

Homework for Lesson 23 Who is God [And Who God Isn't]

How we perceive God determines how we include or don't include God in our daily lives. We probably do not see God one particular way. Sometimes our feelings about God change based on where we are and what is going on in our lives. Keep in mind that our perception of God does not define God. God remains constant and present in our lives always.

Fold a piece of paper in half so that you have two equal rectangular sections. Then unfold the paper. Fold it in half the other way so that you have four sections. In each of the four boxes you will sketch and write what you think of a common perception of God.

#1. The first common perception is **"God as the Great Oz."** Write **"God as the Great Oz"** in one of your boxes now.

In the book and movie, the Wizard of Oz, the people of Oz see their leader as a great and powerful being confined in a castle. In the story, Dorothy and her friends have to make a journey to find the mysterious Wizard. He is distant and unapproachable, too busy to be bothered with the troubles of everyday. Sometimes we think of God like this... as a distant being sitting in the clouds, unapproachable and mysterious, removed from our day-to-day realities.

In one box on your paper, take a minute to draw and write what God acts like as the Great Oz.

What is wrong with this perception of God? How is God more than this? [Answer Here]

God is all around us. God is not in a distant place, separate - God is living within our lives daily. We don't have to journey to find God, we just need to be present and attuned to God's presence all around us and in us.

#2. The second common perception is **"God as the Big Vending Machine."** Write **"God as the Big Vending Machine"** in one the boxes on your paper.

Sometimes people only go to God for a quick fix... insert the right prayer, select what you want and then God drops your wishes from the sky, meeting all of your desires. We can just get whatever we want and God is there to deliver.

In one box on your paper, take a minute to draw and write what God acts like as the Big Vending Machine.

What is wrong with this perception of God? How is God more than this? [Answer Here]

God is not whatever we want God to be. God does not just exist for us and our purposes... we exist for God's purposes. When we align with God's purposes in the world that is when we find meaning and fulfillment in life.

#3. The third common perception of God is **“God as Giant Judge.”** Write **“God as Giant Judge”** in one the boxes on your paper.

Sometimes we think of God as a big eye in the sky who watches us waiting in anticipating for us to make mistakes—and to pass judgment.

In one box on your paper, take a minute to draw and write what God acts like as a Giant Judge.

What is wrong with this perception of God? How is God more than this? [Answer Here]

God is not waiting to pass judgment on us for our mistakes. God is present at times of mourning and at times of celebration. God resides in our laughter and our tears.

#4. The fourth common perception of God is **“God as Cosmic Life-Coach.”** Write **“God as Super Therapist”** in one the boxes on your paper.

A trend today for rich and famous people is to have a life-coach... someone to help them with self-improvement and to continue to actualize their dreams of success. What they are seeking is a life of happiness and fulfillment, free from pain. Sometimes we think God is our personal life-coach, existing to pave a path of happiness and prosperity especially for me, removing pain and discomfort from my lives.

In one box on your paper, take a minute to draw and write what God acts like as a Super Therapist.

What is limited or wrong with this perception of God? How is God more than this? [Answer Here]

God does want to bring meaning and fulfillment in our lives, but makes no promise about removing pain and suffering. God does care deeply for each of us, but God seems to have greater purposes than to exist for our own comfort.

We cannot make God out to be what we want God to be. When we can accept who God is, then we can begin to transform ourselves. When we are transformed, only then can we witness God in our lives all the time and in everything. We cannot describe God based on who we are but rather we need to describe ourselves based on who God is. We need to break down the walls of perception to get a clearer idea of who God is. Only then can we be transformed and allow God to live in our lives the way God intends.