

# How Big Is Your God Part 5

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## Introduction

- 1990's Bette Midler recorded a popular song about God watching us from a distance. Subtle suggestion that God is distant, disinterested and uninvolved — nothing further from the truth.
- **Today — God's Omnipresence** — will study two facets in two weeks

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## God's Omnipresence

***God is All-Present, everywhere — nowhere that He isn't***

***Important — He's here now, where two or three are gathered — wants us to experience Him!***

- **Psalm 139:7-10**

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

- **Jeremiah 23:23-24**

"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

**He is near and far, really nowhere to hide, He fills heaven and earth!**

- **2 Chronicles 2:6**

But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him?

**The universe itself can't contain Him!**

- "God is omnipresent and immanent, penetrating everything even while He contains all things. The bucket that is sunk into the depths of the ocean is full of the ocean. The ocean is in the bucket, but also the bucket is in the ocean-surrounded by it. God dwells in His universe and the universe dwells in God." <sup>1</sup> A.W. Tozer
- **Acts 17:28**  
for in Him we live and move and have our being...

***Question — How Big is God? How omnipresent is He?***

- **Isaiah 40:12,15,21-22**

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span

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<sup>1</sup> A.W. Tozer, *Attributes of God Volume 1: Deeper into the Father's Heart*, (Moody Publishers, 2007)

and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in...

**SO** — we've made the **theological point**, God is **HUGE** and God is everywhere — let's get **practical...**

### **Question — Why do I feel so distant?**

- **First-** we can't think of being “close to” or “far from” God in physical human terms...
  - there isn't a human unit of measure to define how close or far He is — He's everywhere!
  - in His omnipresence, He is as close to everyone, everywhere as He'll ever be

**Important** — you must use **spiritual truths**, not **physical measurements**, to define God's proximity to us and our proximity to God

- **Using spiritual truth and vocabulary**
  - distance from God and difference from God are the same — likewise...
  - closeness to God and likeness to God are the same

**Application** — so we are **closest to God** when we are **most like Him** — also, we are **most distant from God** when we are **least like Him**.

- **Adam**  
sinless, communing, close, walking in the cool of the evening in the garden with God...  
close because Adam is very much like God, not God, but like God in His moral character, desires and actions
- **Genesis 3:8**  
And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
  - Sins — not like God — immediate spiritual distance is result

**Application** — being unlike, dissimilar to God causes distance and separation from His presence — the devil is sure to let you know that, in order to keep you distant and hiding!

- **Isaiah 59:2**  
But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

- **Ephesians 4:17-19**

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

**Obvious** — *dissimilarity to God produces alienation, distance, separation from God, Paul warns Christians not to let this happen to them.*

**An unrepentant, sinning heart puts distance between itself and God's presence — though He is everywhere — our dissimilarity distances ourselves from Him.**

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## **God's Manifest Presence**

### **God's Personal, Revealed Presence within His Omni-Presence**

**Interesting and noteworthy** — *back to Adam and Eve, they were **hiding** from God's presence, **while being** in God's presence*

- **Manifest Presence**

- it is personal, tangible, revealing, engaging
- Example:
  - two people in church both experience Omnipresence, only one experiencing Manifest Presence — only one having a personal, tangible, engaging encounter with God
- Adam hid from God's Manifest Presence while being in God's Omnipresence.

**Sadly** — *many believers today are the same way. Okay with God's Omnipresence holding everything together, keeping the world spinning etc., but we hide from His Manifest Presence, not wanting His personal, revealed presence to speak, convict, affirm, love challenge, empower, question etc. **Many Christians are trying to be happy without God's Manifest Presence in their lives. His presence is where real spiritual life is!***

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## **NT example of this in the famous Prodigal Son story**

- **Luke 15:11-13**

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living."

**Application** — *the prodigal son only wanted His father's **presents**, not his father's **presence!***

**When you get to that point** — dissimilarity is already upon you because first and foremost the Father wants close personal relationship with you... that dissimilarity produces distance, went on a far journey, that produces greater degrees of dissimilarity and distance, wasted living, maybe even devastation, broke in pig mud.

**Question** — What must you do when you've valued God's presents over His presence? What must you do when you are dissimilar, distant, and devastated?

- **Luke 15:17-20**

"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

- come to your senses, arise and go to your Father, confess sin...
- know Father's heart toward you, looking, compassionate, He's wanting nearness, tenderness... Manifest Presence today!

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### Closing thoughts

**Believer** — distant due to dissimilarity, maybe hiding in God's Omnipresence, maybe only wanting God's presents and not His presence, you need to return to the Father's Presence.

**Unbeliever** — distant due to dissimilarity, lifetime of unconfessed sin, void of the life of God, you need to come to Jesus, get rid of dissimilarity and receive closeness of His manifest presence.

- **Matthew 11:28**

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- **John 6:37**

...the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

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### Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God wants you to experience Him, and not just your passive attendance?
2. Discuss: "Distance from God and difference from God are the same."
3. Discuss: "Closeness to God and likeness to God are the same."
4. Where are you as an individual on the distance / closeness scale?
5. What can you do to increase God's Manifest Presence in your life today?