly had to overcome when I first came in the Church:

#### **4. God is not out to get you.**

Sometimes we can feel this way: Why me, God, why are you doing this to me, why have you allowed this to happen to me? God is not out to get us. Let's go Isaiah 54:5—I'll read this out of the New King James. Notice God's attitude and His approach.

*Isaiah 54:5 For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name; (NKJV)*

We know the LORD of Hosts dwells between the cherubim so we know who this is referring to.

*5 continued) ... And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel [God is also our redeemer, Jesus Christ is, too]; He is called the God of the whole earth.*

*6) For the LORD has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused," says your God. (NKJV)*

Weak of the world, nobody wants us.

*7) "For a mere moment I have forsaken you [here He's specifically talking to Ancient Israel], but with great mercies I will gather you.*

*8) With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment [when they were sinning and rebelling and turning against Him]; but with everlasting kindness [notice that—everlasting kindness] I will have mercy on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer.*

*9) "For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you [meaning, forever; I won't be angry with you forever].*

*10) For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, [notice this] but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has mercy on you. (NKJV)*

How can this be a God that is out to get us, who wants to see us suffer? Verse 17, notice this promise.

*17) No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," says the LORD. (NKJV)*

Any righteousness that we have comes from God's Spirit, doesn't come from us, we have human nature. God is saying if you do righteousness that's because you're yielding to Me and yielding to My Spirit and allowing My Spirit to operate in you. Does this sound like a God who's waiting for us to sin?—of course not! Notice what David says in Psalm 103:2. Notice how merciful and long-suffering God is—how can He be out to get us when we read scriptures like this and understand God's nature.

***Psalm 103:2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:***

*3) Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

*10) He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

*11) For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him [infinitely merciful].*

*12) As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

*17) But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting [that's infinity] upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;*

*18) To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. (KJV)*

The key here is no matter what our sins have been in the past, no matter what they were earlier today or yesterday or a year ago or ten years ago, God gives us a do-over every day. When the sun comes up and we wake up, we have a new day and have an opportunity to show God we're not going to commit the sins we committed yesterday. We're going to have a do-over, we're going to do it right today. God looks at our life in a blink of an eye and if He sees progress, day by day, and today we don't do the things we did yesterday, we don't have the attitudes we had yesterday, we don't have the stinking carnality that we had yesterday—we're not perfect—but if He sees progress, there's rejoicing in heaven over us. Does this sound like a God that's out to get us?—of course not!

Let's go to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and we'll go to chapter 3:22. This tells us a lot about God and His attitude toward us. Lamentations, right after the book of Jeremiah. We don't often go to Lamentations or read Lamentations but it's got some very important information.

***Lamentations 3:22 It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (KJV)***

How can He be a God that's waiting for us to mess up when He says, it's because of His mercy that we're not obliterated; His compassions don't fail.

23) *They are new every morning* [the do-over—we get a new start every day]: *great is thy* [referring to God's] *faithfulness.*

31) *For the LORD will not cast off for ever.* (KJV)

The prodigal son came back—didn't cast him off forever.

32) *But though he cause grief* [meaning we pay for our sins], *yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.*

33) *For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.* (KJV)

He doesn't take pleasure in seeing us suffer. The confidence we can have is whatever God causes to happen to us, or allows to happen to us, is for our ultimate benefit and for the benefit of those around us. Sometimes the trial is not because of us; God allows us to suffer a trial for the benefit of those people around us because maybe they have lessons they need to learn. Now let's go to one of my favorite passages, John 8:1.

**John 8:1** [verse 1 tells us the context] *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*

2) *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.*

3) *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,* [you wonder how this happened—was somebody spying on somebody?—well, of course] ... (KJV)

So they set her in the midst after she was taken in the act of adultery and they ask Him in verse 5:

5) *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?*

6) *This they said, tempting him* [or testing him], *that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.*

7) *So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

8) *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.*

9) *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

10) *When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?*

11) [She said something profound] *She said, No man, Lord* [meaning she understood that this was no ordinary human being that was talking to her, she understood that]. *And Jesus said unto her,* [this is the lesson for us] *Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.* (KJV)



The do-over. You can go home now and start over again. This illustrates very clearly that God is not out to get us. All He wants us to do is love Him and obey Him and respect Him and honor Him, which is what we should do to the God of the universe.

The fifth and the last point, and I don't know what greater demonstration we could have about God *caring* for us and being *for* us ...

## **5. God wants us—wants you, wants me—to have eternal life in His Kingdom.**

That's the goal. Let's go to 1 Timothy 2:4. Read this out of the New Living Translation. Sometimes the New Living is so great because it puts it in modern English, says it very plainly.

**1 Timothy 2:4** *For He [referring to God] who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. (NLT)*

What a concept. God wants everyone to be saved and also wants us to understand the truth that's revealed in His Word.

**5) For, There is only one God [that is profound] and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people—the man [that Mediator] is Christ Jesus. (NLT)**

So this tells us very clearly that—what's God's desire?—He wants everyone to be saved, every single one, but as we know, we have a part to play in that; it's up to us to respond. Let's go to 2 Peter 3:9—notice what Peter says:

**2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; [notice God's character and His characteristics] but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (KJV)*

The Greek word for "longsuffering" means *to have long patience or to patiently endure*, and when I look at my life, how God has been so longsuffering with me and put up with my garbage for so many years, and waywardness and wrong thoughts, and wrong actions and yet He hasn't kicked me to the curb or rejected me, I am amazed because I would have rejected myself a long time ago, but God didn't, and that tells us about His character. I'm so thankful for His patient endurance and obviously we need to be that way with each other. Let's go to Luke 12:32. You see this is God's desire and we need to be reminded of this from time to time. Talking about us, the flock—the flock of the Good Shepherd.

**Luke 12:32** *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's [the Father of the Good Shepherd] good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (KJV)*

Can there be any doubt that God wants us to be in His Kingdom forever?

Let's summarize now. It is vitally important that we know who God is. I can't think of anything more important than God's people know who He is. How can we worship Him if we don't know who He is? How can we obey Him if we don't know who He is? Today we've seen that we're special people to God. You are a special person to God. God sacrificed His Son for each one of us and He promises to take care of each one of us and He is not out to get us. He wants us to have eternal life in His Kingdom.

Think a minute, we won't turn there—Galations 5:22, we know it by heart—remember the fruits of God's Spirit? Think about this—love, longsuffering, gentleness and goodness, I'm just picking out four of them. These are the fruits of God's Spirit. We know that the Holy Spirit is the very Spirit of God, so these four characteristics, love, longsuffering, goodness and gentleness are God's characteristics—that's what He is. These characteristics, being God's, He demonstrates them to us daily. Love, longsuffering, gentleness and kindness—that's the way God is to us daily. He is not mean, He is not harsh, He is not vindictive. He isn't waiting for us to mess up so He can smash us. God and Christ's love for us is stronger than anything else. Let's go to Romans 8:31. Paul is summarizing many concepts and many ideas here. This is what we have to remember—the world is against us and people that Satan is provoking are against us but notice the promises we have.

**Romans 8:31** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

32) *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

33) *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [Accusing, slandering and so forth] It is God that justifieth.*

34) *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

35) [We need to think about this:] *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

36) *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

37) *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. [God and Christ]*

38) *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

39) *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (KJV)*

We know there are scriptures that tell us that God is love, and what we see here, in that God's love is in His Son, Jesus Christ, because They share the same Spirit. God's love for us was manifested in the life Christ led when He walked this earth. *Everything* He

did was for the benefit of the sheep, being the Good Shepherd that He was. Let's go to one final scripture in Psalm 56:11—David is talking and this is something that we need to remember always. When we go through trials and tribulation, God is for us—He wants us to succeed. David had tribulation on top of tribulation.

***Psalm 56:11*** *In God have I put my trust [David says]: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. (KJV)*

I'm going to read verse 8 out of the New Living Translation.

*8) You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one [each tear] in your book. (NLT)*

Think about that—God records each sorrow that we have and each tear that we shed in His book. Does this sound like a God who does not care? Verse 9, I'll read this out of the King James.

*9) When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me. (KJV)*

He's right by our side, He's rooting for us and encouraging us. So when you get down or you feel overwhelmed by trials and troubles, remember these scriptures and always realize that God is for us.