A young boy wearing a straw hat, a blue and white checkered shirt, and blue shorts is sitting on the grass under a large, thick tree trunk. He is holding an open book and reading. The ground is covered with fallen yellow leaves. The background shows a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

# **The Children's Guide to Understanding the Character of God**

by Kevin J. Mullins

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## Introduction – A word to Parents & Guardians

I believe the problem of why many are confused concerning God's character lies in our understanding of HOW to read and study the Scriptures correctly. Is the Bible to be read literally? Absolutely! However, please take note that it is the WHOLE Bible that we are to consider, not just one verse. One verse may say something one way, but another verse, speaking of the same topic, may word it a little differently. When we can collect and compare the many places throughout Scripture which speak of one certain topic, then we will know that we have the truth.

Teaching our children how to read and study the Bible is of vital importance. Many children grow up reading and hearing mixed messages of God. Then, when they have grown, they begin to read stories in the Bible that seem to confirm God as a vengeful tyrant who kills billions of people because they do not do what He says. This can often lead them into Atheism.

There is a huge movement going on all over this world on this issue, which must be made clear before Jesus comes again. Many people are coming to a more correct understanding of God's true character. As a result, there has been a great demand for this wonderful truth to be written and explained for our children. It is for this reason that this volume has been produced. I sincerely pray that, not only your older children are blessed as they read it, but you (the parent or guardian) are too as you read it to your dear little ones. If you would like a deeper understanding of these things yourself, please consider reading some of our other material by visiting us at: [lastmessageofmercy.com](http://lastmessageofmercy.com).

I pray that this little volume will be a great tool in helping your child develop a deep-rooted love for their heavenly Father who deeply cares for them and created them for a great purpose.

*Kevin J. Mullins*

## What Would Jesus Do?

When you think about the character of Jesus, what words come to mind? Kindness? Loving? Gentle? Forgiving? How about, Caring?

Now think of some words that describe God our Father in heaven. Are these words different or the same? Do you think God acts any differently than His Son Jesus?



One day one of Jesus' friends, named Philip, asked Him to show them how the Father acts. This is what Jesus replied:

**Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? ~ John 14:9.**

This is a VERY important truth Jesus has told us. Our heavenly Father does not act any differently than Jesus does. In fact, this is why Jesus came to this world. He came to show us exactly how our Father acts. One night while Jesus was praying, He said this to His Father:

I have **GLORIFIED** You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ~ John 17:4.

What did Jesus mean when He said He “glorified” His Father? It means He showed us how our Father acts. Everything Jesus said and did “glorified” His Father.

Have you seen these four letters written like this – WWJD? These letters are a short way of asking us a question. Do you know what the question is? The question is: **What Would Jesus Do?**



Many people ask this question when they need to make a really important decision. What should you do if someone is not being kind to you? Well, this is when many people ask that question – What Would Jesus do?

What would Jesus do if someone wasn't being kind to Him? Would He want to hurt that person? Would He say mean things back? Would He want to fight them? Did you know there were many times when people were not being very kind

to Jesus? I think we should look at a couple of these stories so we can really find out the answer to our question – What Would Jesus Do?

## Love Your Enemies

There were many religious leaders who did not like the things Jesus was teaching the people. They were getting very upset that a lot of the people were going to Jesus to get answers to their questions about God and His character. These leaders wanted the people to go to them for all the answers. They had to find a way to get rid of Jesus. They came up with a plan to have Jesus arrested.

One night, while Jesus was with His best friends, some of these leaders and some Roman soldiers came to take Jesus away. One of Jesus' friends, named



Peter, got really upset about this, so he took out a sword and he cut off one of the men's ears! Ouch! What do you think Jesus said to Peter? Do you think He said, "Good job Peter!"? Was Jesus happy that His friend tried to help Him in this way? No, He wasn't.

The man whose ear was cut off was named Malchus. When Jesus saw Malchus was sad and hurting, He reached out and touched where his ear used to be, and He healed him. Jesus gave Malchus a brand-new ear! Let's read this story from the Bible:

**When Jesus' friends saw what was about to happen, they asked, "Lord, should we attack them with a sword?" Peter then pulled out a sword and struck at Malchus, the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. Jesus told Peter, "No more of this. Put your sword away." Then He touched the servant's ear and healed it. ~ Luke 22:49-51; John 18:10.**

Wow! Even though these people were there to arrest Him, Jesus was still being kind to them. Malchus was trying to hurt Jesus, but Jesus healed and helped Malchus.





Jesus knows that it is not natural for us to be kind to those who are unkind. That is why we must ask Jesus for help. When someone is being unkind to you, try praying for Jesus to enter your heart so you can treat others the way He treats others. Read carefully what Jesus says below:

**You have heard people say, “Love your friends but hate your enemies.” ~ Matthew 5:43.**

Whoa! Let’s stop right there for a second. Have you heard people say that before? You may not have heard people say this, but it is how a lot of people act.

It is easy to love someone who is our friend, but it is not so easy to love someone who is our enemy, someone who always tries to hurt us. Can you think of someone who isn’t very kind to you? Maybe the person laughed at you or pushed you.



Let’s continue reading and see what Jesus says about how we are to treat people who act mean at times:

**But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who is mean to you. Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven.**

**~ Matthew 5:44-45.**

Isn't that amazing? Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for anyone who is mean to us. Even though they are mean to us, we are to still love them no matter what they do or say.



“But why should we pray for them?”

you might ask, “They are not the ones who need help.” That’s a great question. It surely does seem like the one who is being pushed around and laughed at needs the most help. But think of it in another way. If someone laughs at you for simply making a mistake, all you need to do is ignore them and walk away.

Or maybe you could even try to laugh about it with them. When they see that it does not bother you, they most-often will stop.

The boy or girl who is laughing and being mean may find it REALLY difficult to be kind at times.

Maybe someone where they live is always mean to them and this is the only way they know how to act. If you really think

about it, the one who is being mean is the one who needs more help.

The meaner the person acts, the more that person needs Jesus to help them. So yes, pray for them. Pray for them because you love them and care about them, even if they are being mean to you.



Did Jesus love those who were being mean to Him? Did He pray for them? Yes! After Jesus was taken away by those

people, they laughed at Him. They spat on Him. They even nailed His hands and feet to a cross! Did Jesus pray for them? Yes, He did:



**When they came to a place called Calvary, they nailed Jesus to a cross ... Jesus then prayed: "Father, forgive these people! They don't know what they're doing." ~ Luke 23:33-34.**

Jesus was just hours away from dying on that cross and yet He knew those people who were being mean to Him were the ones who really needed help, so He prayed for them. Jesus knew that His Father could bring Him back to life. Jesus trusted His Father. He prayed others would trust Him too.

But those who were being mean didn't love Jesus or His Father. They wanted nothing to do with Their message of love. Jesus felt sad for them. He knew that His Father had already forgiven everyone, even these people who were being mean to Him. He prayed that they would accept God's forgiveness and experience the happiness of being a child of

God, who loves us no matter what we have done wrong. Whenever you are feeling sad about doing something wrong, remember the words from your Father in heaven:

**Because I have loved you with everlasting love, I will continue to show you My loving kindness forever. ~ Jeremiah 31:3.**



God's love for you is "everlasting." This means His love for you will NEVER end.

So please do not miss the most important point Jesus said earlier at the top of page 10. He said, when we love our enemies and pray for them, *"then you will be acting like your Father in heaven."* So, we can see that God Himself loves His enemies. He still loves those who do not love Him back. Jesus continued saying:

**If you are kind only to someone who is kind to you, will God be pleased with you for that? Even those who do not love God are kind to people who are kind to them ... So, love your enemies and be good to them ... and you will be children of God in heaven because He is kind even to people who are unthankful and mean. So be tender, loving and kind, as your Father also is tender, loving and kind. ~ Luke 6:33,35,36.**

Did you see what Jesus said here? He said God is always *"kind*

*even to people who are unthankful and mean.”*

I pray that you are beginning to understand God’s character a little better than you did before. There are many people who say wrong things about God. They say He hurts people who do not love Him back. This kind of teaching causes people to be afraid of God. They are afraid that He will hurt them if they do not do what He says. But we have learned that He is ALWAYS tender, loving and kind even to those who are unthankful and mean to Him.



**Can you think of anyone who  
has been mean to you lately?**

**Before reading the next page,  
why not kneel down right now  
and pray for them?**

**Give it a try!**

## God is Love

One of Jesus' friends was named John. He knew Jesus very well and understood the things Jesus said about His Father in heaven. John wrote this about God's love:

**My dear friends, we must love each other. Love comes from God ... and God is love. ~ 1 John 4:7-8.**

John says that "God is love." True love comes from God. If we want to love others the right way, we must allow God to live inside us. He comes to live inside us through His Holy Spirit of love. When we allow God's Holy Spirit to live in us, we will live the way He lives. We will love others the way He loves others.



Do you remember from page 6 that Jesus said He had finished the work that His Father gave Him to do? Do you remember what that work was? That's right, He "glorified" His Father.

When we read about all the kind things Jesus did, we are to remember that He is helping us to see how our Father in heaven always acts. The book of Psalms says, *“The things in the sky show us the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1)*. Paul writes that, although we cannot see God, His *“character is clearly seen and understood by the things He has made” (Romans 1:20)*. Wow, not only we humans, but even the sun, moon, stars, trees, and animals were created to act like Him.



**We breathe in  
Oxygen**

Take a very deep breath right now. When we breathe in, we are breathing in oxygen. Did you know that trees give us the oxygen that we breathe? That’s right, but did you know that trees also breathe? Yeah, they breathe in something called carbon

dioxide. What is super amazing is that, after we breathe in oxygen, we blow out carbon dioxide. This is how the trees are able to breathe. They give us oxygen, and we give them carbon dioxide. It’s a big circle of giving!



**We breathe out  
Carbon Dioxide**

This is how all of God’s creation shows us what He is like. He is a loving Father who is always GIVING us what we need. Isn’t that comforting to know?



This circle of giving throughout God's creation is called His Law. It is the Law of life and love. God did not give us His Law to boss us around and to make us do what He says. No. His Law is there for our protection because He loves us.



God created us and so He is the only one who knows what is best for us. If we were to stop breathing, this would break God's Law of life and we would die. God is not the one who causes death when you break His Law. God does not discipline you in this way. This is NOT how God's Law operates.

For example: Let's pretend that you and a friend are playing at your house. It's a really warm day so your mom turns on a big fan. You then tell your friend not to stick their fingers into the fan or they will get hurt. Why did you tell your friend this? Below are two reasons. Circle the one that is correct.

1. You told your friend not to stick their fingers into the fan because you wanted to boss them around and if they do, YOU will hurt their fingers.
2. You told your friend not to stick their fingers into the fan because you love them, and you do not want the FAN to hurt their fingers.

I am sure you circled answer number 2. When we break God's Law this is called "sin." John tells us that *"sin is breaking God's Law."* (1 John 3:4). Sin is choosing to be selfish, and selfishness is not wanting to be part of God's design (His caring plan) for your life.



What would happen if your friend decided not to listen to you and they put their fingers into the fan? They would get hurt. Did you hurt them or did the fan? That's right,

the fan did. This is how sin works. When we do not listen to God's instructions, we hurt OURSELVES. It is NOT God who hurts us when we sin. Remember, God is love. God's Law tells us about God's character (His way of living) and warns us about the dangers of sin. A man named Paul wrote this about God's Law:

**Love does no harm to others because love is the Law upon which life is designed. ~ Romans 13:10.**

When we are living the way God's Law instructs us, we will not do anything mean to others. We will not hurt them even if they hurt us. We will love others the way God loves others.

One day someone came to Jesus and asked, *"What is the most important instruction in the Law?"* (Mark 12:28). What do you think God's most important instruction to us is? Well, good thing for us is that Jesus gives us the answer. He said:

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” And the second most important one is this: “Love others as yourself.” There is no instruction more important than these. ~ Mark 12:30-31.**

So, the most important instruction God has given us is to love Him and never let anything take away our love for Him. The second most important instruction is to love others the way we love ourselves. You don't want anything harmful or bad to happen to yourself, do you? Of course not. So, we should not do anything harmful or bad to others.

Why do you think the most important instruction is to love God first? Is God being selfish? No. The answer is in the way we show our love to God. We show our love to God by allowing Him to bless us. When we do this, He will live in us and give us the power to love others the right way. This power is called God's GRACE. His grace gives us the strength to live in obedience to His Law of unselfish love ([Romans 1:5](#); [Titus 2:11,12](#)). None of us would be able to breathe without God's gift of grace.

Have you ever had a remote-control toy? What does the toy need in order to move? Yes, it needs batteries. Think of God as your battery. You need Him in order for you to move, think, talk, hear, smell and see.



This is the same way Jesus lives. He said, *“All things have been given to Me by My Father.”* (Luke 10:22). Jesus could do all those wonderful things and help people because He allowed His Father to live in Him. He accepted God’s grace by letting God be His battery (Luke 2:40). Jesus said:

**... The words I speak are not My own words, but My Father who lives in Me does His work through Me. ~ John 14:10.**

Everything Jesus did was the work of His Father. This is why Jesus told Philip, *“Whoever has seen Me, has seen the Father.”* (John 14:9).

Did Jesus ever hurt anyone? No. Why? Because God NEVER hurts anyone. Did Jesus hurt anyone’s feelings? No. Why? Because God would never hurt anyone’s feelings. Did Jesus always help and heal people? Yes! Why? Because God always helps and heals people.

Have you ever been sick? Maybe a cold or a stomachache? Did your mom or dad scold you for being sick? Did they punish you? No way! What did they do? They helped you get better, right? Yeah. They may have even given you medicine to make you healthy again.

Think of sin as a sickness. Do you think your heavenly Father will scold you? Do you think He will punish you for having a sickness? No! He wants to help you get better. He doesn’t

want to get rid of *you*, He wants to give you some medicine to get rid of the *sin* causing you to be sick.



The medicine that God gives us is His Son Jesus. That's right, God's medicine is a person! Just as we drink medicine and it goes into our body, we need to have Jesus live in our body. Jesus can get rid of the sin that is making us sick. We cannot get better without Him. Jesus has told us, *"Without Me, you can't do anything."* (John 15:5).

And remember, the work that Jesus does is the work His Father is doing through Him. So, the medicine that is making us better is our Father who is working through Jesus.

When sin begins to go away, we begin to act more like our Father. We will be tender, loving and kind to others because God is always tender, loving and kind.

## The Flood and the Character of God

Now that we know a little bit more about God's character, let's read a few stories in the Bible that are hard to understand. These stories seem to talk about God hurting people. But we have learned that God never harms or hurts people. He is always kind to everyone, even to people who do not like Him. Let's go to the book of Genesis and read our first story – the story about a flood that covered the entire earth.

**The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every thought of the human heart was only evil all the time. He felt very sorry for them and His heart was sad. He said, "I'll destroy every living creature on earth! I'll wipe out people, animals, birds, and reptiles. I'm sorry I made them." ~ Genesis 6:5-7.**

Oh no, is God really saying He is going to destroy these people? Is He really going to hurt them because they are not acting like Him? By reading this it sounds like God has mixed feelings. First, He is very sad for them; then He says He will destroy them; then He says He's sad for them again. Hmm, does God's character ever change like this? No. God has told us, *"I am the Lord, I do not change."* (Malachi 3:6). Paul tells us something similar about Jesus: *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."* (Hebrews 13:8).

Now remember, when Jesus was being kind and helping the people who were being mean to Him, He was showing us how God always acts. God is always kind to those who want to be mean and do not want to live like Him. We have just learned that God's character never changes. He treated people that lived long ago the same way He treats people now. He is ALWAYS *"kind even to people who are unthankful and mean."* (Luke 6:35).

When God saw all these people not living in harmony with His Law of life and love, He was very sad. Like your friend in the story of the fan we talked about earlier, they were about to choose to stick their fingers into the fan. They were going to hurt THEMSELVES. But since God loved them so much, He told His friend Noah to build a big boat called an Ark. Why? Because God knew that in 120 years there would be a flood that would cover the entire world.

He wanted all the people and the animals to be safe, but only Noah's family listened and were saved along with a select few of the animals.



But why was a flood coming? Did God cause this flood because He wanted to destroy all the people who did not like Him and the way He lives? Some people say “yes,” but you and I know that God is love and He is always *“kind even to people who are unthankful and mean”* and that His *“love does no harm to others.”* (Luke 6:35; Romans 13:10).

Remember earlier when we talked about the trees and how they give us oxygen and we give them carbon dioxide? This shows that all of God’s creation is connected to each other.

The first two people that God created for this world were Adam and Eve. One day they chose not to listen to God’s instructions, and they broke His Law of life and love. They sinned against God’s way of living. What is very interesting about this is that their sin, not only affected them, but it also affected the earth itself. After they sinned, God told them what would happen to the earth:



**The ground will be under a curse because of what you did. You will now struggle to grow enough food. Your food will be plants, but the ground will produce thorns and weeds. ~ Genesis 3:17-18.**



Have you ever hurt yourself on prickly thorns? These thorns came as a result of sin upon this earth. Did you know that God created us humans from the earth?

**Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man became a living being. ~ Genesis 2:7.**

Do you see why sin affects the earth? We were made from the earth, and when we sin it affects the very earth from which we came from. In the book of Isaiah we read:

**The earth is polluted because the people living on it disobeyed the Laws of God and changed His Statutes (His appointed times of worship) ... The earth is under a curse; the earth's people are dying out because of their sins. ~ Isaiah 24:5-6.**



Here again we see that our sinful behavior affects the earth itself which, in the beginning, caused it to produce thorns.



4,000 years after the very first thorn ever grew, some Roman soldiers gave Jesus a crown made of thorns and forced it onto His head. They were making fun of Him because Jesus said He was a King. They did not understand what Jesus meant.

Jesus meant He was a King of a kingdom which is not like the kingdoms of this world at all. Jesus' kingdom is not a physical place somewhere, but instead it has to do with the way we think and act toward others. It is the kingdom of unselfish love. Jesus said this about His kingdom:

**The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No one will say, "Look, here it is!" or, "There it is!"; because [the Kingdom of God is within you.](#) ~ Luke 17:20-21.**



Isn't that amazing? God's kingdom is all about tender, love, and kindness towards others. It is all about changing our thoughts in our mind (our brain) and beginning to think and act just like Jesus does.

Paul said this to us: *"Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 2:5). Why do we need the mind of Jesus to be in us? God tells us:

**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. ~ Isaiah 55:8-9.**

God's way of thinking is much better than ours. This is why we need to think the way Jesus thinks, so we can act the way Jesus acts. And we can only do this if we let His mind, His way of thinking, take over our mind and way of thinking.

Jesus allowed the Roman soldiers to violently press that crown of thorns upon His head to show us that He loves us so much that He is willing to allow our hurtful sins, which caused these thorns, to kill Him instead of us.

Our hearts and minds have become "thorny." Thorns hide the

natural beauty of the garden. A beautiful and delicate rose becomes hurtful with thorns. Thorns and weeds are a witness to the fact that this world is filled with good and evil, when God only meant it to be filled with good. How sad.

Like the rose, because of sin God's beauty and gentleness is covered and hidden by the deceitful and tricky thorn. Jesus allowed the crown of thorns to pierce His tender and loving mind (head) so that our hearts will be pricked (become sad) as we see His love for us through the awful thorns.

When our human sinful minds and hearts caused Jesus to be hung upon the cross, He had to show us how dark our thinking is before we could see His love for us.



This is why *“darkness came over the whole land” (Luke 23:44)* while He was on the cross, and then when He died *“there was an earthquake, and the rocks split apart” (Matthew 27:51).*

Can you see how the earth itself was affected by the death of Jesus? The earth reacted to its Creator being tortured and hurt. Like a mirror, the darkness that spread over the earth showed us what was in *our* dark minds. That means we really did not understand and were confused about the true loving character of God our Father.

But because of Jesus, we are able to see through the darkness, and once again see God's true beauty, gentleness and love that lasts forever. Like a true Father that loves all His children, He never stops loving you.

**For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light (truth) of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ~ 2 Corinthians 4:6.**



When we see Jesus, we are given "the knowledge of the glory of God" because He is really like His Father. But what is God's glory? Let's read what God told Moses:

**Then Moses said, "Please, show me Your glory!" And God said, "I will make all My goodness (tenderness) pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; for I will be gracious (loving) to whom I will be gracious, and will show kindness on whom I will show kindness." ~ Exodus 33:18-19.**



God's glory is His character! God's character of tender, loving kindness has shone through the darkness of our confusion about His character through His Son Jesus. Whenever we read something about God that confuses us, we must believe what Jesus taught us about Him. Only Jesus can do this because He is the only one

who really knows God and His character. Let's not allow the darkness of sin to trick us anymore! Let's allow the light of God's TRUE character to shine on us by reading His Word every day!

Considering all that we have just learned, is it possible that the earth being sick is what caused the flood during the time when God had Noah build the Ark? Well, let's notice again what had happened to the people just before the flood:

**The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every thought of the human heart was only evil all the time. ~ Genesis 6:5.**

Their minds and hearts were filled with "evil" – they were always violent and hateful, and they didn't care about living according to God's loving design. They only cared about themselves and how much fun they could have.



Did this have a direct effect upon the earth itself? Let's find out in verses 11 and 12:

**Now the earth was ruined before God, and the earth was filled with violence. God saw the earth, and behold it was ruined because all the people had corrupted their way upon the earth.**

**~ Genesis 6:11-12.**

Yes! The violent actions of these people ruined the earth. Again, it was like a mirror reflecting the violence in their hearts and minds, and this made God sad.

God did not like that the people, the earth, and the animals had become violent and hateful to each other. God does not like violence. Isaiah tells us that Jesus "*never did any violence*" (*Isaiah 53:9*). And we know, if Jesus never does any violence, neither does His Father! In fact, God wants to save us "*from deceitful lies and violence.*" (*Psalms 72:14*). If God is the one who sent the flood, then He would be acting out in violence.

But we have seen God does not like violence and would never do anything that is violent.


Some people say that it is a part of God's justice to use violence and destruction upon people who do not obey His Law. But listen to what God tells the mean princes of Israel: *"Enough, you princes of Israel; Get rid of violence and destruction; and start practicing justice and doing what is right." (Ezekiel 45:9).* Notice that true justice is the opposite of violence and destruction. So, God's justice is NEVER about God Himself acting violent or destructive.

God told Noah to warn the people about the coming flood. How do you think Noah warned the people? Below are two answers.

\_\_\_\_\_ Circle the one which is correct: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Noah said, "There is a violent and destructive flood coming! God wants to save you from this flood, so please do what He says and turn away from your sins."

2. Noah said, "If you do not stop breaking God's Law then He is going to violently destroy you by sending a flood to drown all of you!"

A young girl with her arms outstretched stands in front of a chalkboard. The chalkboard contains text about Noah's warning and two options for how he warned the people. The girl is smiling and looking at the camera.

I am certain you circled number 1. God desired to save them, not hurt them. God was not trying to protect them from HIMSELF, He was trying to protect them from the FLOOD. It was the flood that was going to hurt them, just like it was the fan that was going to hurt your friend.



Since it was the earth itself that was becoming violent, the earth itself was going to act violently, not God. God NEVER does anything violent.

God once taught some people that, because *“the earth itself was sick”*, it actually *“vomited out the people who were living there.”* (Leviticus 18:25-28).

But we must ask a question. Don't ever be afraid to ask God questions. The question we need to ask is why the Bible says that God Himself said, *“I'll destroy every living creature on earth! I'll wipe out people, animals, birds, and reptiles”*?

This verse seems to suggest that God is the one who would destroy them. How are we to understand God's character here? Well, it all depends on HOW we read the whole Bible.

One day Jesus asked someone, *“What is written in the Law? HOW do you understand it?”* (Luke 10:26). So, we must make sure we understand what and why the Bible says what it does. If we do not understand it, then we will think the Bible says something that it does not.



Allow Jesus to take off the covering and follow Him to the light.



← Start

Paul tells us that many people read the Bible as if they have a covering over their eyes. This covering causes them not to correctly understand the things that it says.

**"For up to this very day the same covering remains at the reading of the Bible ... But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the covering is taken away."**  
~ 2 Corinthians 3:14, 16.



In order to really understand the Bible correctly, we must let the Lord Jesus help us. We must understand the Bible the way He understands it.

So, what has Jesus taught us about God?



In the book of Job, we are told something that helps us to understand what happened during the time of the flood.

**Will you keep the old way by which evil men lived? Who were violently taken away before their time, who were overcome by the rush of a flood: Who said to God, "Go away from us; what is the Almighty One able to do for us?" ~ Job 22:15-16.**

The people living during the flood told God to "Go away!" What do you think would happen if God went away? Well, do

you remember what would happen if you took away the batteries from your remote-control car? It would stop working. God is like those batteries. If He goes away, we do not work! Because the people were pushing Him away, God sadly said, *“My Spirit (life-giving presence) will not always be with these humans.” (Genesis 6:3).*

But guess what else doesn't work if God goes away? If God goes away the trees and grass will die. The sun will not give its light. The waters of the earth will not remain where they are supposed to be. The earth will be so violent that nothing can stop it from destroying us humans.

The Bible tells us that God *“set boundaries for the sea so that the waters might not go against His Word.” (Proverbs 8:29).* God's Word holds all the water in its place. If God goes away, His Word cannot hold the waters. The waters would flood the earth.



This is what God meant when He said He would destroy the people with a flood. He was saying, “If I go away, My Word will not be holding the waters, and this will destroy all the people.” God’s Spirit spoke through Noah pleading with the people not to make Him go away. But the more God spoke about a flood, the more the people got angry and wanted Him to stop.



They thought that a coming flood was silly, and they laughed at Noah. They did not believe a flood was coming, so they told God to go away and leave them alone.

But how can we humans make God go away? God loves us so much that He will give us what we want. God will NEVER force us to love Him. If you truly want God to go away and leave you alone, then He will. But this makes Him sad because He knows if He leaves, we will not be able to keep living because He is our battery. He is what keeps us alive, but they refused to let Him protect them.

Earlier we learned that God holds everything together by His Word. Remember when we talked about Jesus being the medicine that God has given us? Well, the Bible tells us that Jesus has another name, and that name is *“the Word of God.”*

*(Revelation 19:13).* John tells us that *“the Word”* (Jesus) was *“in the beginning with God”* and by this Word (Jesus) *“all things were created.”* *(John 1:1-3).*

Wow! Jesus created all things by the power that His Father had given Him. It has been Jesus holding things together this whole time! Paul tells us that Jesus *“holds up all things by the word of His power.”* *(Hebrews 1:3).*

When the people told God to go away, they did not believe that it was God’s Word holding all things together. They rejected God’s Word, which is the same as rejecting Jesus who *is* the Word. Noah was the only one who understood this. As God looked upon us sinful humans, Noah’s family saw, believed, and accepted God’s grace, while all the others did not *(Genesis 6:8)*. Just like those men who came and took Jesus and hung Him up on a cross, the people living during the time of the flood stopped Jesus from helping them.



We must not forget that Jesus is the one who holds all things together in their place, as those people who lived just before the flood chose to forget:

**People willingly forget that it was by the Word of God (Jesus) that the heavens and the earth were formed from the middle of water. By these waters the earth was destroyed by a flood. And even today the heavens and earth are being held together by the same Word (Jesus) ... ~ 2 Peter 3:5-7.**

Every time we humans decide to reject the loving instructions from God and His Son, it is like we are nailing Jesus to the cross again and again. The disease of sin has caused us to like living the way we want to live, instead of living the way God desires us to live. The book of Hebrews tells us that when we sin, we are *“crucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to humiliate Him again.”* (Hebrews 6:6).

Not only did Roman soldiers pierce His head with a crown of thorns, but they nailed His hands and His feet to a cross.

Why did God allow us humans to nail Jesus’ hands to the cross? In Scripture “hands” represent the way in which we work (see, Psalm 92:4; Proverbs 31:31; Isaiah 59:6).



Nailing Jesus' hands to the cross revealed our natural hatred towards the loving and unselfish works of Jesus. It was our way of trying to stop His work of serving us because sin has tricked us into believing we can do things better than God can. How foolish we are at times!



Why did God allow us humans to nail Jesus' feet to the cross? In Scripture "feet" represent the way in which we walk (see, [Psalm 56:13](#); [Habakkuk 3:19](#)).

Nailing Jesus' feet to the cross revealed our natural hatred towards letting God our Father be our battery life-support and depend on Him as Jesus did. It was our way of stopping His plea for us to accept God's grace and follow in His footsteps of obedience. Jesus' friend Peter wrote:

**"For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in His footsteps. He never sinned, nor even lied to anyone. He did not fight back when He was being treated unkind, nor did He threaten revenge when He suffered." (1 Peter 2:21-23).**



One time Jesus and His friends were out on a boat. A huge storm came, and His friends were all scared and worried that they were going to sink.



They looked for Jesus and noticed He was asleep. They woke Him up and begged Him to help them. *“Then He got up and commanded the wind to stop, and said to the sea, ‘Be still!’ Then the wind stopped blowing, and the sea became very calm.” (Mark 4:39).*

If the people during the time of the flood would have trusted in the Word of God (Jesus), the earth and the sea would have calmed down and there would not have been a flood. Jesus would have stood up and commanded the waters to stop flooding the earth, just as He commanded the raging waters to calm down while out on the boat with His friends.

God being pushed away is what caused the flood to come. It was the flood that destroyed the people. When Jesus was telling a group of people the story of the flood, He said, *“The flood came, and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17:27).* Jesus said nothing about God destroying them, He said “the flood” destroyed them. And remember, Jesus is the Word of God who said: *“I don't do anything on My own. I say only what My*

*Father taught Me.” (John 8:28).*

God telling the people that He was going to destroy them meant He was only going to ALLOW, or PERMIT, the flood to destroy them. They did not want God’s help so, because He loved them, He sadly let them CHOOSE for themselves. This is a very important thing to know when reading the Bible. Many times God is said to “do” something which He is only “permitting” to be done. You will see this again as we look at other stories from the Bible.

## **The Plagues of Egypt and the Character of God**

Let’s move on to another story where God seems to do something mean. God wanted to do some great things with a group of people called



Israelites, but these people were made slaves by another group of people called Egyptians. The Egyptians were forcing the Israelites to do very hard work. God loved both groups of people, but He wanted the Egyptians to stop being mean to the Israelites. Like the people living just before the flood, the evil actions of the Egyptians were going to cause disasters to

come to the land. To prevent this from happening, God sent a man named Moses to the leader of the Egyptians.



The leader of the Egyptians is called a Pharaoh. Moses told the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. If they would not let them go, then God was going to send 10 plagues upon them.

A plague is something really bad such as: disease, swarms of flies, painful sores, and even darkness during the day. But was God really going to make 10 bad things happen to the Egyptians? Does God ever do anything that is bad?

Every time one of these plagues would come, the Pharaoh would ask Moses to pray to God so the plague would go away. Each time, God showed His kindness to the Egyptians by stopping the plague. However, every time God showed kindness, the Pharaoh would become even meaner, and was becoming very upset at all these things. He did not want to let the Israelites go free. He was being stubborn.

It finally came down to the tenth plague. God warned the Pharaoh that something really bad was going to happen to all

the firstborn sons of the people. Being the firstborn son means you are the oldest boy of each family. God said:

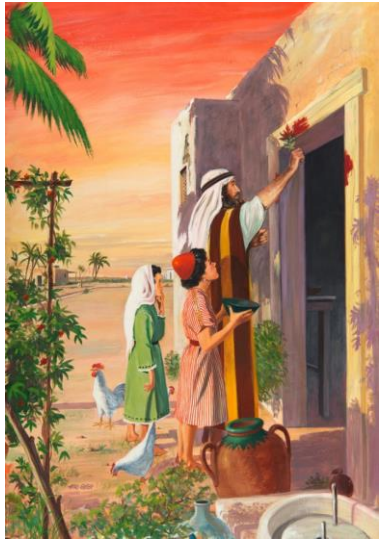
**“That same night I will pass through Egypt and strike the firstborn son in every family ...” ~ Exodus 12:12.**

Yikes! Is God really going to hurt all these boys? How should we understand God’s words here? We should understand this just as we learned about the story of the flood. Remember, God said He was going to destroy the people with a flood, but we learned that the flood came because the people told God to go away. We learned that many times in the Bible God is said to “do” something that He is only “permitting” to be done.

Now what about these ten plagues? Do you think God is going to hurt these boys? Or is He going to allow something or someone else to hurt them like He did with the flood? That’s correct, He’s going to ALLOW the bad thing to happen.

But first He gave EVERYONE, including the Egyptians, the opportunity to be safe. He told the people to spread some blood from a lamb over their doors to their houses. That sounds strange doesn’t it? Well, we’ll talk about that later. Let’s read what God told them:

**“When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and He will not permit **the DESTROYER** to enter your houses and strike you down.  
~ Exodus 12:23.**



Did you notice something very important here? I noticed that it was NOT God who hurt them, but someone else called “the Destroyer.” God said when He sees the blood, He would not permit the Destroyer to go into that home.

Some people call this destroyer “the angel of death.” Do you think this angel is one of God’s good angels? No. They would not destroy people.

This angel is bad – an evil angel. In fact, the book of Psalms tells us that evil angels were the ones causing the Egyptians all this trouble:

**... He set His signs in Egypt ... He turned their water into blood ... He permitted flies and frogs to come, and destroy them ... Locusts devoured their crops ... Their grapevines and trees were destroyed by hail ... He expressed His anger upon them by permitting **EVIL ANGELS** among them. ~ Psalm 78:43-49.**

Again, all this trouble was caused by evil angels. Evil angels are not good angels. Good and evil are opposites.

On one Sabbath day Jesus taught the people what the difference is between good and evil. He said, *“On the Sabbath should we do good deeds or evil deeds? Should we save someone’s life or destroy it?” (Luke 6:9).*

When Jesus said this, He was teaching us that to do *good deeds* means to “save someone’s life,” while to do *evil deeds* means “to destroy” someone’s life. And since God NEVER does anything evil, then we can be assured that He NEVER destroys people! Evil angels do not work for God, they work for “the Destroyer.” Who is this Destroyer?

**Watch out! Your enemy, the Devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to destroy. ~ 1 Peter 5:8.**



The Devil was once one of God’s good angels who became very selfish. The word “Devil” means he is a liar. He loves to tell lies about God and His Son. He lies about Their character and says that They are the ones who are selfish. The Devil is always trying to hurt others. He was the Destroyer hurting the Egyptians!

## Anger and the Character of God

But what did the verse mean in the Psalm we read when it said that God “expressed His anger” upon the Egyptians? (Psalm 78:49). How do you think God expresses anger? Do you think it’s like the way we express anger? No. Without the help of Jesus, our anger is expressed very badly. Jesus’ brother, James, wrote this about anger: *“Human anger does not express the tender, loving kindness of God.”* (James 1:20).

Our sinful anger results in us hurting others and even ourselves. God’s anger is different. God’s anger is Him feeling very sad as He is forced to step away, permitting the Destroyer (the Devil) to hurt others, or even permitting humans to hurt themselves. Do you see the difference?



**This is NOT how  
God expresses  
His anger**

Let’s look at a few examples of how God expresses anger. In the book of Numbers, we read about Miriam and Aaron who began to complain about Moses and his wife. Let’s see how God reacts to this:

**“The LORD was ANGRY with them; and He LEFT ...”** (Numbers 12:9).

When most people are angry at someone, they move toward them, to attack, to strike out! But God moves away.

After God moved away from Miriam and Aaron, He could not protect them and so Miriam came down with a disease called leprosy ([Numbers 12:10](#)). Likewise, when God moved away from the people who chose not to trust Him by not getting into the Ark that Noah built, or when He moved away from the Egyptians, He could no longer protect them from the coming flood or from the plagues.



This is **NOT**  
what God's face  
looks like when  
He gets angry

Another example of how God expresses anger is when God asked Moses to go to Egypt and speak to the people. Moses said, *"I have never been a good speaker."* ([Exodus 4:10](#)). God replied, *"When you speak, I will be with you and give you the words to say."* ([Verse 11](#)). Moses, still not fully trusting in God, begged, *"Lord, please send someone else to do it."* ([Verse 13](#)).

Notice what is written next:

**The Lord became ANGRY with Moses and said: "What about your brother Aaron ... I know he is a good speaker ... Aaron will speak to the people for you ... I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will tell each of you what to do." ~ Exodus 4:14-16.**



Did you see how God expresses anger? He didn't start yelling or throwing and kicking things around. He didn't even desire to hurt Moses. All He did was give to Moses exactly what he desired – someone else to speak for him.



another section of the Bible, we read about King David who wanted to count the people to see if he could have a big army to fight the other armies, but God did not want David to do this. Like Miriam and Moses, God wanted David to trust Him and His ways. God never wanted His people to go to war against others. Let's read what the Bible says about this:

The Lord was ANGRY with Israel again, and HE made David think

**it would be a good idea to count the people in Israel and Judah.**

**~ 2 Samuel 24:1**

This says, because God was angry, He made David count the people. But wait, God did NOT want David to do this. So why does it say that God made him do it? Does God really force people to do things when He is angry?



Sometimes we really need to do some detective work as we study the Bible.

To fully understand this, we must turn to another section of the Bible where it repeats this story, but this time it's worded a little differently to give us a clearer understanding:

**SATAN decided to cause trouble for Israel by making David think it was a good idea to count the people in Israel and Judah.**

**~ 1 Chronicles 21:1.**

Do you see what is happening? Here we read that it was Satan who made David count the people. The word “Satan” means “the enemy.” Satan is another name for the Devil. He is a lying enemy. Jesus spoke of the Devil (Satan) saying, *“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth ... When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the creator of all lies.”* (John 8:44).

It was Satan tempting David not to trust in God. David chose to do it Satan’s way, so God sadly stepped aside and gave David what he desired by permitting Satan to convince him to count the people. This is the way God expresses His anger to those who do not want to do what He instructs.

But I believe it’s much better to trust God and His Son Jesus, don’t you? They will always keep you safe.

**“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans of peace and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”**

~ Jeremiah 29:11.



Now let’s see how Jesus expressed anger. It will be no different than His Father. On the same Sabbath day when

Jesus taught the people what the difference is between good and evil, Jesus wanted to heal a man's hand, but the religious leaders didn't think it was right to heal people on the Sabbath. They said, "Today is the Sabbath, and you are not allowed to do any work on the Sabbath!" Jesus taught them that it is okay to heal on the Sabbath. The man's hand was hurt, and Jesus wanted to give the man rest from the pain and suffering. Health and healing are what the Sabbath is all about. Let's read what Jesus did:

**"And when Jesus looked at them with ANGER, being SAD because they were stubborn, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as healthy as the other." ~ Mark 3:5.**



**This is what  
God's face looks  
like when He  
gets angry**

Jesus was angry, but He didn't say or do anything mean or violent. His anger was expressed by His sadness. He felt sorry for the religious leaders who did not understand God's character of love.

Just like when God felt sadness and sorrow for the people during the flood, Jesus shows us that His anger is the awful sadness He and His Father feel when they are forced to permit the bad things that happen when people choose not to listen to Their instructions. This hurts Their hearts.

## Poisonous Snakes and the Character of God

To further prove that Satan is the Destroyer who attacked the Egyptians, we can read another story about poisonous snakes.

In this story the people have just left Egypt and are walking through a huge wilderness. The people began to complain to Moses and God asking, *“Why did you bring us out here? There’s no food or water. You have brought us out here to die.” (Exodus 17:3).*

They thought God was someone who punished people by hurting them if they do something wrong. They believed God acted like the false gods that the Egyptians worshiped. But God does not act like that at all. He doesn’t want to hurt people, He wants to always protect us. But again, we read something in the Bible that is hard to understand:



**Then the Lord sent poisonous snakes that bit and killed many of them. ~ Numbers 21:6.**

Do you really think God became so angry that He gathered up a bunch of poisonous snakes to attack the people? I don’t think so either. So, what is really going on here?

In another section of the Bible, it tells us that the poisonous snakes were already in the area and God had been protecting the people from these snakes the whole time.

**... Don't forget that you were once slaves in Egypt and that it was the Lord who set you free. Remember how He led you in that huge and frightening desert where poisonous snakes and scorpions live ... ~ Deuteronomy 8:14-15.**

The people kept on complaining, and as a result, they were pushing God away. Do you remember what happens when we push God away and tell Him to leave us alone? Yeah, only bad things will happen. Like a wall, God's Law was protecting them from harm, but they chose to break the Law not realizing that they would be unprotected from the snakes.

**If you dig a pit to trap others, you will fall in it yourself; if you break down a protective wall (God's Law), a snake will bite you.  
~ Ecclesiastes 10:8.**

So once again, when we read things in the Bible about God "causing" or "sending" bad things, we are to understand it as God PERMITTING these things to happen. Paul also wrote about this story. Let's carefully notice what he said:

**And don't try to test Christ, as some of them did and were later bitten by poisonous snakes. Don't even grumble, as some of them did and were killed by the DESTROYING ANGEL.  
~ 1 Corinthians 10:9-10.**

Here is that Destroying angel again. He likes to cause a lot of trouble. In another section of the Bible, it tells us that this Destroying angel, who acts like a poisonous snake, is the *Devil* whom we have learned also goes by the name *Satan*:

**... Yes, that old SNAKE and his angels ran out of heaven! That poisonous SNAKE, who fools everyone on earth, is known as the DEVIL and SATAN. ~ Revelation 12:9.**

Just as God permitted Satan to destroy and harass the Egyptians and permitted him to cause David to number the people, God permitted Satan to destroy the people with poisonous snakes. But why does God do this? God has to do this in order to show us what happens when we CHOOSE to live a selfish life. Then, when we realize that we want to change, we will be ready and willing to seek His help.



The people realized that God had been protecting them all along the way, so they prayed to God for help. God told Moses to make a snake out of bronze and hang it up on a pole. God told them if they looked at the bronze snake they would be healed. It was true! Everyone who looked was healed.

When Jesus was on the earth, He met a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus asked Jesus a lot of questions. Jesus told him:

**“...Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so I must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Me.” ~ John 3:14-15.**

Jesus was talking about when He would be lifted up on the cross. The bronze snake lifted up by Moses was a lesson about Jesus being lifted up on the cross.

But remember, the snake always represents Satan. When Jesus was hung up on the cross, He defeated Satan and put an end to all his lies. Jesus showed us that He is as gentle as a lamb while Satan is a mean snake who destroys and tells lies about God’s character. Isaiah tells us more about Jesus:

**He was painfully abused, but He did not complain. He was silent like a LAMB being led to the butcher, as quiet as a SHEEP having its wool cut off. ~ Isaiah 53:7.**



Do you understand now why God told the Israelites to spread the lamb’s blood over their doors? The lamb describes God’s kingdom, which is all about tenderness, love, and kindness to others. Jesus did not fight back with violence or any harsh words because people in God’s kingdom always treat everyone with kindness.

The poisonous snake describes Satan’s kingdom which is always about being mean and selfish. People in Satan’s



kingdom like to force other people to do things that are not nice or loving. The death of Jesus showed us who the real enemy is by exposing Satan as being the liar and the destroyer who made it look like God was doing the destroying. The death of Jesus shows us how much He and God love us and how They prefer to be killed than to kill.

## Conclusion

I pray that this book has helped you understand God's character better and that you will be able to use these understandings and guidelines as you read other stories in the Bible such as: Sodom and Gomorrah, the battle of Jericho, and the lake of fire that ends all suffering and death.



Many people believe that, to save us, God killed Jesus instead of killing us. However, Jesus dying on the cross revealed the heart of a Father that had already forgiven us in His loving mind. All we ever needed to do was simply believe and accept it. God made us a promise by saying:

**I will take away your stubborn heart and give you a new heart and a desire to be faithful. You will have only pure thoughts, because I will put My Spirit in you, giving you the desire and power to submit to My Laws and Statutes ... ~ Ezekiel 36:26-27**

What does God mean when He says He will put His Spirit in our hearts? Well, think of God's Spirit as your PAL.

*P = Presence A = Attitude L = Life*

God's Holy Spirit in you is His very own presence, attitude, and life of unselfish love. You will then have the desire and power to submit to His Laws and to love others the way God loves others because His Law will be written in your heart.



**The time will come when I, the Lord, will write My Laws in their MINDS and HEARTS. I will be their God, and they will be My people. ~ Hebrews 8:10.**

If we don't resist Him, He will save us from our selfishness and our confusion. We will love our enemies and be good to them; and be kind even to people who are unthankful and mean.

Satan has fooled us into being afraid of our heavenly Father, that God is someone who demands that we must behave in order for Him to love us. This is a big lie. John wrote: *"We love Him, because He first loved us."* (1 John 4:19). God's salvation plan has nothing to do with God changing His mind about us (He has and will always love and accept us); it's about changing our minds about Him! He accepts us simply because we are His children.

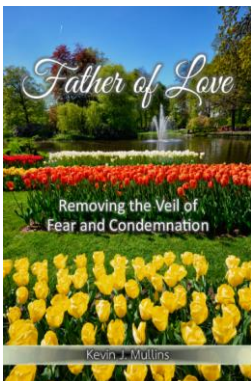
Find and circle the words that describe God's character.

A	I	E	F	D	V	D	O	E	D	N	E	L	R
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E	N	L	E	E	E	E	U	Y	I	S	S	N	A
P	H	N	D	R	E	I	L	D	S	I	S	H	S
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UNSELFISH  
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NONVIOLENT  
HEALER  
LOVING  
GENTLE  
RESTORER  
TENDER  
GOOD  
KIND  
HOLY  
PROVIDER

**Parents/Guardians - for a deeper study to what you have just read, be sure to read the adult companion book:**

### Father of Love



Does God condemn and judge others while commanding us not to judge but to love others unconditionally? Does He torture His enemies for eternity in a lake of fire while at the same time commanding us to love our enemies? Does He spitefully send plagues and pestilence upon people who choose not to love Him while demanding we pray for health and happiness to fall upon those who do not love us? Are we not to live a character like His? Or are we reading the Bible through a mirror which reflects back to us what's in our thinking and practice?

Download it for free at: [lastmessageofmercy.com](http://lastmessageofmercy.com)

# What is God's True Character?



What does the Bible mean when it talks about God's wrath and anger?

Did God make use of violence and cause a flood to destroy millions of people because they would not do what He said?

Did God's anger want to seek revenge and cause harm upon the Egyptians by sending them 10 plagues?

Did God get so irritated with His people that He sent poisonous snakes to kill them?



Is this really God's justice?

These are questions that our Christian children will have to answer as they get older. Will they be ready?  
Let's get them ready!

