

Can God Be Limited?

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All of us understand and know that our Father is all powerful. Let's go to the first book of the Bible, Genesis 17, and see that. Here, right at the beginning of scripture, we are told that our Father is indeed all powerful.

Genesis 17:1 *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. (KJV)*

We know that our Father's Word is consistent. If that is the case, then that consistency would flow through the entirety of His Word. In Revelation 19 we see that God has that same title in the last book of the Bible—Almighty.

Revelation 19:15 *And out of his mouth [Christ's mouth] goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (KJV)*

His Father—the same Being in the beginning of scripture as at the end of scripture--- the title is the same, Almighty God. We have a sermon on our website, Who Is the Almighty God, for those of you who are new and might want to research that in a little more depth. That was given on September 16, 2017 and you can find that in the archives. The Hebrew and the Greek for *Almighty* are very similar in definition. They mean “omnipotent or all powerful”. Logic will tell you and scripture will tell you that there can be only one Almighty. Only one Being that has all power. We want to stop here and think about that. Jehovah—God Almighty, God our Father—is the Almighty and in Him resides all power.

Think about that power and what that power means. Just as an example, every morning in the summertime, when the sun comes up—particularly in the summertime when the Northern hemisphere is tilted towards the sun, a little closer to the sun—we feel the power of that sun. I get up before the first light and watch the sunrise (that's when I get my study in) and the window next to me faces East. In the summer, which, because of the heat, is my least favorite time of the year, when that sun rises above the horizon, I can immediately feel the heat coming in on that side of me. You can feel it on your arm and on the side of your face. We have all felt the power from the heat of the sun. But think about that. This is a burning ball, ninety-three million miles from earth and here we are this far away and we can feel the heat of that fire. Think about this; there are roughly, 200 billion such suns in our own galaxy, the Milky Way. Then, how many galaxies are there? The latest estimate, which varies depending on who you talk to and when you check, is about ten trillion galaxies. That is the number one with twenty-four zeroes after it. One septillion. There are roughly ten trillion galaxies, each galaxy with

hundreds of millions of fires burning. Where did all that power come from? Remember, the earth came and the universe came from nothing. So that power had to be inserted into the universe at the time of creation. We know that the Almighty put some of His power into each star. There are trillions and trillions and trillions of stars and that gives us just a hint of the power of Almighty God.

Given what we have just described about the Almighty's power, implies power that is unimaginable to a human being. We just can't comprehend the power of the God we worship. With that in mind, notice an apparent dilemma. In Psalms 78 and verses 40 and 41 David is looking back at Israel's history. This is a history that we have recently studied and thought about as we were coming out of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Psalm 78:40 *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!*

41) *Yea, they turned back and tempted [modern translations will say "tested"] God, [notice this last phrase] and limited the Holy One of Israel. (KJV)*

David is saying Israel limited the Almighty God. If you look at the definition of the Hebrew word *limited*, the Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Baker and Carpenter says this: A word meaning "to limit; it has the sense of restraining persons from what they can do because of one's own actions or attitudes". David is saying that Israel kept God Almighty from doing what He wanted. They restrained Him in that sense. So, there is an apparent conflict. If God is Almighty and all powerful, then how can He be limited? That is the question we are going to look into today. The title of the sermon is:

Can God Be Limited?

A secondary question would be, can we as individuals limit God? We are going to look into that question too. The first thing we are going to do is look at two biblical examples of humans limiting God. In Psalms 78, David said that Israel limited God, so we will go back and look at the context. In verse 10 of Psalm 78, we read:

Psalm 78:10 *They [referring to Israel] kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;*

11) *And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.*

12) *Marvelous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.*

13) *He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. (KJV)*

Recounting the miracles that God did. Continuing in verse 24.

24) *And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.*

Other miracles done in their presence. Verse 37:

37) *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.*

38) *But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*

39) *For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. (KJV)*

This is ending the context here.

40) *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!*

41) *Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. (KJV)*

They limited God by their rebellion, by their sins, by their lack of belief. A specific example of where they did that is in Numbers 13. We're breaking into the story where Israel is now on the east side of the Jordan, ready to enter into the Promised Land.

Numbers 13:25 *And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. (KJV)*

Moses sent out a scouting party to search the land and now they are back in the beginning of verse 26.

26) *And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel ...*

27) *And they told him, and said, we came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. (KJV)*

They had brought back some of the produce of that land.

28) *Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. (KJV)*

Those children had a reputation.

30) *And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.*

31) *But the men that went up with him said, we be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. (KJV)*

That might have been true, but they were leaving God out of that picture.

32) *And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. (KJV)*

At this juncture, Jehovah is giving them the opportunity to enter into the Promised Land and here Israel chose to turn away from that opportunity—to turn their back on that opportunity. Notice Chapter 14:26.

Numbers 14:26 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27) How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. (KJV)*

Now He gives Moses instruction.

28) *Say unto them, as truly as I live, saith the LORD ... (KJV)*

Jehovah has never had a beginning; He will never have an end and He lives right now.

28 continued) *... as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:*
29) *Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,*
30) *Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.*
31) *But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.*
32) *But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.*
33) *And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. (KJV)*

By their lack of faith, they altered and they limited what God could do through them. What He could do with them. Jehovah then made a choice; you choose not to do this, then I'm going to use your sons and daughters instead of you. They paid a horrible price for that. We see here an example in which Israel limited the Almighty God.

Now look at a second example. This is an example of the people of Nazareth who limited Christ while He was on earth. We need to keep in mind that Christ came to do the will of His Father. Scripture after scripture tell us that Christ could only speak what His Father told Him to speak. He came to do the will of His Father. Matthew 13:54, from the New Living Translation.

Mathew 13:54 *He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?"*

55) *Then they scoffed, He s just the carpenter s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.*

56) *All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?"*

57) *And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family."*

58) *And so, he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief. (NLT)*

We see that these residents of Nazareth and maybe some in his own family, limited what Christ could do among them. The Son coming to do the will of His Father. These people frustrated His Father's will—Christ's will—because of their unbelief. There is an important point to remember here; their lack of faith in Nazareth did not stop Christ from performing miracles. He just did them somewhere else. He didn't do them there or to the extent that He desired or that His Father had desired.

So, we see two examples of human beings limiting the Almighty God. Now, and for the rest of the sermon we have a big question before us. How can we limit God individually? How can we limit God? I'm going to talk about two areas or two ways in which we, as individuals, can limit God Almighty.

The first way we can limit the Almighty God is to limit what He can do within us, inside of us. We need to set the background for this, so we are going to break into Christ's narrative on His last night on earth in John 14:23.

John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him [that's Judas, [not Judas Iscariot], If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we [the Son and the Father] will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *abode* means "a staying" or "a residence". That is, we will take up residence in him. In 1 John 4:13, which is obviously from the same author, we get some more detail of how this happens.

1 John 4:13 *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

14) *And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.*

15) *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God [the Father] dwelleth in him, and he in God. (KJV)*

We know—and this would be an entire subject and a series of sermons—the Holy Spirit is the manner through which the Father and the Son live inside us; through the very Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit. So, we have to ask, what is the purpose of the Father and Son living in us? There has to be a reason for it. Why would God give us His Spirit? What does He want us to do with it? We can see in Ephesians 4:22 that Their purpose is to make a change in us. This is where the rubber meets the road—the hard part.

Ephesians 4:22 *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man [the way we used to be], which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (KJV)*

Now we get to the point in verse 23.

23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (KJV)

Be a new person, get rid of the old person. It occurs in the mind and we are told in Philippians 2:5 that we need the mind of Christ. That comes by way of the Holy Spirit. We make a transformation from the way we used to be, which is totally carnal, to having the mind of the Son of Almighty God. But here is the problem: with our human nature we can actually oppose the Father and the Son dwelling in us. We can actually fight against it. Remember we are told, because the carnal mind is enmity against God and not subject to the laws of God, neither indeed can be—Romans 8:7 that we have a nature that opposes God; opposes His commandments, His rule inside us. If we give vent to our human nature rather than the Spirit of God, then we can limit what God can do inside of us.

We can oppose the influence of God's Spirit—the Holy Spirit—in several ways. As an example, we can limit Bible study. If we limit our time studying the Bible, then we are limiting what God can say to us. The Bible is the very Word of God and He is talking to us through that Word. If we limit the amount of time we study, we are limiting what God can say to us. If we limit our prayer time to the end of the day when we are almost falling asleep, then we drop down on one knee or both knees and we give a one minute or a two-minute prayer and call it good, we limit our closeness to God. We limit the closeness of our relationship with Him, because it is through prayer that we talk to Him. If we ask for things, God can put thoughts back into our minds. We limit our closeness by limiting our prayer time.

Also, if we limit exercising God's Spirit in us, by not controlling our mouth, not controlling our mind, not doing the things that we should do, then we limit our ability to become like His Son and follow in His Son's footsteps. We begin to close the door, pull the garage door down and thereby limit God.

Let me give you an example. This goes back to the 1980's and a certain period of time, in which we spent three years in another area. There was a couple that came into the church, and were in their late thirties I would guess. As you began talking to them you found out that they loved to watch the X-files. For those of you who weren't around at that time, it was a science fiction, alien conspiracy theory drama that was very popular in those days. Over time they became increasingly addicted to watching that drama, because at church they would talk about it a lot. I don't remember how long before I noticed that the network had changed the airing of the X-files from a week night to Friday night. It didn't take long, before they had convinced themselves that it was okay to watch X-files on Friday night. Not long after that they even said that it had become the highlight of their Sabbath evening. They would have a nice meal and sit down and

watch this TV program that they had looked forward to all week. They said they really enjoyed it, as it made their Sabbath evening. They were gone within a year because they were limiting what God could do within them by how they spent their time and where they put their minds. They were limiting what God could do.

Rather than opposing our Father and opposing the influence of His Spirit, we need to cultivate God dwelling in us. We need to enable it and to facilitate it. In 1 Timothy 4:7 Paul is making a comparison of this process to an athlete in training. Of course, the Olympic Games began in Greece so this was a very familiar subject; it wasn't strange or foreign to anybody.

1 Timothy 4:7 *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise ...* (KJV)

The Greek means "to train", as in the Olympics or "to train as in a contest".

7 continued) ... thyself rather unto godliness. (KJV)

In other words, when we exercise God's Holy Spirit—we train to become like Jesus Christ. If we fail, if we miss the mark, we get up and try harder the next time. Through prayer, study and fasting, we get stronger and hopefully the next time we can overcome that hurdle. Our Father can dramatically change who we are if we let Him. If we allow Him to do that. If we choose to allow Him to change us.

Look at the example of Paul. Mark pointed this out last Sabbath very clearly and pointed out that Paul changed from a murderer of Christians to a helper of Christians. In the beginning, Paul fought that process. The context of Acts 9:5 is on the road to Damascus; Paul having already been struck down and Christ is trying to teach him something.

Acts 9:5 *And he [referring to Paul] said [after being stricken down and this miracle occurred], Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest [I'm sure that was a shock to Paul]: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* (KJV)

He's using an example—a modern day example would be, if one of us went up to a rosebush, took off our work boots, took off our socks and began kicking the rosebush. Christ is saying, you're doing it the hard way. It is going to be painful and it is going to hurt you—you are kicking against the pricks. What He's saying is, Paul you are opposing Me, you are opposing My Father and this is not the right way path to take. After that, it became clear that Paul allowed the Holy Spirit to begin to work inside him, to change who he was; to change his nature, his mind, his spirit and his attitudes. Look at 2 Corinthians 1:24 and notice the contrast. He was a murderer of Christians, he put Christians in prison, including women. He separated families from children, husbands from wives, but notice the change here.

2 Corinthians 1:24 *Not for that we have dominion over your faith [no one has dominion over our faith, that is between us and our Father], but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. (KJV)*

He says we—meaning the apostles and himself—are helpers of your joy. The Greek word for helpers is *synergos* and we get the English word synergy from that. It means “a companion in labor” or “a fellow laborer”. Paul is saying, I’m not here to murder you or put you in prison, I’m here to help you achieve a state of joy by your relationship with your Father.

If we look back on our lives, I think all of us can see the dramatic changes our Father has made in them. Well over fifty years for me, and I look back and cringe at who I was coming into the church and some of my attitudes and thoughts, words and deeds. Then I look at it today and I see there has been a big change. Not that any of us can take the credit, it comes from God’s Holy Spirit and His love for us. The only thing we can do is yield to God’s Spirit and get out of His way. What we need to do is what Paul did. If we do not present a stumbling block to the Holy Spirit, then we can allow God to fulfill His will in us. But if we fight God’s spirit, if we do not yield to God’s spirit, if we want to have our way instead of our Father’s way, then we present a stumbling block. In so doing we limit what our Father can do within each one of us. That is the first way we can limit God.

The second way is, we can limit the Almighty in what He can do through us. Using us as an instrument or a tool or a mouthpiece or whatever He chooses, we can limit what He can do for others through us. Our sins, as we know, affect others. In Exodus 20 the Ten Commandments are being given on the mountain. There is a telling part of scripture in this, which illustrates the point of our effect on other people. Exodus 20:2.

Exodus 20:2 [Our Father is speaking] *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

3) *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

4) *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:*

5) *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, [notice this] visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (KJV)*

The children of the first generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt, had to pay the price for the sins of their parents. The sins of the parents in their whoredoms, their idolatry and their lack of faith. They wandered for forty years until that generation’s carcasses were dust in the desert and then they finally came into the Promised Land. What we learn here is that our sins can affect our mates, can affect our children, our grandchildren, and the brethren around us, thus limiting what our Father can do through us to help them.

There was a Worldwide Church of God survey, and I didn't have time to look up when this actually happened—it was in the late '80's or early 1990's and it was at a time when church attendance was about 185,000. This survey was a survey of church brethren at that time. One of the questions that was asked was how you came into the church. There were boxes to check; was it the Plain Truth magazine or the radio program or the television program or through some other person. Sixty-five percent of the brethren on this survey said they came into the church through the influence of somebody who was already in the church—sixty-five percent. So, we see the influence that we have with others is very, very great. Far more than we probably acknowledge. So, the question, relative to this survey back then is, what if our example turned off somebody that God was calling? What if our example was such that that person didn't want anything to do with this church or this religion? If that was the case, then we, through our actions, would be limiting what God could do with that person.

Let me give you an example of that. This was in the 1990's, an Evangelist of the Worldwide Church of God—very famous man—was in a conversation that I was on the outskirts listening to. He mourned that while his two young girls were growing up, they would sit in the back seat and he and his wife sat in the front seat and he said, he and his wife got into the habit of airing the church's dirty laundry in front of his two girls, on the way to church and on the way home. Mentioning people's bad conduct or what happened at headquarters or the college or whatever. He was just grieving about that because now today, they were in their early twenties or late teens, didn't want anything to do with the church. He said he felt responsible. We as parents can limit what God can do through our children by our example. We do not want to be a stumbling block to that.

If we let Him, God our Father, will use us for the greater good of His children; to fulfill His will, to fulfill His purposes, if we get out of His way. This is the big problem. We want to insert our way, our belief. This is the way it should be done or I think it should be like this. Rather, we should be prostrating ourselves with our faces in the dirt, in front of the Almighty God, Who has the power which we talked about in the beginning. We should be saying, God I can't put one foot in front of the other. You show me the way, you show me Your will and I'll just follow it. I want to do your will and I want to make you happy with me. In 1 Peter 3:7 Peter uses an example of a husband and a wife. He is talking about limiting God and what God can do between a husband and a wife.

1 Peter 3:7 *In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together [very good advice]. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.* (NLT)

What he's saying is, it's God's will for the husband to treat the wife as Christ treats the church, which is with lovingkindness, patience, forbearance, understanding, support and love. He is also saying is, if you husbands don't do that and you try to exalt yourself, you try to make yourself feel better or more powerful, you're limiting what I can do through you because I'm not going to hear your prayers. That is a powerful example for

husbands. But it holds true between parents and children and between brethren and between grandparents and grandkids—it holds true.

We can limit what our Father wants to do through us. Look at Moses, he had a tremendous influence over millions. Coming out of the Spring Holy Days, our minds have been on that, we've studied the examples. When God first called Moses and he was hearing the voice of Jehovah—God the Father—from the burning bush, the first thing Moses did was try to limit God in what He could do through him. He made four excuses right there in front of the burning bush. We'll look at the first excuse in Exodus 3 verse 11. Moses said I am not qualified; I don't want to do it because I'm not qualified.

Exodus 3:11 *And Moses said unto God, who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? (KJV)*

I am just not qualified; I've been herding sheep for forty years.

Then the second excuse that he gave was, I don't have the faith. I don't have the vision and I just don't get this.

Exodus 4:1 *And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. (KJV)*

He says I don't have the faith that they're going to do this. I just don't grasp this vision that you're telling me about.

For the third excuse, Moses said, I don't have the ability. We find that in Chapter 4:10.

10) *And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. (KJV)*

He repeats it twice in Chapter 6. He just says, I don't have the ability, you need to pick somebody else because you have the wrong guy.

The fourth and last excuse—this is the big one—he told God; I just don't want to do this. Tap someone else because I just don't want to do this. Verse 13 in Chapter 4, out of the NIV.

13) *But Moses said, Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else. (NIV)*

Because I don't want to. So, we see at this point, Moses wanted it his way and not Jehovah's way. Jehovah said, here's what I want you to do and Moses started throwing up stumbling blocks, road block and hurdles in front of God saying, no, this isn't a good

idea because I don't want to be involved, I don't want to do it, I don't have the ability, I don't have the faith or the vision and so on and so on. He wanted his way. The problem is, when we insist on our way, we limit what God can do through us. God has this vision that is limitless. Our vision is through a series of two soda straws and then we tell God what He's going to do or what is best—through our vision of two soda straws? When we insist on our way, we limit what God can do through us. Moses didn't yet have Jehovah's vision of helping his fellow Israelites; he didn't have the faith that the Almighty could do what Moses couldn't do physically. In the beginning, Moses tried to limit God.

It's understandable from a human perspective, but we who have God's spirit in us, should not make that mistake. The point is, look how Moses, over time, allowed Jehovah to use him. It took a bit of time. In chapter 4:2, we can pick up the context of the second excuse, they will not believe me.

Exodus 4:2 *And the LORD said unto him, what is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.*

3) *And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. (KJV)*

Just stop here for a minute. Moses had been herding sheep for forty years, he had obviously seen a snake before, but it said he fled. My suspicion is that it was a poisonous snake and probably a Cobra because Cobras had great symbolism in Egypt. So this rod turned into this poisonous snake with which Moses was very familiar. I think all of us would jump back or turn our back and run a few paces and that's what he did.

4) *And the LORD said unto Moses, put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. (KJV)*

Now this, after having fled, takes a little faith; to grab a poisonous snake by the tail, but Moses did it. It was a baby step.

4 continued) ... *And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: (KJV)*

So now all of a sudden, Moses says, maybe this Being that spoke to me out of the burning bush knows what He's talking about; maybe He has all power.

5) *That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. (KJV)*

You give them this demonstration; they will believe it. This small miracle that required a little faith is small compared to what God was going to ask of Moses not too far down that road. Let's understand that along the way, God gave him some physical help; things he could see with his eyes. He saw this rod changing into a serpent and then

back to a rod. But also, God gave him some other help; verse 14. This is the context of the third excuse, I am slow of speech.

14) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. (KJV)

God engineered this whole thing; He inspired Aaron at that moment to get up and come toward Moses.

15) And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. (KJV)

So, God provided an encouragement in the form of Moses' brother, but frankly it was also a crutch. For a period of time, Moses could lean on his brother, his brother could do the speaking; he was the eloquent one apparently. It was a crutch for Moses to get him through a difficult period of time. Then after that, Moses watched all the ten miracles that occurred. Every one occurred exactly as Jehovah said they were going to occur and through that process, Moses began to slowly gain faith and trust in God, that He knew what He was doing and what He said would come to pass.

Now look at the result in Chapter 14. This was covered during the days of Unleavened Bread. In verse 1, Jehovah spoke to Moses and told Moses, I want you to take Israel and set up camp over here. That was in the shape of a V. On one side were mountains and the other side was the Red Sea and Israel camped at the tip of the V. At the open end of the V, Egypt was coming; with chariots and horseman, swords and spears, bows and arrows and all of that. Look at verse 10.

Exodus 14:10 *And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.*

11) And they said unto Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

12) Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. (KJV)

Stop here for a minute. You see right now—it's kind of humorous really—Moses is getting a dose of his own medicine. The Israelites are saying, leave us alone. When God called him out of the burning bush, Moses said to leave me alone, I don't want any part of this. Now he's getting a dose of his own medicine. He had tried doing that earlier but notice the change in Moses between that time at the burning bush and now when they were trapped between the mountains and the Red Sea; verse 13.

13) *And Moses said* [there is no indication that he told Aaron to say, Moses said it on his own] *unto the people* [he didn't need the crutch of Aaron at this point in time], *Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today:* (KJV)

Look at the faith that he had; nothing had happened at that point. But he said that the One who spoke to me out of the burning bush, the One who has performed all the miracles and the One who is bringing us out of Egypt, you watch and see what He's going to do.

13 continued) ... *for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever.* (KJV)

He told them Jehovah will fight for you and you don't have to do a thing. Just watch. Have faith, trust and let God do it and let God perform His will and stay out of His way. Moses overcame his excuses with the help of His Father's love, His patience—lots of patience—and of course His power. He ceased to be a stumbling block; he learned to keep his mouth shut, he learned to trust in God and let God do what God will do and not get in his Father's way. He learned a huge lesson of allowing Jehovah to work through him, where he was a conduit, a mouthpiece, an instrument in God's hand and didn't get into God's way. Look what Jehovah did through him. He brought millions of people out of a dire situation and brought them into peace and out of slavery.

Moses and Paul are huge lessons for us as God's people. Paul, in allowing the Holy Spirit to work within him, to change him from murderer to helper. Moses in allowing God Almighty to work through him to do his Father's will and bring a nation of millions out of bondage.

Looking back at all this, we can start answering the questions that were posed in the beginning. Can we limit God in our life? You bet we can—absolutely. Does the fact that we as humans can limit God, the fact that God can be limited by human beings, does that mean that He is not God Almighty? Of course not. Here is the crux of the matter: God Almighty chose to be limited in a certain way, in a certain area—that was His choice. It didn't happen by accident, it wasn't thrust upon Him, it has been a part of His plan from the very beginning. From the beginning our Father allowed His children to choose. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had a choice to make. Do you listen to the serpent or do you listen to Me? Do you obey the serpent or do you obey Me? Where do you put your faith, where do you put your trust—they made a choice.

Then with Abraham—Abram—God told him I want you to sacrifice your son. Abraham had a choice; what was he going to do? Was he going to obey God Almighty or was he going to do it his way, thereby being a stumbling block in what God wanted to do. As we know, Abraham made the correct choice and set a powerful example.

God could have made human robots; perfectly capable of doing that, He has all power. He could have made preprogrammed human beings that were preprogrammed to love

Him and put Him first. They could come out of the womb that way; He could have done that. Or He could have forced obedience. Just to think of an example, what if God said, here are My laws and when you have a wrong thought in your head or you take a wrong action or say a wrong word, I'm going to give you a headache—a drop to your knees, migraine headache for one hour. The second time you do that, the headache is going to last for two hours. The third time you do it, the headache is going to last for three hours. He could have forced obedience that way and after a while—those of you who have migraines, you know what that's like—you're going to control your mind, control what comes out of your mouth because you don't want to face the consequences. But once the pain is removed, what do people do? They revert back to their previous behavior, they revert back to whatever comes naturally, whatever they want to do. What God wants and why He gave us the ability to choose, is because He wants a family comprised of those who are willing—I emphasize the word willing—to love Him with all their might and to put Him first. They are willing to choose to put God Almighty above everything—self, family, friends, career, even life itself. They willingly choose to obey God with all their being, willingly choose to put Him first in every way.

Once the Father made the decision to ordain that humans are to be free moral agents, He chose to allow humans to limit Him. What He could do in them individually, by transforming their character and their nature or what He could with them to use them as instruments to further His will with other people. There is the choice. In Galatians 6:8; our choice is presented in one verse. Very stark contrast—the choices we have. God's way is so simple really. It is not complicated; a child could understand.

Galatians 6:8 *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit [meaning the Spirit God has given us where he sets up abode in us] reap life everlasting. (KJV)*

God chose to give us the choice and when we don't do His will, humans can limit Him from doing what He wants inside of us and what He wants done through us. We can see that we can limit God. We can limit Him doing His will inside us, we can limit us doing His will through us because of the choices we make, the actions we take.

The biggest cause in limiting God Almighty is our getting in our Father's way. If we would learn the lesson of stepping aside, putting Him first, getting rid of our desires, our wishes, how we think something should happen or be done. Just getting aside and prostrating ourselves on the ground and saying, Father show me what Your will is, that's what I want to do because you're my Dad and I want to make you happy with me. We get into trouble when we put our will before His. God Almighty is watching us; this is our time of testing, to see if we want to be like Him and His Son. Or do we want to be like what we want to be just like the choice Adam and Eve made. Do we want to do it our way, as the song goes? Or do we want to do it God's way?

Despite the fact that humans can limit God, let's ask the question, can God's overall plan and purpose be limited? Because humans can limit God? Absolutely not; nothing can limit God's overall plan or purpose. Why is that? Here comes the scary thought for

all of us. As with Israel's children, the children of those who were adults when they came out of Egypt, as with that generation, our Father can replace those who limit Him. In Israel's case, that generation that limited Him died in the desert. He chose to use their children, the next generation, to fulfill His purpose. Go to Luke 3:8 for a final scripture. We are breaking into the context of John the Baptist speaking to the Jews. I'm going to take this out of the New Living Translation. His audience are the Jews and he's not happy with them.

Luke 3:8 *Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. [Prove it by the way you live] Don't just say to each other, We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham. [We don't have to worry about that because we're Abraham's descendants] That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. (NLT)*

The point being that none of us are irreplaceable. None of us are so valuable that God just can't do without us. He did without the first generation of Israel; He has done without a lot of people who rejected Him and turned their back on Him and put their way before His way. When we limit God—what He can do in us and through us—when we limit that, Jehovah chooses to use others in our place. That is the scary thought. If we don't yield to Him and we start limiting Him, what He will do, is set us aside and He will use somebody else. The point is that we, right now, have an incredible opportunity. An unlimited opportunity to do what is right. To be part of a group that follows God and puts Him first and obeys Him above all.

So, let's not waste a second in making sure that God will perform His will inside of us and perform His will through us. The key is to constantly seek our Father's will and constantly get ourselves out of the picture. To get our desires, our ways, out of the picture, which is exactly what our elder Brother Jesus Christ did. How many scriptures say that Christ came to do, not His own will but the will of His Father who sent Him? He said, I don't speak My own words, I speak the words of the Father. I am teaching you what My Father taught Me. Over and over and over again, He sublimated His will to His Father's will. In the Garden of Gethsemane before He was taken, He said, Father I wish this cup could pass from Me—oh I wish it could—but He knew, as we say today, the drill and what was ahead. But nevertheless, Your will be done. Therefore, we should seek our Father's will and not our will. Always seeking to please our Father; to make Him happy with us because we're not a stumbling block, we're not interfering with what He wants to do inside us or through us. Let us never be responsible for limiting God and what He can do in us and through us.