

FOCUSING ON GOD

By Bob Young

What do you think about when you think of God?

- What and how we think about God is the most important thing in Christianity, in life. To know God is to know Jesus; to know Jesus is to know God (John 14).
- The Bible is God's self-revelation. God wants us to know him and understand him as he is, according to his nature.
- We cannot get life right without getting God right. J. B. Phillips popularized the phrase, "Your God is too small." Is our view of God biblical?
- After studying the doxologies of the New Testament, this challenge came to my mind: tell me about your God. Put God into your own words of praise and worship. How easily can I do this? Can you do this?
- How specific and definite are your ideas about God? How specific is your concept of God?
- The question is important because an abstract concept of God will lead to abstract discipleship. We cannot know the goal of discipleship if we do not have a clear view of God. We cannot define discipleship and know what a disciple looks like if we do not know God.

How to focus on God – three questions.

What is God up to in this world?

- What is God intentionally doing in this world? What must God do to be God? What does he do to demonstrate his nature? What is his plan, his purpose? What does he want to see happen?
- Biblically, God's purpose focuses on evangelism and missions. People must be saved. This is primary. Nothing else qualifies as God's purpose statement, mission statement, eternal purpose and plan.
- The answer is not benevolence, or eliminating poverty and disease, although these are consistent with God's merciful nature. God has not acted to make possible the elimination of problems in this world.
- The action that God absolutely had to take in order to be consistent with his nature was to deal with sin.
- God is pursuing relationship and renewal of relationship with his human creation by providing salvation.
- Because God is pursuing his human creation, God's purpose for us is the same, the pursuit of people. Evangelism is simply the process of pursuing someone for God, in God's name.
- This understanding must be a part of any discipleship training.

What is your local congregation up to in this world, keeping the intentionality of God in view?

Describe congregational engagement in your local church? Describe congregational involvement? What are the necessary commitments in the local church? How is necessary participation defined in the local church? What is the place, role, and activity of your congregation in the local community? How does congregational activity differ from individual actions (place, role, activity)?

What are the greatest needs in your local church in order to align God's intention and the church's ministry?

What is the greatest challenge in the ministry of the church right now?

How does the church distinguish priorities and urgencies?

How does the church help members balance "resting" and "serving"?

Is the church "praying ahead" in anticipation of God's future intentions?

How does the church balance planning and depending?

How does the church help its members balance and use well the relationships of life?

How does the church help members learn stewardship -- of self (talents, abilities, gifts), situation or circumstances (including time), and "stuff" (possessions)?