

# DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

AUG 2025 | ROMANS 1:18-23

*For what can be  
known about God  
is plain to them,  
because God has  
shown it to them.*

*Romans 1:19*

## ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Have you ever wondered why some people continue to live in confusion even after vowing that God is their final authority and the Bible is the guide for knowing Him and His ways? I can see two possible explanations for this. First, we don't ask the right questions. What we think are the most important answers are not relevant to what God is doing in our lives or in the world. Second, we don't seem to grasp that the Bible is primarily an announcement of what God has done in history to fulfill His purposes for creation. In other words, God's word to us is the solution to our real problems rather than an intellectual answer to philosophical or cultural debates. God can solve

our problems without satisfying our curiosity about theoretical questions. Let's look at some of the essential questions that must be answered if we are to live in this world which was created by God. When we ask these questions and get God's answer, many of the problems and confusion that stymie us are taken care of:

### ***Who is God---really?***

We are not looking for a Sunday School answer here. This is not about debating theology. This is asking who has the last word in our lives? Who is the central figure in our thinking? Who are we most concerned with pleasing? Whose smile brings us the most joy? Who are

we most conscious of being accountable to?

The Bible tells us that all humans have misnamed God:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*

Romans 1:18-23, ESV

Jesus told a parable about a master giving various talents (investment money) to three men. The first was given

5, the second 2, the third 1. The first two doubled their investment and were applauded and rewarded with more opportunities to invest for the Master. The third hid his allotment. His explanation was that his knowledge of the nature and character of the master led him to believe that he was so strict and demanding that he could not afford to lose any, so he hid it. The master took his allotment and gave it to the first guy and called the third man a wicked man. He was wicked because he had misnamed his master.

In our fallen state we, too, have assumed we know His nature. We perceive Him to be angry, distant, transactional, judgmental, and moralistic. We seem to feel that we are all on video and that there will be a day when the video will be shown to the whole universe with God eager to punish the imperfect.

But the Bible gives us the answer to the question about the true nature of God. It says that Jesus reveals the nature of God fully. In fact, at one point Jesus said to His disciples, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father" (see John 14:9). Look at Paul's declaration: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or

in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:15, 19-20, ESV). If we believe these descriptions of God, we will run toward Him, eager to know more of His mercy and grace. We will totally open up to Him. We will desire to please Him and to find out what He wants from us. We will be surprised that He mostly wants to enjoy us and have us enjoy Him. He has blessings to give. He has flourishing to offer. He gives rest to all who trust Him. Those who are striving to arrive, working to perfect, or afraid to approach are revealing that they don't know who He is.

***Who am I — really.***

***And who defines that?***

God is Spirit and therefore knows us not only physically, emotionally, and socially, but spiritually. He knows our core essence. He made two sexual genders: male and female. He made both in His image. He made us His unique partners on earth to manage what He has made. But we are more than hired servants in charge of management. We are sons with legal privileges that we can enjoy. We are participants of the new creation. We have been born of the imperishable seed of God's own Word, by the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. We are eternally forgiven, completely cleansed, and fully empowered to display the glories of His mercy and grace. Our daily work is worthy to be

accountable, and we are treasured by the Father.

The primary battle we fight is against the voices that continually try to redefine our identity as well as God's. We are daily accused! We hear taunts of "Failure! Hypocrite! Imposter! Sinner! Hopeless! Disappointment! Forsaken!" Words of parents, coaches, teachers, peers, and competitors echo in our ears regularly, seeming to confirm our fears. We find ourselves hesitant to approach God in prayer for fear that He, too, will accuse us. But He never does. He is well pleased with His Son, and we are in Him.

***What is my garden? What am I responsible for? Who am I responsible to?***

The short answer for this question is that my garden is whatever is in front of me now. I have been given a body to manage. I have a mind to develop. I have sexuality to steward. I have giftings to utilize. I have assignments I have been given. I have things to use and fix. I have relationships to enjoy and bless. To use an old agricultural statement: "I have my own row of corn to hoe." Paul mentioned this in his instructions regarding living in the Spirit: "But each person should examine his own work, and then he will have a reason for boasting in himself alone, and not in respect to someone else. For each person will

have to carry his own load" (Galatians 6:4-5, HCSB).

It seems easier to try to fix others and even hoe their corn before we give attention to defining our own garden and managing it to the best. If we all managed our own garden, much of the earth would be under the management of God's people with God's wisdom. There is just not enough time to criticize. We have a garden to tend.

### ***Who is the hero of your story?***

All of us have heroes. There are characters in our history that we admire, adore, esteem, and trust. There are those who seem to make it into each and every story we tell about our lives. There are many people we don't want to live without. There are some we think we can't live without. Since we are all prone to worship, we sometimes let our admiration and need for security slip into worship. We turn our heroes into gods who become the source of our pleasure rather than a channel of God's love. We do them an awful disservice. They are not equipped to be gods. They are just people.

The hero that makes the most boring story is you. We have all known people who tell each story in such a way that they look good. We can easily become people who do that. Our culture

has encouraged us to put ourselves out there. Present well! Take the initiative! Drive for your dream! Be better tomorrow than today! Push! Get ahead! Never doubt! Don't let them see you sweat! Tell your victories, never your defeats! We become the hero who can't afford to be tired, needy, afraid, and lonely. And we make for boring stories. We begin with self-will that is sustained with self-effort and that will end in self-glory. Jesus is a player, but a minor one. We are the hero. But there is a better story with a hero who is beyond imagination. All people need Him. We are all longing to hear the story with Him as the hero.

These are the questions to ask. Ask these questions and get God's answer. I think we find that many of the questions that had us paralyzed are addressed by His answer. He is not ignoring us. He is enticing us to come closer, to see clearer, and to love deeper. We have not because we ask not. Ask!

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