

# EXPERIENCING GOD TODAY

## 1. BELIEVING IN GOD

### INTRODUCTION

Do you believe in God? Do you believe God is here now? Do you believe God is working in your life? Is it evident to others that you believe in God and he is at work in your life? This leads to our theme for the next couple of weeks: *Experiencing God Today*. Daniel 11:32 says, “The people who know their God will be strong and do exploits.” Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let them boast about this: that they understand and know God. Jesus said in John 17:3, “This is eternal life: that we may know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.” This is how we experience God today, and it begins by believing in God. But first...

### 1 BEFORE WE BELIEVE IN GOD

Many today do not believe in God. They are called atheists. To all atheists, Psalm 14:1 says, “Only the fool (a senseless person) says in their heart that there is no God.” Agnostics say there may be a God, but we don’t know. To all atheists and all agnostics we say, “God has spoken, and we need to look, listen, and learn to live.” To do this, we need to look at God’s revelation in the Bible...

The Bible assumes God existence; it doesn’t try to prove it. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God.” Isaiah 45:5 says, “I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God.” Along with this assumption in the Bible, there is a religious consciousness in most people, most cultures, and most societies. This is why people are still interested in God—even atheists!

An awareness of God is reflected in the questions: “Who am I? What am I doing here? Where am I going? What’s it all about? We ask these questions because Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, “God has placed eternity in our hearts.” Echoing this, the French philosopher Blaise Pascal said, “There is a God-shaped vacuum in each of us that cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God our Creator.” If we don’t follow up on this, we are on our own in pursuing meaning and purpose in life. This leads to...

### 2 BEGINNING TO BELIEVE IN GOD

An awareness of God has led some to reason logically for God’s existence. *A cosmological argument* reasons from the order that we see in the cosmos. It is argued that this presumes a supreme being who created the world. When we see a work of art, we want to know the artist. A cosmological argument for God’s existence says there has to be an author of such a complex world. Psalm 19:1-2 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Every day they pour forth speech; every night they display knowledge.”

The word teleological comes from a Greek word ‘telos’ meaning purpose or goal. *A teleological argument* for God’s existence assumes that there is purpose in the world. Romans 6:22 says, “Now that we have been set free from sin... the benefit we reap is holiness, and the end result (telos) is eternal life.” To find this telos or purpose, we should seek God and his ways. This leads to...

*A moral argument for God's existence.* There is a sense of right and wrong in each of us that suggests a moral being who made us to live in harmony with himself, with ourselves, and with others. In applying this moral argument for God's existence, 1 Peter 1:15 says that just as he who called us is holy, we should be holy in all that we do... to this end or purpose, we were called.

These philosophical arguments may help us believe in God, but we need more than a philosophical argument; we need to experience God for ourselves. This leads to...

### **3 BECOMING A BELIEVER IN GOD**

Romans 1:19-20 says, "What may be known about God is plain, because God has made it plain. Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen... so that we are without excuse." This is a sense of the supernatural, and it should lead to a belief in God.

Aware of our own existence, we look in a mirror and ask, "Who am I? What am I doing here? Where am I going?" This is a search for the existence of someone or something greater than ourselves. This is what Descartes called the Ontological Argument for God's existence. It is summed up in his well-known expression, "I think therefore I am." Debating with Greek philosophers in Athens, the Apostle Paul said in Acts 17:27-28 that God is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being. But there is more...

In the light of continuing acts of terror, immorality, and injustice, words like wicked, evil, depravity, and demonic have reappeared. We are beginning to see again that we are just not right. This is not the way it was meant to be. And it isn't. Romans 8:22-24 says, "The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves... groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies."

One philosopher has described death as the ultimate existential trip. Death is the opposite of life, and it spoils our past experience, our present enjoyment, and our future happiness. Having said this, Jesus said in John 11:25-26, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die."

God speaks in Creation, God speaks in the Bible, but in Jesus Christ, God speaks more directly. Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "In the past God spoke through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken directly in his Son."

We see God's presence in creation, God's precepts in the Bible, God's person in Jesus, but to experience God today, we need his power. We need God's power in his Spirit. Creation does not reveal God to us personally, nor does the Bible. Knowing about Jesus will not reveal God to us personally. To experience God today, we need his Spirit. Jesus said in John 3:3 to enter God's Kingdom and experience the reality of God, we must be born again.

### **CONCLUSION**

We will take this further next time as we move from beginning to believe in God and becoming a believer in God, to being a believer in God or Practising the Presence of God.