

Bringing the Bible to Life

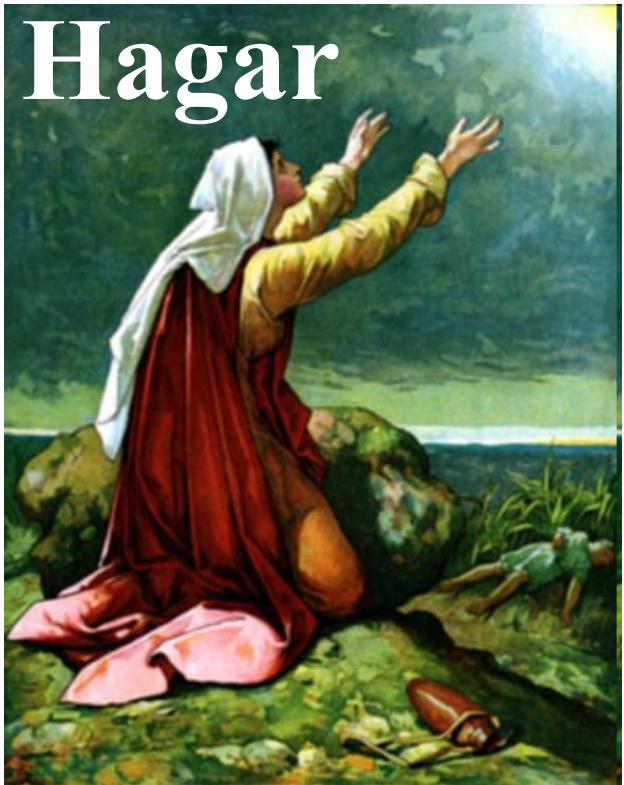
Biblical Counseling Workshops

**Who is God and Why it Matters
in Counseling**
Track II.6
Brock Gerber



Who is God & Why Does it Matter in Counseling?

Hagar



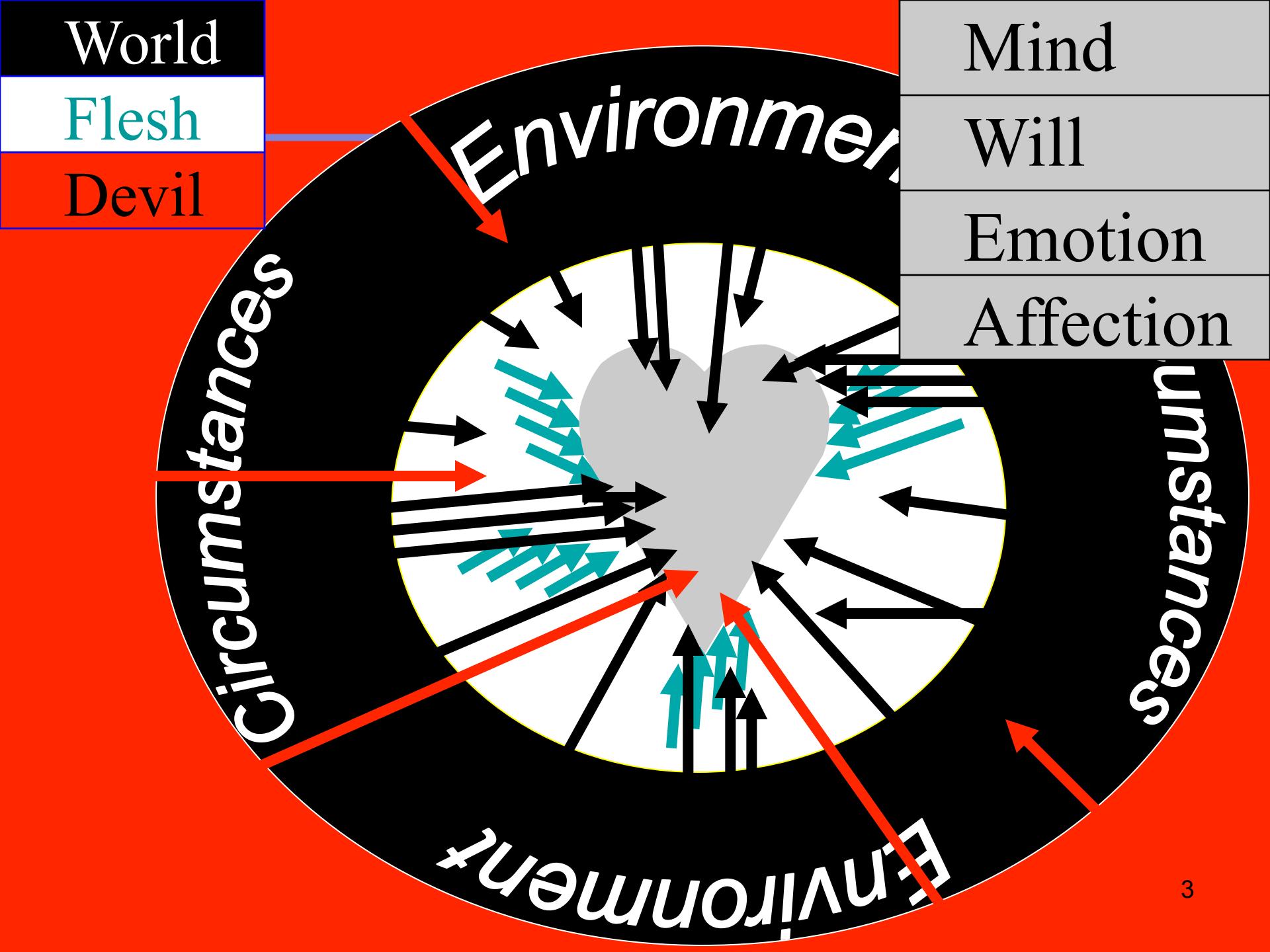
Daniel



Sin

&

Suffering





Transcendent

To exist far above; greater than; independent from; distinct from, separate; surpassing; creator, therefore not a part of creation, but ruling over all.

- Ps. 8; Heb.1:3; Col. 1:17; Acts.17:25-28
- Is. 55:⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.



God is CREATOR

- Gen. 1 “In the beginning God...”
- Exod. 3:14 “I am who I am.”
- ...For by him [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. (Colossians 1:15-18 ESV)
- By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. (Ps. 33:6 ESV)
- **Everything belongs to Him**



God sees everything from outside of time

- Is. 46⁹remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,¹⁰declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’
- Pr. 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.
- Heb. 4:13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
- Job 37:16 Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge



God is SOVEREIGN

- Sovereignty: With reference to God, it means that God is the supreme ruler and authority, that He ordains whatever comes to pass, and that His divine purpose is always accomplished.
 - The Moody Handbook of Theology, Paul Ens
- God ordains all things, He brings all things to pass. Its not just ‘allowing’ them to happen, in fact nothing has ever happened and nothing will ever happen except the Lord commands and ordains it.
- Gen. 50:20, Job 42:11, Amos 3:6



God is SOVEREIGN

- Dan.4: 35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”
- Rev.19:6b the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.
- Mt.19:26 But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”
- Gospel of Mark reveals *Christ's power over nature, disease, demons and death!*



GOD is HOLY

- **Morally separate** “*God is holy, separate from any hint or blemish of sin or evil. God is absolute moral perfection; the presence and essence of everything good, pure, holy and righteous.*” [3]
- Does not create evil
- Does not tempt with evil
- Yet is in control of evil and Satan
- Devoted to seeking his own honor/glory



GOD is HOLY

- As it relates to counseling: God's Holiness provides the pattern for his people
- Lev 20:26 You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.
- Heb 12:14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.



GOD is HOLY

- 1Pe 1:13-16 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."



God is Just and Righteous

- Ps. 92: 15 to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.
- Ps.145: 17a The Lord is righteous in all his ways
- “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.(Deut. 32:4 ESV)
- Rom.3:26 *It [propitiation] was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*



God is Truth

- Since God is Truth and is TRUE, I can claim and embrace (believe) everything he says and know that He will do everything he says he will do with my best interests in mind.
- Jn.17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
- Jn.14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
- Jn.17: 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.



Superior, yet IMMANENT (involved)

- “*God is actively involved (yet distinct) in what goes on in the world (as opposed to deism). In his acts, God is purposeful in all that He does, ordering all of the events of the world including evil in His divine, sovereign, wise plans.*”[2]
- In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind. (Job 12:10 ESV)
- Job 31:4 Does not he see my ways and number all my steps?



Superior, yet **IMMANENT** (involved)

- For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.” (2 Chron. 16:9 ESV)
- As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:13-14 ESV)
- Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7 ESV)



God is Involved - *Immanent*

- ²⁷that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. *Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,* ²⁸for “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.’ (Acts 17:27-28)
- God’s transcendence and immanence are both affirmed in this verse: “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:6 ESV)



Knows everything about me.

- Ps. 139:1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 *Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.* 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.
- **Remember Hagar Gen: 16:13**



The Tri-une God exists in Perfect Harmony & seeks the same with you!!

- Jn.14:7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”
- As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. (John 15:9 ESV)
- All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that **they may be one, even as we are one.** (John 17:10-11 ESV)



Knows how much & what I can handle

- 1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
- John 18:8-9



God is VERY FAITHFUL

- *“In all of God’s dealings with his people he is faithful in all things and at all times. He does what he says he will do. His faithfulness is inextricably tied to his truthfulness. God is the true God; all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.”* [1]
- Ex. 34:6b “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,



God is faithful and trustworthy...

- Why is it important to understand and believe that God is faithful?
- I have no need to worry. I know that He will fulfill his promise to work this trial for my good and his glory. I know that His choices for me at this time are the best “option” he had for me. I know that he has ‘pre-measured’ the amount of pressure I'm experiencing and will enable me to get through this.



God's Faithfulness Matters!

- **IN PRAYER:**
 - Psa 143:1 A Psalm of David. Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy! In your *faithfulness* answer me, in your righteousness!
- **IN SUFFERING AND AFFLICTION:**
 - 1Pe 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to *a faithful Creator* while doing good.
 - Psa 119:75 I know, O LORD, that your rules are righteous, and that *in faithfulness you have afflicted me.*



Does everything in perfect timing

- Esther 4:14b And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
- Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all **his works are right and his ways are just**; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (Daniel 4:37 ESV)
- Rom.5:6 For while we were still weak, **at the right time** Christ died for the ungodly.
- Gal. 4:4 But when **the fullness of time** had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law



God is ETERNAL

- Deut. 33:27a The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.
- Is. 57:15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.



God is LOVE and is loving

- 1 Jn. 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, **because God is love.** 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that **God sent his only Son into the world,** so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.



God is Love

- Ps.94: 8 When I thought, “My foot slips,” your steadfast love [thy mercy -KJV], O Lord, held me up.
- In view of God’s faithful mercy, and loving grace, I will rest, knowing that if there was a more loving option, God would have graciously given this to me. I can/will trust that this hardship is what will be best for me and will bring him the most glory.

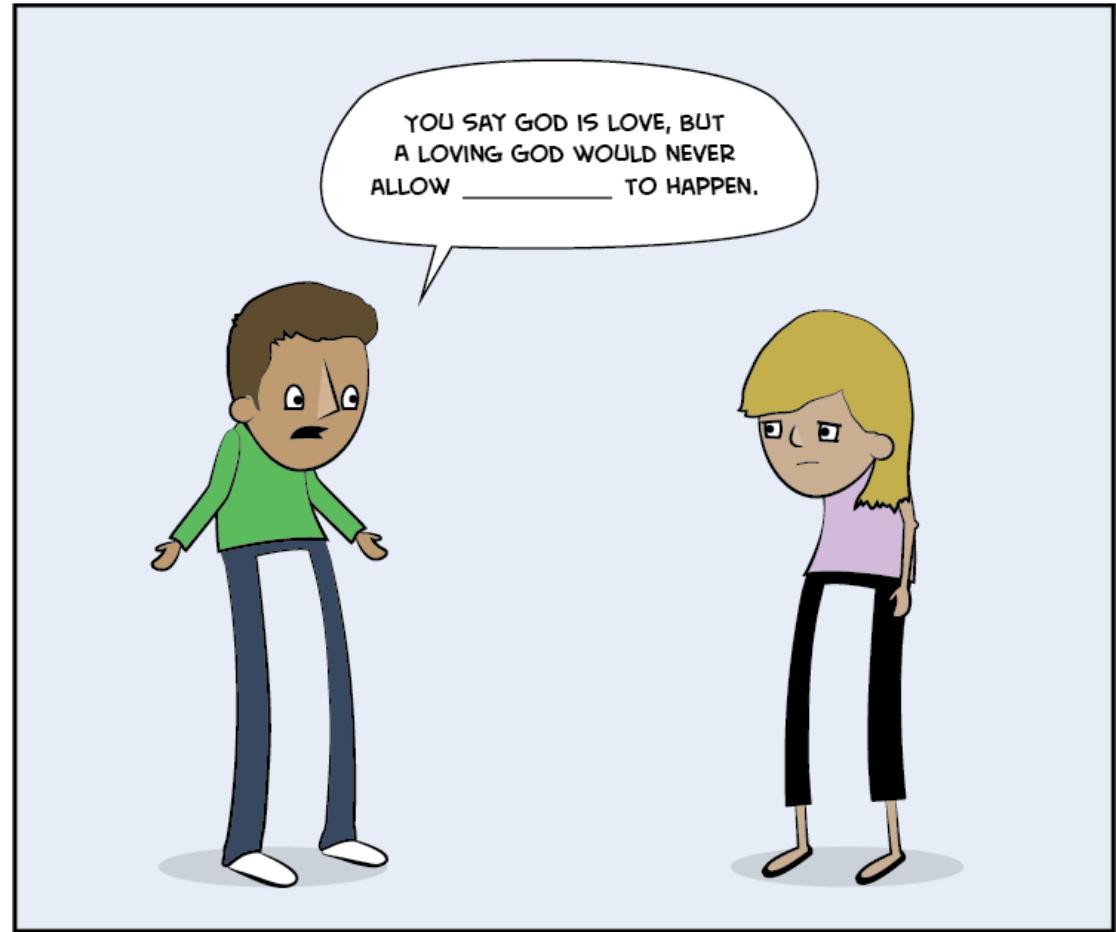


God is Love but Love is Not God



...but love is not God.

There is an important distinction
to be made between the two.



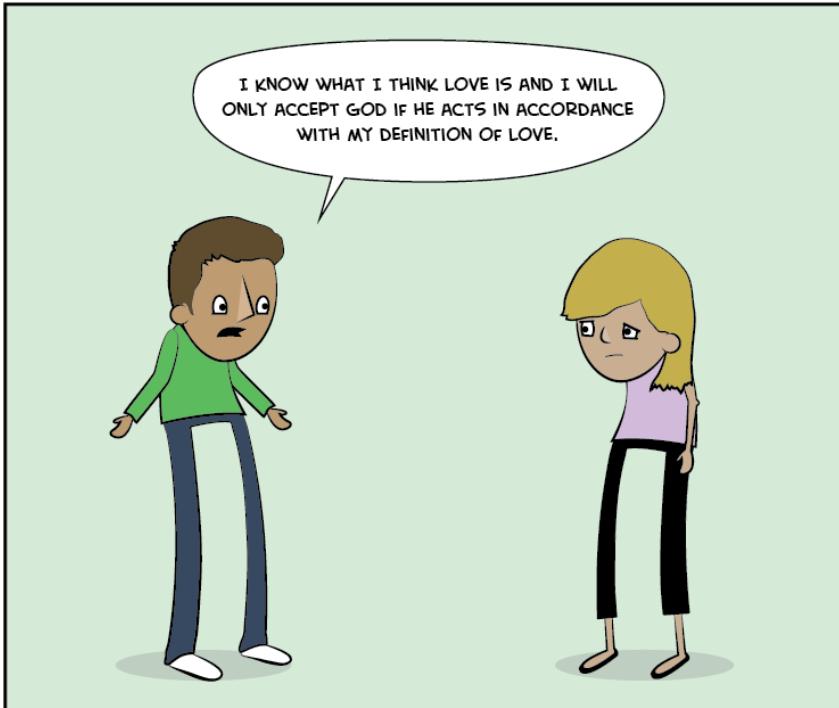


God is Love but Love is Not God

We've all heard (or said) this before.

What this person is saying seems to rest on the statement that **God is love**, but in reality, attempts to undermine it.

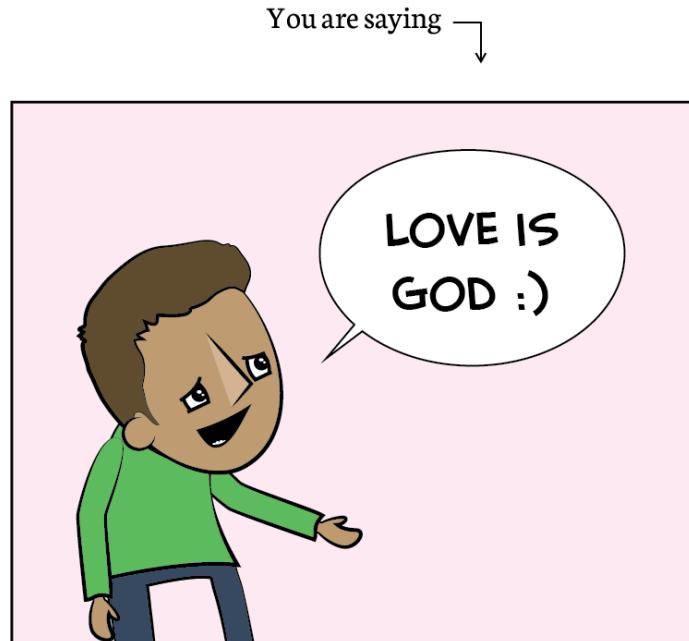
Here is the essence of what he is saying



This popular idea is the basis for all kinds of trouble, from terrible theology to outright rejection of God.

If you hold that **God must conform to your idea of love**, then you're making the sovereign, omnipotent God of the universe into a weak, impotent, dependent god, **whose existence or character is beholden to a notion in your mind**.

You are making **your idea of love** into an **idol**, to be worshiped in the place of the real God.



You are saying



God is Love but Love is Not God

This is extremely problematic because
love is NOT God. God is God.

So how can we know what **love** is?

Easy. Pick up a Bible and learn about God.

God is love, remember?

God is love. But love is not God.



God is Merciful & Compassionate

- Mk.5:19 And he did not permit him but said to him [the demoniac], “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”
- Mt.9: 36 When he saw the crowds, he had [was moved with - KJV] compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.



Knowing God Brings Comfort

- Knowing that God sovereignly superintends all of life's experience, we are enabled to confidently respond, looking for ways God is using the trial to glorify himself and work for good. (Rom.8:28-29) This doctrine is foundational to counseling in that it explains the purpose of suffering, (which most people miss).



Seeing GOD brings MEEKNESS

- Even though my loss, pain, heartache, trauma seems to be more than I can bear, I can know with certainty that what God has done is right and was done in the right timing. I can and will choose to praise God and thank God in the midst of my trial, knowing my trial has been orchestrated by a Sovereign, Righteous, Active & intimate, Faithful God who has an ETERNAL and GOOD plan for me.
- In view of God's eternal plans, promises and purposes, my current problem is quite insignificant. A God with an eternal time-table isn't primarily concerned about decades or centuries, he's concerned about his Glory.



WORST-CASE SCENARIO

- the same God that solved the worst problem I could EVER face, (my depravity & eternal sin-debt), is able to help me in ANY problem I face. The God who spoke the World into existence, the God of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Job, Esther, Ruth, Paul and Peter is the same God who is active in my current circumstance. Though I face constant change & uncertainty, God's purposes and promises are constant and apply just as much to me today as it did to them back then.
- *Perfect love casts out fear... (1 John 4:18-5:5)*



Christians are destined to suffer

- I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”(Jn.16:33)
- **because Christ suffered**
- For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (1Pet.2:21)



So God gets glory

- In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Pet.1:6-9)



Since God is ...

- I can/will take comfort to know that he “helps me cry”[1] as I work through my trials
- God is intimate, communicates, reveals himself completely and wants reconciliation so intimacy can be restored
- God will deliver you so you can enjoy Him for an eternity



Homework

- *Summarize your main take-aways from this session, especially noting any areas that were either unclear to you or that you might disagree*



Going Deeper

- Memorize 2 Cor. 3:18, 2 Peter 3:18
- *Read Chapter 6 in Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*
- Introduction and Ch. 2 from *Seeing with New Eyes*, by David Powlison
- *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer
- *The Joy of Fearing God*, Jerry Bridges
- *Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges
- *Caught off Guard*, William P. Smith



Next Classes

- Track II.7 *Role of the Church in Counseling*
- Track II.8 *Qualifications of a Biblical Counselor*
- Track II.9 *Getting to Heart Issues,*