

**Coming to Know and Trust God #7;
God Is Not a Man**

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Here we are this morning, brethren, on the seventh and final day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Of course, we look forward to the Last Great Day—the High Day—tomorrow, but the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles is ending at sunset tonight. This is now my seventh message to you in my series that I have been giving and, technically, it is the last message on this theme that I am giving. Now, you are also going to get one that is related to this theme on the Last Great Day—a meat-in-due-season message—but this is the last one in what I call technical instruction sermons that drill down into this principle that I've been covering: "Coming to Know and Trust God." What does it mean to really come to know and to trust Him?

I've given you a lot of the fundamentals, and in the last couple of messages we went into more details on the subject, because we can all agree—it's easier to agree—on a philosophical level, up here, but it is another thing, then, to take that and to test it more specifically down where we live, down very close to us. And that's what I've tried to do in the last couple of messages: to bring it down so that you and I can actually apply it and test ourselves, and say, "Do I really believe that, or is it conditional, based upon some personalized considerations that are closer to home?" So, hopefully, you've been able to assess some of that. This is the last message where I want to do a little bit more of that.

Unknowingly, we often ascribe the limitations of human beings to God. We often take the limitations that you and I have as human beings and we try to ascribe those to God. Now, we don't mean to do it, but it happens very often. And I consider coming to recognize that fact—that tendency—and being aware of it, as a key means by which you and I can appreciate, value, know and trust God more.

Our theme text, of course, has been Hebrews 11, verse 6. You probably know it by heart by now: Faith is the essence, paraphrasing, of things not seen, because we have to both believe that He is *and* that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Now, how are you going to do that if you don't have full confidence in His character, let alone His power?

But what do human beings like to do? Because we are weak, because we are fallible, and because we have limitations, our idea of getting close to God is making Him seem more human. We very often think getting close to God doesn't mean us growing closer to Him—where He is—but bringing Him down to our level, and that is where the closeness comes from, because we bring God to us. The danger and the problem with that, then, is that we very often ascribe human weakness, foibles and even sin to God in the course of trying to make Him more approachable. Don't we feel that way?

You know, if there is a human being—if there is somebody you know, or are aware of—who you think is untouchable, or seems so good, or whatever: "Well, I feel intimidated. I can't get close to them because they are too perfect." And then if we see them act more human and make mistakes, then we think: "Oh, well, that makes me feel better. Now I can be closer to that person because I know they are not some icon of virtue, or whatever. They are down more on my level." And then we feel more comfortable and relaxed around them. That's a natural human tendency. We do it with God. And we would probably never admit it, especially in the church of God, but we like to find ways to bring God down to our level and make Him seem more like us. You and I have to be aware of that tendency and not allow ourselves to do it. Don't let your mind bring God down.

Numbers 23, verse 19. Numbers 23 and verse 19, to start this morning. Here is a strong declaration of a truth: "God is not a man." God is not a man. Now, it goes on to say, "God is not a man, that he should lie," because all human beings, by nature, are liars. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent," meaning that since He never commits a sin, and He never makes a mistake, there is nothing that requires him to say, "I'm sorry."

"[H]ath he said, and shall he not do it?" Has He made any promise or commitment that He hasn't followed through on? Has He ever reneged? No. "[O]r hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Never. We have already

talked, in the past, about the fact that He is honest; He has integrity; He is dependable; He is unchanging. That's why He is called a Rock. But beyond that, I'll just take the very first part of verse 19 here and say: "God is not a man." So I just want to expand upon that and say that God is not a man, or a human being, in *any* of those ways that manifest the limitations that you and I face. He just isn't.

Yes, human beings often try to ascribe human weaknesses to God to make themselves feel better about themselves. They make it appear that if God is more like us, then we can feel better about being weak. Now, what are some good examples of that? I'll just give you a couple out of pop culture: you know, like music. There is an old country music song—I think by Alabama—with a line in it I remember that talks about "the man upstairs." Well, that is a reference to God, and it is supposed to be a song that is kind of very favorable and thankful, or whatever—appreciative toward God, respectful of God—but they call Him "the man upstairs." I would never call Him "the man upstairs." Yes, Jesus Christ divested Himself of His glory, was born of a human mother, and became a man, but He was a man on this earth, for that period of His life, then He died and was resurrected. He was not a man when He ascended to the right hand of His Father in heaven, and hasn't been. He is not a man, He is God. And I just think that's a simple example of this human tendency to try to humanize God and to bring Him down: calling Him "the man upstairs."

What is another one that is even more egregious? I had to look this up to remind myself, but I had heard this pop song before. It was released in 1995. The artist is a lady named Joan Osborne. Some of you know this song. It's called "One of Us." Have you heard it? Here are four lines from the chorus—the first four lines of the chorus. What does it say?

What if God was one of us?
Just a slob like one of us.
Just a stranger on the bus,
trying to make his way home?

I remembered that song. *There* is an outward manifestation of this concept which is very, very subtle in many human beings. Now, this one is overt. I mean this one is in your face, and the intent really is to denigrate God. And this song, if you look at all of the lyrics, is absolutely, then, disrespectful to the whole idea of a

perfect God, as Creator and Sustainer. It is basically an anti-God song. But it is disguised by putting it in the context of just making God more personal, and reachable, and touchable. "What if God was just like one of us?"—just an average guy trying to get by. Don't let yourself fall into that. God is not one of us—meaning human beings, with our sins, our weaknesses and our foibles. No way.

To know God—which is the intent of what we are trying to do in this particular series of sermons at this Feast this year—don't limit God. In your quest—in the process of trying to get closer to God—do not allow yourself to limit God in any way. Don't try to draw Him to you. We have got to try to elevate, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to where He is. That is our mission and our goal, not the other way around. So to begin with on this topic, let me tackle just a few philosophical points, which I have seen, and run into, over the years, which I believe exemplify this tendency to subtly, unintentionally draw God down, rather than for us to elevate to His level through the Holy Spirit.

The first point here is that man's mind has been intentionally limited by God, and he cannot—man cannot—truly grasp that Spirit realm. We cannot grasp fully—not even close—the Spirit realm in which God exists, and that's for a reason. God put a limit on our minds, and He won't let us do it. But it is interesting how human beings, and members of God's church, over all of the years, have tried to overcome that barrier on their own and make judgments and conclusions about God, and about the Spirit realm, and they don't know what they are talking about.

Well, let's start in Isaiah 55 and verse 8. Isaiah 55 and verse 8, just to see what God says about this whole concept. Isaiah 55, beginning in verse 8:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts [my thoughts are not your thoughts], neither are your ways my ways, saith the [Eternal]. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

So much for God just being like one of us—a slob on the bus. No way.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts [so said God].

Turn to Romans 11 and verse 33. This is one that we quoted a portion of on the first High Day, but I want to tackle the same text from a little bit different perspective this time. Romans 11, beginning in verse 33, and we will read through verse 36: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Oh yes, He has all knowledge, and all ability, and all capacity, and furthermore, His ways are so much higher than ours that you and I cannot begin to fathom the fullness of who and what God is, as a Spirit Being in that realm, and His capacity of mind. Why? Because God has intentionally put a limit—a lid, if you will—on your capacity, and my capacity, and the capacity of every human being who has ever lived, to understand, save Jesus Christ. You simply cannot pass that limit. We all desire it. Don't we all desire to know more—to see more, to understand more? But God said you can't do it. "My ways are so much higher than yours." It is impossible in the human realm for you to touch.

"[H]ow unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the [Eternal]?" Who has really understood and fathomed completely this Being we call God, and His capacity? Can you touch it? I can't even remotely get there.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? [Who has given God a helping hand?] For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things [for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things]: to whom be glory for ever.

He is an awesome Being. He is an awesome Being beyond vocabulary to express, let alone even to be able to think about. Words can't express it; thoughts cannot express it. It is not in our capacity to do it—to fully fathom what this Being is really like. Yes, He has revealed Himself, as we have been seeing, to the extent that the called can come to know and to appreciate Him, but you and I just

need to know that the most that we can ever achieve in this human state, even as members of the Body of Jesus Christ, is only a fraction of that understanding. The awesome reality of who this God is, in His entirety, is beyond our capacity. We can't even remotely approach it, and that is an important fact that we need to be cognizant of and that we need to take into consideration as we deal with Him.

Human beings run into problems when they decide they think they know, and can touch, and can grasp, whatever they want in providing answers regarding the Spirit plane, and all we do is make fools of ourselves when we try. 1 Corinthians 13 and verse 11. 1 Corinthians 13 and verse 11: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Paul, to the Corinthians, is making a comparison of the knowledge, the scope of understanding, and the capacity to interpret, of a little child versus that of a full grown adult who, by virtue of education and experience, has a much greater awareness, and a capacity to understand his environment. That is exactly what God inspired Paul to record for the last-day church in order to explain the realm in which you and I live and are experiencing as we go through this training program as members of the church of God in the last days, as compared to the world of the Spirit which God inhabits and which He rules. It is the same as a little child.

Now, can you teach algebra and calculus to a three-year-old? Can you explain macroeconomics? You see, it's absurd isn't it? Well, somebody might say that there is some child prodigy somewhere, but they are probably demon inspired if they have that kind of capacity. It's not normal, because there has to be growth—there has to be experience and development—before even a human being, in going from a child to an adult, can achieve that full capacity. Paul uses that example to show that this is how far away we are. Well, actually it's only a minor comparison, because we are a whole lot farther away from understanding the reality of a Spirit realm because of the limits that we have as human beings. The human mind has only a limited capacity by God's design, and He put an absolute lid on it, and said: "No further. I don't care what your IQ is; I don't care what your experience, your training, your education is; I put a lid on the brightest, the most educated human being, and he cannot, or she cannot, go past that, no matter what, and touch or grasp the Spirit realm." You just can't do it, and you won't do it, while you are in the flesh.

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass, darkly . . ." There is the key. By God's design, the best that you and I can achieve, even as the called, converted Spirit-begotten children of God, is like seeing through a window that is fogged, or dirty. I like to say fogged. Have you ever done that? Have you ever tried to look into the bathroom mirror but you have fogged it up? I mean, you can kind of see your image, but you can't really see any detail. How about when you are looking literally through a glass window that has been fogged up? You can see certain shadows, shapes and images that give you a sense for what is there, but no detail—absolutely no detail. This is the example that God inspired the Apostle Paul to give to us, to show what we are like in relationship to the Spirit realm. We see through a window, or a glass, only shadows, darkly, by God's design.

And which one of us is going to overcome that by our own will? We have had all too many in decades past in God's church who *will not* be satisfied with seeing through the glass darkly. They are going to try to overcome that by their own will—they are going to clean the glass, or they are going to break the glass, so that they can pass over, because they want to see more, they want to know more, and they want to be able to speak with authority about that Spirit realm in a greater, more detailed capacity. And it is nothing but human arrogance. Can't do it.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then . . ." When? In the day of the arrival of Jesus Christ, when that first resurrection takes place and the Firstfruits harvest is changed and becomes part of that God Family, a transition is going to take place, because, then, they are going to move from the limited physical realm, into the God realm. And then there will be no more fogged-up glass for them. They will be part of the richness and the fullness of that Spirit realm of God. But in the meantime, you can't do it, and I can't do it, by His design and His purpose. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." You and I will have the opportunity to know the Father and our elder brother Jesus Christ, face-to-face, in the fullness of glory. That's what's coming.

"[N]ow [he returns back to our human state] I know in part." In essence, he is saying that right now, by God's design, we know just a fraction. We can only grasp a small sliver of that Spirit realm that God inhabits, and no more—just in part.

"[B]ut then [at that resurrection of the Firstfruits] shall I know even as also I am known." The time is coming when you will know that God as well and as completely as God now knows you, because you too are going to be God, which means you are going to have that whole capacity. We are going to talk about that, actually, tomorrow in my Last Great Day message. "[N]ow I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Why is this important? You and I have to understand our limitations and accept them in order to enhance our relationship with God, right now. When we are aware of the limitations God has imposed upon us in the human state, by design and purpose, then we can be sure not to reach beyond those limits and make mistakes in passing judgments on God and His character. I think it's integral to the reason that human beings want to try to bring God down to their level. It's because they have no remote understanding of what they are dealing with. Not at all.

When we try to answer questions about the Spirit realm, according to human reasonings, based upon our own limitations, we enter a fool's quest. Let me say that again: When we try to answer questions about the Spirit realm, according to human reasonings, based upon our own limitations, we enter a fool's quest. And I have seen people—and maybe especially ministers in the church of God—do this for years. And the proof of their foolishness is the fact that it ends up having no substance—the fruits are bad when they try to do it. It would be nice if some of them would stop and take account of some of these things, where they have gone out on a limb and made prognostications or drawn conclusions that are absolutely inconsistent with the character of God. If they would only pay attention to it and connect the dots.

Notice John 8 and beginning in verse 21. John chapter 8 and verse 21:

Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. [Verse 22:] Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. [You see, they are thinking physically. They don't understand. Verse 23:] And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

Oh, if only human beings, especially members of God's church, could really understand that. "You are of this world; I am not of this world." Oh yes, through conversion, we are no longer part of this world, from the standpoint of our orientation—of our goal-setting, and our desires, and our hopes—because now we are focused on achieving the Kingdom of God. But still, we are doing it in human form, with human limitations of body, and limitations of human minds, as God has dictated it, and we will not overcome those—we will not overcome those—until we become a part of the Spirit realm.

Alright, but this is all on a theoretical level, so let's drill down on it. What are some of the specific areas that often cause us to forget, and to try and treat God as if He were a man? These are just some of the big ones I was able to think of and document, in which I think we unintentionally try to ascribe human limits to God—we try to pass judgment and make decisions about what we think the Spirit realm is like, based upon a human environment which does not apply.

What are some examples? Here is a biggie: I love talking about this one. God is eternal. God is eternal. And we may think, "Okay, well, we all agree on that. Big deal. What are you talking about?" God being eternal means that God is not subject to time. Some of you have heard me wax eloquent on this in Bible studies, and I'm going to do it again. God is not subject to time. Do you know how phenomenal that is, and do you know how mind-bending that really is when you stop to think about it? This is the best example I can give you to talk about how human beings are so different and separated from God, because you cannot fathom in your human mind, and neither can I, the concept of eternity. Do you understand eternity, and can you describe it—can you define it? Can you think about it correctly in your own mind and know what it is? No, you can't. I'll prove it by going through some of the mental exercises.

But let's note a couple texts, first, just to confirm that. 1 Timothy 1:17. 1 Timothy 1 and verse 17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." So it does say that He is eternal—He is immortal, He never dies. But what does eternal mean?

Hebrews 7 and verse 3 gives us a hint. Hebrews 7 and verse 3, we read: "Without father . . ." Here is a description of Jesus Christ who became that High Priest. Hebrews 7 and verse 3: "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life . . ." The distinction of Jesus

Christ is that since His resurrection, not only does He live forever into the future, and is never going to die, but He also never had a beginning.

Now, we've got a lot of former members of God's church at large who don't believe this anymore. And there are ministers who know better, or should know better, who are now trying to debate and say that Jesus Christ was a created Being—that He had a beginning. Oh, I understand the world and some of these deceived, so-called Christians believing that, but former members of God's church who were not only baptized but who were ordained to teach the Truth concerning the nature of God? And now they are espousing all this garbage? *Shame* on them. He had no beginning.

There are two Beings, we know of, who were revealed to us, who are God. Mr. Armstrong called them God of the first part, and God of the second part. There may be more. Those are the only two God has chosen to reveal. They may be the only ones, and neither one of them had a beginning. Do you understand what that means, never to have a beginning? Can you even begin to get your mind around it? What does it mean not to have a beginning? Because for you and me, everything has a beginning. "Well, I know God never had a beginning, but when did it start?" No, there was no start. We can't even talk about it without revealing our limitation.

"[H]aving neither beginning of days, nor end of life." Now, that's how you and I are going to be distinguished, because we all had a beginning. It was at conception. We have the hope, if we are found worthy—or accounted worthy—in that day to be resurrected to become part of that Family, and then we will live forever into the future, never having an end. But the distinction between all of the rest of that expanded God Family and Jesus Christ is that He will be the only one who never had a beginning, and yet, went through that process of qualification and resurrection. You and I will be fully God, but we will have had a beginning. He never did. But can you understand it? I don't know what it means not to have a beginning. My mind can't grasp it, and I don't care how long I think about it, I can't cross that barrier, can you?

Isaiah 43 and verse 8. Isaiah 43 and beginning in verse 8:

Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be

assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things?

Which of us, as human beings, can make any comment about history, or the past, let alone what happened before the creation of the world? Was there any human being, or anyone else, to document it? It was happening in the Spirit realm, beyond the reach of human beings.

. . . let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. [Who can comment on it? No one.] Ye are my witnesses, saith the [Eternal], and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me [the only one]. I, even I, am the [Eternal]; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the [Eternal], that I am God. [Verse 13:] Yea, before the day was I am he . . .

"Before the day was, I am He." Do you understand that? Can you grasp what that very statement means? Before this thing called a day ever existed, God existed. What is a day? What is a day? How do you define a day? It's the time that it takes for the earth to spin one time on its axis. The whole concept of time—whether it is a day, a week, a month, or a year—depends upon a clock to count it out, doesn't it? And what is the clock? It is the relationship in this solar system between the earth and the sun, most importantly, and the moon, too, because the movement of the moon defines a month. A day is the amount of time it takes for the earth to spin one time on its axis—three-hundred-and-sixty degrees.

What is a year? The time it takes the earth to make one revolution all the way around the sun and get back to where it started. That is a year. Who created the earth, and the sun, and the moon—the clock? Who created the clock? God. Was there time before God created the clock? No. But can you conceive of the idea of there not being time? No. You can't imagine it. Everything you do is on a timeline. The way you think, invariably and without doubt, requires a timeline—a beginning, and an end, and a progression of going from one point to another. Try and see if you can do anything without it. Can you divest yourself from the concept of time? I dare you to do it. I haven't been able to do it. I'll bet you can't, either.

John 17 and verse 24. John 17 and beginning in verse 24:

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Before the earth was ever created—meaning long before it ever started spinning on that axis and counting days, or before that earth started rotating around the sun and started counting years, before the clock—the Father, or God of the first part, loved God of the second part. Before this physical Creation, they existed without a clock. And even by using the word "before," do you know what I am doing? I just tried to speak about it in terms of a timeline. "Before" means a previous location on a timeline. I can't even begin to use language to touch this concept of eternity, because the only way I can speak or think about it is in terms of having a beginning and an end, or some progression on a timeline. Look at the words that you use when you speak about it and you will find that you do exactly the same thing.

Get a load of this sentence: The time is coming, also, when there will be no more time. The day is coming when there will be no more time. I just used the word "time" and I used the word "day." It's like contradicting myself. I can't describe it to you because I can't do it without talking about time.

Notice Revelation 10, verses 5 through 7. Revelation 10, beginning in verse 5:

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer . . .

Now, some commentators will interpret this—and probably rightly so—and they will render this passage: "There shall be no more delay." Yes, contextually, it fits to say that eventually God is going to end this. The end of the age is going to come—He will cut it off and then bring about the fulfillment of the Master Plan, and all of its pieces. Yes, that is an accurate interpretation, but I would tell you that it still, in my mind, supports the idea that time itself, as a concept, is going to end, because the clock is going to be stopped. Because, again, the clock has to do

with this physical sun, and with a physical earth spinning on its axis and rotating around that sun. But, as you know, the last chapters of Revelation say that this current Creation—this physical realm—is going to be destroyed. It is going to be burned up, and there are going to be new heavens and a new earth and they are going to be spiritual, not physical.

The clock is going to be destroyed. The clock didn't exist from the beginning—God created the clock for a temporary period of time, and this earth was created as a habitat for human beings, right? So, when there are no more human beings on the earth, there will be no more need for the physical Creation. It will have served its purpose, which is why anyone who has not been changed into a Spirit Being is going to be burned up, along with the earth. The time in which a clock is needed is going to be over, because this particular Master Plan will have been finished. Then what's going to happen? No more time. Can you imagine that? Not me.

Because, you know how we speak? We speak in terms of "how long is eternity?" Now, what did I just do when I said that? How long is eternity? What does the word "long" indicate? It is a word that implies a length of time on a timeline. I can't even talk about it. The very attempt to express, or to talk about, or to define "eternity" reveals my ignorance, and the limit—that lid—that God put on my mind. I can't do it. How long is eternity? It's not long. There is no length to it. It is not subject to time. Time is a limiting factor. God is not subject to the limit of time. God *created* time, and God is not subject to His own Creation. His Creation is subject to Him.

Now, some people freak out when I take this to the next level and I tell them that the day is coming when the Sabbath is not going to be kept. "Ohhhh! What do you mean? The Sabbath lasts forever." The Sabbath will last only as long as the clock lasts. What is the weekly Sabbath? It is a day—it is the seventh day of the week—and you don't have days unless you have a clock. Unless the earth is still here, and still rotating on its axis, there is no day. Remember, God said plainly in the Bible that "God made the Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath." The first part of that tells us something: God made the Sabbath for man. He didn't make the Sabbath for God. God existed long before the Sabbath ever came into being. It doesn't say that the Sabbath existed with no beginning. *God* existed with no beginning. The Sabbath was created. At a given point in time [laughs], God brought it into existence through the creation of the earth, and setting it in motion around the sun. So the Sabbath hasn't always existed, and

when God burns up the clock, the God Family goes forward without it. Now, some think that is sacrilegious, but can you please give me an explanation which says otherwise? Do you understand what we are talking about? To me, it's disrespectful to God to try and say that He is subject to His own Creation. He is not. And at the end of this Master Plan—pictured by the Last Great Day which we will observe beginning at sunset tonight—there are going to be no more human beings on the earth. He will complete the Master Plan, and all that is still physical, that hasn't been resurrected to life eternal, is going to be burned up. The only ones that are going to be left are spirit beings—either members of the God Family, or the angels. No more men. So, if God created the Sabbath for man, and there are no more men, then there will be no more Sabbath, either. It's just one of those exercises that we have a tendency to take for granted because we don't think it through. God is not subject to human limitations. He created it all.

2 Peter 3 and verse 8, which you know very well. 2 Peter 3 and verse 8. 2 Peter 3:8 says: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Do you understand that? I have tried to ponder it, and I bet you have too. A day is as a thousand years to God. Wow, that's a long day. Well, sometimes you may have days when it seems like they last a thousand years, but what does that mean to God—that a twenty-four-hour period in your life is equal to a thousand-year period? What does it mean in reverse—that a thousand-year period of time is no more than a day to God? You know, the only thing that I can draw from that is that it is basically just another way of saying that time is immaterial to God. Time is immaterial to God. A day, a thousand years, they are all the same, it doesn't matter to Him. As He created it—according to the plan that He is working out as it affects human beings—oh, it absolutely applies to us. It is a part of the Creation that He made, but it doesn't limit Him; it doesn't control Him—it is immaterial to Him. To Him, ten million years, one second, it's all the same. Can you understand that? No, I can't. My mind won't allow me to do it, because we see through a glass darkly. He will not let us see it, but it is part of the reality of His realm. Do you feel confident in passing judgment on things that happen in the Spirit realm? Can you talk about it? Can you make statements about it? Can you educate other people about it? Only if you are very foolish will you even attempt it. It's beyond our capacity.

The other question I hear is: "Once we are in the God Family, what will we be doing millions of years from now?" Again, we are imposing a timeline element to the God Family which doesn't exist. There will be no such thing as "millions of

years"—there will be no timeline. So, what is eternity? I don't know. I know it doesn't involve time; I know that it doesn't end; I know that there is immortality and that it goes on forever and ever, but I can't describe it to you. God has not allowed any of us to know these things. I don't care what your IQ is, you cannot grasp eternity. And God did that intentionally to remind us that we are flesh. He created *us*, we don't define Him. He defines us. It's one of those elements that should put us, and keep us, in our place, if we are wise enough to recognize it. If you could understand and grasp eternity, you might be less inclined to be humble and to hold Him in awe. If you understand the limitations of your mind, you are in a better position to appreciate and to value Him, and therefore to love Him, and to glorify Him.

All of these former members and ministers who have tried to pass those limits and pass judgment, make statements and draw conclusions about the Spirit realm are way out of their league, and it is a foolish endeavor.

Alright, that's the issue of time and eternity—that's my favorite one—but are there others? Yes, here are just a couple more: Those who are added to the God Family, likewise will not be subject to time, nor any other human limitation of the flesh. And we have a hard time with that concept, too. What are some examples of this? These are questions which prove that we often are still thinking physically, and we try to interpret things on the God- plane according to our limitations. What are some examples of that? Here are some honest questions asked by hundreds, even thousands, of God's people over the years:

How about this question: If I am blessed enough to be part of the first resurrection and made immortal at Christ's return, but I still have little children that need to be taken care of, who is going to take care of them? Have you ever thought that question—asked that question, and worried about that as parents? What happens if you die in a car wreck and your little children are left? That's a worry. But what if you live to see the return of Jesus Christ, and what if you are one of the Saints who are changed in the twinkling of an eye, and you rise up into the air with a new Spirit body to meet Jesus Christ as He descends to the Mount of Olives, but your little children are not going to be changed, because they have to grow up and be converted and baptized? What happens to your little children when, all of a sudden, you have been changed and whisked away? Who is going to take care of your children? Common question, but what's the problem with it? It ascribes human limitations to God. "What? What do you mean?" When you are changed and become God, you are going to be like God in every way. You,

too, will be omnipotent, and omnipresent, and omniscient—you will have all power. You will be ever-present, with all knowledge.

Remember, we talked about what it means to be ever-present. God can be anywhere—everywhere—simultaneously. It's the perfect multi-tasking gift, or opportunity, or capability. If you are a member of the God Family, you will be perfectly capable of taking care of your children at the same time that you are fulfilling a role as a King and a Priest in the Government, because you can be everywhere at the same time. You can continue to be a dutiful parent. In fact, you will be the best parent that ever was—you will be a perfect parent. Your children aren't going to miss you, at all. You can still absolutely be a parent who raises your own child to maturity, even though you are God. Why do we even doubt that? Why do we have the question? Because we assume that, "Oh, well, if I am God, and now I'm a King and a Priest, and I'm going to be assigned this jurisdiction, well, I'll have to spend all of my time focused upon that. I can't be in two places at one time. How can I be in Jerusalem and somewhere else on the other side of the world where my child is, too?" Oh, we just took human limitations and tried to apply them to God, didn't we? We are not thinking in terms of God's capabilities, we are thinking in terms of the flesh. But, as God, you will have no such limitations. You will be able to do it all, perfectly, in the same way that Jesus Christ, as our High Priest, and God the Father, are attentive to your prayers and my prayers, simultaneously. He doesn't have to tell you, "Oh, sorry, I need to put your prayer on hold, because I'm listening to another one right now. As soon as this one is done, I'll give you my attention." God doesn't have to do that. You won't have to share your attention between your hundreds, thousands or millions of responsibilities. You can do them all, simultaneously, and you can be everywhere to do them in the same moment of time. Can you fathom that? No, because it is on the Spirit-plane. It is a God-capability that is beyond our understanding. But, if God can do it—and you are going to be God, too—you can do it. That's the answer to that.

Alright, here's another one: In a misguided sense of humility—and I have commented on this in times past, in years past—I've heard the statement, "Well, I don't consider myself worthy, at all. I'll just be happy if God will let me be a doorkeeper in the Kingdom. I'm not worthy to be a King or a Priest. If I can just be a doorkeeper in the Kingdom, I'll be satisfied." No doorkeeper positions are being asked for. The job openings are for King/Priest—nothing else, and nothing less. The angels do the serving work to the God Family. The only offices you and I have an opportunity to have, if we want to have immortality and eternity in the

God Family, are going to be offices of Kingship and Priesthood. So, as humble as it sounds, it's actually trying to lower the bar of expectation. Instead of saying, "I need to hustle more, and to overcome more, in order to be better assured that God will look favorably upon my works, and my fruits, so that I can be a King and Priest," what we inadvertently try to do, under the guise of humility, is to lower the bar of expectation and we say, "Well, you have to be at a certain level of righteousness in order to be a King and Priest, but maybe I can slide in the back door with fewer fruits. Give me eternity, even if you don't give me an office of responsibility." It won't work. It's all or nothing in this Plan of God for human beings.

Revelation 5 and verse 9. Revelation 5 and beginning in verse 9:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof [speaking of Jesus Christ]: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

That's what God is offering. He wants you to reign with authority and power under the auspices of Jesus Christ. And that's the only job being offered. Now, at what level we will be in that government, that's for Him to decide.

1 Corinthians 6, verses 2 and 3. 1 Corinthians 6, verses 2 and 3: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Those who are changed and added to the God Family are going to *judge*. One of the responsibilities of a king is to make judgments.

"[A]nd if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" Everything we are doing now matters. Even though we can't even conceive of eternity, or immortality—it is beyond our capacity—we can understand, and we need to understand, what God has given us to do *now*. And the little responsibilities we have today are telling Him everything about our character, and our orientation of mind, and it is absolutely going to be decisive in who makes it, and who doesn't.

"[A]nd if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? [Verse 3:] Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" The angels are subject to the God Family, whether it applies to the holy angels of God, or whether it is the fallen angels. Now, Satan and the demons have already been judged—meaning that they have already been found guilty of rebellion, and that they are not redeemable. That has already been done. This judgment, in that context, is not speaking of having a trial and a sentencing. Carrying out the sentence that has already been declared by God upon Satan and the demons is going to involve banishing them to outer darkness. This might imply, therefore, that the resurrected, expanded God Family, at the return of Christ, are going to be part of the army that literally carries out that sentence of banishment, and that makes perfect sense. Likewise, because there are a host of trillions of faithful angels who carry out their respective jobs under the God Family, you are likely going to have continual responsibility for directing their activities. That doesn't mean that you are in a court of law and that you are judging bad angels, because these are perfect angels. These are angels who have already demonstrated that they are perfectly obedient to God. But it means that you are going to be directing their work—giving them their work assignments. All of these things are in the Spirit realm and there is a limited amount that we can understand or fathom about it. We see through a glass darkly. But what God has allowed us to see is enough. He wants it to be enticing enough for us to decide it is worth the sacrifice. Just don't make the mistake of trying to go too far and attempt to grasp that which He has not allowed us to know. Be satisfied with the limit of what He has shown us and stay within the bounds.

What's another example—a question? Here's a common question, and women in the church very often ask this: "I'm worried, because if I have not been given a chance in this life to exercise very much authority—because I'm a woman, and I either have a husband, or father, or somebody else that I'm supposed to be subject to—and I have not had an opportunity to actually learn to use, and to wield, authority, and make decisions, how am I going to be qualified to rule in a position of authority in the God Kingdom?" Common question. What is the two-part answer?

The first answer to the question is—and I remember Mr. Raymond Cole saying this very often: We learn best to rule by first learning to be ruled. The very best way to learn and to qualify to be a good leader, or ruler, is to learn how to be ruled. And I didn't say "learn to be oppressed and taken advantage of." It's about

how to be subject to the authorities which God has given, that affect all human beings—and we are all subject to authority in many different ways in our lives.

I highlight it with four main, I call them venues, of authority—separate categories of authority that God has established: Personal authority—that means you are responsible for you, and no one else. "Work out your own salvation." In the Judgment, you are not going to be able to blame somebody else if you fail. "Well, I would have succeeded except that he did this, or she did that." "Work out your own salvation"—be accountable for yourself. You won't be able to blame anybody else—because of their misbehavior, or whatever else—for the choices that you make.

Number two is family authority—the authority of mothers and fathers over children, and husbands and wives in that relationship of authority. Family authority—that's a second venue.

The third venue is civil government. We are told to be subject to those powers which God has established, as long as they do not require us to violate His Law. If not, then we are subject to them.

And fourth, and last, is church government—that authority that He vested within His ministry, and in the structure of the convocation of God's people, in the house of God, for orderly conduct.

All of those venues involve power, to some degree, and they also have limits. They do not cross over, and they do not contradict. And by each of us fulfilling our God-given responsibilities, in all four of those venues in our lives—our converted lives—we are learning and preparing to be rulers in the Kingdom of God. And that means you ladies, as well as the men. You learn as much, in qualifying to be a King, by fulfilling your obligation as a wife, and a mother, as you do by being a husband or a father. And even if you never marry, and you never have children, you are still subject to civil government, and you are required to take responsibility for yourself—you have to make your own personal decisions in obeying the Law of God, in spite of any other pressures in your life. You have ample opportunity to take charge and to be a leader in your life. That's how you are going to bear fruit—if you do bear fruit. So, it is a glorious system that God has designed, and no one is without opportunity, or a way to prepare. We all have that, regardless of the roles that we play. Philippians 2 and verse 5. Philippians 2 and beginning in verse 5:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant . . .

So, even though He did not consider it blasphemous to reach to be a member of the God Family—because that's exactly what He was called to do, and that's what He did—the way He achieved that lofty role as High Priest and God was to humble Himself and become a servant. You see, it's counterintuitive, isn't it? The way man thinks is very different from the way God thinks. If the way He qualified for rulership and the use of authority was by being humbled and becoming a servant, what about for you and me? We are supposed to walk in His footsteps.

. . . and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the [stake]. Wherefore [because of that process that He went through] God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

His humility, as a sacrifice, is what catapulted Him in qualifying for the lofty authority of a King and a Priest. It is counterintuitive to human beings, but that's the reality of the Master Plan that we are working within right now. So, the same is true for all of you.

The second answer to the question, "Well, if I don't have enough opportunity to wield authority in this lifetime, how am I going to be a King and a Priest in the Government of God?" Here is the answer that I really like: Once you are changed into a Spirit member of the God Family, you will have none of your past human weaknesses or limitations. And I hear this out of God's people all of the time. Unknowingly, we take our current human limitations and assume we are still going to have them in the God Family. But you won't. You are going to be God. Really. And what is God? He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, and you are going to be like Him—exactly like Him. You will be a full God member. You will have all power, be ever-present, and have all knowledge, without limit. There is no such thing as a member of the God Family having more

knowledge, or more capability, than another. "Ohhh! You are saying that we are going to have as much capability as the Father has." Yes. The only distinction is that the Father always will have authority over all the other members of that Family.

Jesus Christ is God in every way—He is not a demi-God, or a mini-God, compared to the Father. He is a full member of the God Family. He has immortality—He has life inherent. The Father doesn't—can't, however you want to say it—take away His immortality. Christ is an immortal Being, He has life inherent. He even said, "No one takes it from me." He had to willingly lay down His immortality in order to become born of a woman, and be subject to that. He willingly laid it down, the Father didn't take it away from Him. He was a powerful Being, and yet, He was always, consistently, willingly, under the authority of that one who became His Father.

That is why, brethren, that learning to get this authority thing right is so critical: because being born into the God Family, you are going to have awesome, inherent power and glory, and He is simply not going to give it to anyone who has the possibility of defective character—who might turn into another rebel like Satan did. There is too much at stake. You are not going to be mini-Gods, you are going to be fully God, and there have been all too many in the past in God's church—even of those who have been in the church for years—who have choked on that idea: "Well, I know we are going to be God, but not really God, because there is only one God." No, you are going to be God. Mr. Armstrong taught us that we are going to be full members of the God Family—as blasphemous as that seems to the world. The true people of God need to understand that for the reality that it is going to be, and then stop putting limitations on God. Not only don't put limitations on the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son, but don't put limitations in your mind on what you are going to be doing. As God, you are going to have *all* of that same power and ability. And when you understand that, then it makes absurd a number of things that we heard coming out of the mouths of certain ministers in past years and decades, and I am going to comment on that.

Quickly turn to Matthew 11, verses 11 and 12. Matthew 11 and verse 11: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist . . ." *There* is a very profound statement, if you understand it, and look at it for what it really means. Jesus Christ said, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are *born of women* there hath not risen a greater

than John the Baptist . . ." Now, who does that include? How about the patriarchs, like King David, and even Moses? But God said that even of all human beings who have ever been born of women—including all of the greatest, most powerful, most complete, accomplished servants of God of antiquity—none of them compare to John the Baptist. But more so, then, He follows and says, "[N]otwithstanding [though that is a true statement] he that is least in the kingdom of heaven [meaning those who are born into that God Family] is greater than he"—greater than John the Baptist. What does that mean? And we are not talking about the differences between "mini-Gods," or whatever, we are talking about full, powerful Gods—members of the God Family—but in a family hierarchy of authority, fulfilling specific roles as dictated by the Father, and Jesus Christ. That's why we are going to be unified.

Human beings want to put limits on it and say, "Well, nobody can have that much authority without abusing it, and being selfish about it." Yes, God can. Human beings cannot. That's why we don't think it will work. We are trying to put a human limitation on God. Stop it, don't do that. God is perfect. The Father and Jesus Christ are perfect. There is no envy, there is no jealousy, there are none of these politics in their relationship. They are unified—they are one in orientation of mind, even though they are both all-powerful—but one is subject to the other. That's not human. Human beings don't do that. The old adage "absolute power corrupts absolutely" is true for human beings. It is not true for God. Stop putting that limitation on God. Stop putting a limitation in your mind even upon yourself, if you are blessed enough to be part of that God Family. You will have equal power. The only difference is that you will be obedient to the authority of the Family, and you will fulfill your role, however high, or however low, in that Family because you will also be perfectly unified in purpose and harmony with the Family patriarch, which is God, the Father. That is going to be the difference.

So, "the least in the Kingdom of heaven"—if you want to say, in the very lowest hierarchical rank of assignments, offices, that will be given in that God Family (if there is a top, there has to be a bottom)—those even on the bottom, are going to be just as much God as the Father, or Jesus Christ. Even those on the "lowest level" in the Family of God are going to be fully God—omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient. They will be capable of doing any job they are assigned—high or low.

Now, the determination of those offices, as Christ showed in some of the parables, is according to the fruits that we bear now, but even the least who make it and are changed, and transformed, and added to the God Family, will have all power, and will be capable of doing any job, and they will be satisfied with the jobs they are given. They are not going to grumble: "Hmmm, well, I'm on the lowest level in the Family, boy, am I upset and embarrassed." That's the way a human being would react. God won't think that way. If you are blessed to be in the God Family, you are going to be ecstatic, no matter where you are, as Kings and Priests, in the family structure. You are going to love it. It is going to be glorious. But you are going to have the capability of doing any job.

And that highlights one of my favorite fallacies that came up in the church in the late 1960s. He's been dead for a number years, so I don't mind using his name: Gerald Waterhouse was the one who came up with this theory that ultimately got accepted by Mr. Armstrong and put into a number of his writings, including *Mystery of the Ages*. It's one of the faults with *Mystery of the Ages*, and it is this whole scheme, or this theory, about which patriarchs are going to be doing which jobs in the God Family. The Bible only gives us two that I am aware of: It says that King David is going to be ruling over the twelve tribes, and it says that the twelve apostles are going to be ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel. Those are the only ones God has told us of in advance, as far as who is going to be in specific offices in the God Family.

Now, this theory that came up and took flight, and then got incorporated into the teachings, didn't come through Mr. Armstrong as a revelation, it came from Gerald Waterhouse, and I don't think he was an apostle. God didn't give new Truth to him. That was all supposition, like so many other things that came through these other ministers who just couldn't wait to come up with something that Mr. Armstrong would accept and incorporate into the teachings of the church.

We don't go for that. Mr. Armstrong, and only Mr. Armstrong, was the one sent and inspired by God with that divine revelation, from the foundation. So the concept was that, "Well, you see, Moses is going to have this particular job, and Joseph is going to have this job. And because Job, apparently, was, you know, the builder of the great pyramids, well, you see, he is going to be in charge of these world, civic construction projects; and Adam is going to do this, and Seth is going to do that"—and whichever ones. What a joke. No one knows. It was all supposition. It was not Biblically based, at all, and it is a classic example of

inserting our noses into God's business when we don't know what we are talking about. He didn't reveal it to us, and He doesn't want us to know. God will put in those positions whom He wants.

Do you know what's wrong with the whole theory, if we had only been able to see it? Again, it is putting limitations, humanly, upon the God Family. The idea is that "well, in the flesh, a particular man was strong at one particular thing, so that is what he is going to be doing in the God Family, too." No. He can do any job that God assigns him. The least in that Kingdom is going to be able to do *any* job, regardless of what his or her physical limitations were in this flesh body. You see, it's just another way that we limit God. We say that "because I have these limitations now, I'll have the same limitations in the Kingdom." No, you won't. If you make it, you can do any job.

Think about it, and the next time you start to rationalize, or hear somebody else do so, test it. Is it, or is it not, consistent with the character and the resume of God? Don't allow yourself to take our limitations and put them on God, let alone to take and besmirch God by trying to bring Him down to our level.

There is a gulf that exists between the flesh and the Spirit realms. We cannot cross it, even in mind, until God opens it to us, and that is not going to happen until the return of Jesus Christ. So, be very, very careful about trying to dip your toe into forbidden waters, if you will. It's a foolish endeavor. God is not a man. He cannot be fully understood, or grasped, now, because of the separation between those realms—between the spiritual and the physical. Those who are born into His Family in that day will share every glorious attribute of God, without limit, but it will be done in a harmonious, unified, cooperative effort within the Family. Be very careful, brethren, to never in your minds put limits upon that God. If you learn that lesson, you are another step closer to really coming to know Him, to trust Him, and to appreciate all that He has in store.