

Too Far without Help  
February 10, 2013

Mankind has been able to reduce the problem of distance like never before. When I was in seminary, in Louisville, Kentucky, and came home to Maryland to my parents house for the holidays it always amazed me how far I could travel in a day. It was 650 miles from my dorm to their house.

Twice, now, I have flown from the east coast to the west coast. And it amazes me how far I can travel by air in a day. Think about the pioneers and how short a distance they could travel in a day. On many days the caravan of pioneers would only travel ten to fifteen miles. On rainy, muddy days they might only travel a couple of miles. It would take them five to seven days just to travel the distance we can drive a car in a single hour.

We have placed a man on the moon. Plans are being made to place a man, or woman, on Mars. And if we someday invent some kind of warp engine, we'll be able to visit the stars.

We have conquered the time lag of communication on our planet. With computers, the internet, and satellites, we can communicate around the world in a few seconds.

But there is one distance that is beyond man's ability to shorten. That is the distance between man and God.

You see, there is a great deal of distance between us and God. It is not so much a physical distance as a relational distance.

God created mankind to have a natural awareness that we are far from God. While some religions propose that God is part of the universe, others believe in the transcendence of God. **Transcendence means God is separate from His creation.** God is not the universe. God is not some force in the universe. God is outside of the material universe.

Another word that has a similar meaning is the word holy. God is holy. The word holy, at its root, means set apart. God is apart from us by His very nature.

**The holiness of God is a key concept we must understand if we are to rightly relate to Him.** If you get this wrong, it will affect everything else you believe about God and how you try to relate to Him. The holiness of God is a foundational truth on which we must build our theology. You may not know that you have a theology. Your theology is what you believe about God. If you get the basic facts wrong, it will affect everything else you believe about God.

For example, the Greeks believed in a multitude of gods who did not get along with each other. They fought. They tried to control each other. They manipulated and used people to fight against other gods. They had many bad qualities, such as greed, lust, and dishonesty. This affected everything else the Greeks believed about their gods and their lives. While they might worship one or two gods, they had doubts about trusting the others.

If you believe that the creator, Yahweh, is like the Greek gods, then you will not trust Him. If, however, you believe that Yahweh is always truthful and faithful, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are perfectly united in purpose, then you will be able to trust God to keep His promises.

So key concepts about God, basic truths about God are foundations for building your theology on. The holiness of God is one of those basic truths. The holiness of God points to the differences between us and God.

**Exodus 15:11 (NIV)** "Who among the gods is like you, O Yahweh? Who is like you--majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"

The holiness of God points to the differences between us. God is not one of us. He is distinct from us. He is other than we are. We are created. He was not created. We are finite, He is infinite. Our knowledge is limited. God's is complete. Our power is limited. God controls all the power in the universe. We only exist in one place at a time. God can inhabit all space in the universe at the same time and even outside of the universe. We exist in time. God is outside of time.

There is a great difference between us and God. This difference between us and God is a natural barrier to knowing God. God is distant from us because He is so unlike us. We are physical while He is spirit. We have more in common with animals and fish than we have in common with God.

What we can accomplish is so little compared to God. God is the maker of heaven and earth. God created the universe. We can only juggle things already created by Him. We cannot create matter or life.

God is whole and complete within Himself. He has no need of anything or anyone. We on-the-other-hand are dependent on the weather, on the food supply, on shelter, on clothing, on other people, and on God.

In short, God is unique.

**1 Samuel 2:2 (NIV)** There is no one holy like Yahweh;

This difference between us and God makes it hard to relate to Him. How do you relate to someone who is invisible? How do you relate to someone who is so unlike you? How do you relate to someone you know so little of?

The truth is, we can't. We are too unlike God, too distant from God to know Him unaided. The only way mankind can know God is with God's help. He gave us help initially through the natural revelation of Himself. In nature we can see something of God.

**Romans 1:20 (NIV)** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

God wants us to know Him. That is why He gave us this capacity to get a glimpse of Him through the world we live in. What we do with this bit of knowledge is very important. How we respond to this bit of knowledge is crucial to relating to God. God expects that we will begin a search to know Him.

#### Invitation

God loves us and wants us to know Him.

That's why He gave us life.

God loves us and wants us to know Him.

That's why He gave us this ability to know something of Him through the creation.

God loves us and wants us to know Him.

That's why He sent to us Jesus, our Savior.

God closed the distance between you and Him so that you could know Him, could be forgiven of your sins through the death of Jesus, and inherit eternal life. Today, believe on Jesus as your Savior and turn your life over to Him as your Lord, and that distance between you and God will be all but eliminated.