# You Cannot Make God in Your Own Image

**(He Has Already Told You How to Come to Him)**

There is a feeling some Christians carry but rarely say out loud. It is a quiet suspicion — not quite guilt, not quite peace — that something about their worship is not quite right. The songs feel good. The service ends on time. The people are friendly. But underneath all of it is a question that never fully goes away:

***Is this what God actually wants from me?***

If you have ever felt that, do not dismiss it. That unease may be the most honest thing happening in your spiritual life.

**The Ancient Problem With a Modern Face.** The temptation to reshape God on our own terms is not new. When the Israelites stood at the foot of Sinai while Moses was on the mountain, they grew restless. They melted their gold, fashioned a calf, and declared, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." (Exodus 32:4)

What is important to understand about that moment is this: they were not abandoning worship. They still wanted a god. They simply wanted one they could manage — one that would not demand so much, one they could approach on their own terms.

That spirit has not died. It has simply put on a suit and walked into a church building. Today it sounds like "God just wants us to be happy." It sounds like "As long as it comes from the heart, God accepts it."

But feeling meaningful to us and being acceptable to God are two entirely different things. And a man can spend his entire life not knowing the difference.

**Do You Take God Seriously?** I want to ask you something directly. Something only between you and God – not to shame you - but to invite you to be honest with yourself in a way that may be uncomfortable for you. But God already knows. ***Do you take God seriously?***

Not seriously enough to attend services. Not seriously enough to call yourself a Christian. I mean seriously enough to ask whether what you are offering Him is actually what He asked for.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

God is not a deity we get to define. He defines Himself. And when we reconstruct Him according to our preferences — adjusting His expectations to fit our comfort, adding to

worship what He never authorized, removing what He commanded — we are not worshiping the God of the Bible. We are worshiping a version of Him we invented. An idol of theology is still an idol. The material is different. The sin is the same.

**When Sincerity Is Not Enough.** Perhaps the most sobering passage in all of Scripture on this subject is Leviticus 10. Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron the high priest, offered fire before the Lord — "unauthorized fire, which he had not commanded them." (Leviticus 10:1) Fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them.

What the text does not say is as important as what it does. It does not say they had wicked hearts. It does not say they despised God or intended to dishonor Him. Their problem was not malice. Their problem was that they approached God on terms He had not authorized.

The lesson is clear: sincerity is not the standard. God's revealed will is the standard.

After this tragedy, God told Moses to speak to Aaron: "Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified." (Leviticus 10:3)

In other words: I am God. Come to me the way I have said. Not the way you have decided.

**Jesus Confirmed This.** Some will say the New Covenant changes all of this — that we now live under grace, that God accepts whatever comes from a sincere heart. But Jesus Himself addressed that directly.

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

Not spirit or truth. Spirit and truth. Sincerity without truth is not enough. And when the Pharisees substituted their own traditions for God's commands, Jesus was plain: "In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9)

Vain worship. Worship that costs the worshiper real time, real effort, genuine feeling — and that God does not accept. That is not a minor concern. That is a crisis most people sitting in pews on Sunday morning have never once considered.

**Man's Will Versus God's Authority.** When we add what God has not authorized, remove what He has commanded, or substitute human wisdom for divine instruction, we are not being creative. We are being presumptuous. We are placing our judgment above His.

The man who spends his life offering worship God has not authorized is not wasting a little time. He may stand before God one day convinced he was pleasing to Him, only to hear the words no soul should ever hear: "I never knew you; depart from me." (Matthew 7:23)

Those words come at the end of a passage about people who were actively doing religious things — all in the name of Jesus. They were not atheists. They were not pagans. They were worshipers. But they were worshiping on their own terms, not His.

So here is the question worth sitting with today:

***Are you seeking God with a pure heart — genuinely, humbly, on His terms — or are you seeking an experience that pleases you and calling it worship?***

That question is not meant to wound you. It is meant to wake you up. Because a man cannot answer it honestly without it changing something.

**A Word of Grace.** None of this is written to condemn those who have worshiped in ignorance. God is gracious and patient, "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

But grace is not an excuse to stop asking hard questions. Grace is what gives us the courage to ask them — and to change when the answer demands it.

The New Testament church sang (Ephesians 5:19). It gathered on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). It broke bread in remembrance of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). It prayed. It gave. It heard the Word taught. These are not suggestions from men. They are the pattern God preserved. We do not improve on that pattern by adding to it. We corrupt it.

**Let God Be God.** The moment we try to make God in our image, we have lost Him. Because the god we have fashioned is not God at all. He is a mirror of ourselves — and a mirror cannot save anyone.

The God of Scripture is gloriously, magnificently, and sometimes uncomfortably other than us. He does not adjust to our preferences. He calls us to adjust to His holiness.

So come to Him. But come to Him His way — with a pure heart, with honest questions, with the humility to let Scripture answer them.

That is where real worship begins. That is where God is found.

— Earnestly Pursuing God Ministries