

B A D I D E A S

REMOVING ROADBLOCKS TO KNOWING GOD

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
~ The Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)*

BAD IDEA #1: *God Is Male*

APPETIZER: Exegeting “Mother!”

The Problem: Believing God is male leads to other forms of faulty thinking that are even more misleading and damaging:

God is male, therefore...

1. God is like other overbearing, uncaring, absent, or abusive, males that I know.
2. Feminine norms are less God-like than masculine norms.
3. My need to connect with feminine spirituality will have to be met through some other spiritual force, such as Mother Mary or Mother Earth. (*Gaia*, Greek; Roman, *Terra* = the earth goddess)

“You never loved me. You just loved how much I loved you.”
~ Mother (From the movie *Mother!*)

DINE IN: The Father God with a Mother’s Heart

1 Peter 1:21-2:3

- **John 4:24** – God is Spirit
- **Genesis 1:26-28** – The best of maleness and femaleness are found in God
- **Deuteronomy 4:15-17** – Don’t make God in our image, as a man or woman
- *El Shaddai* = God Almighty, where *Shaddai* is from the Akkadian word “*sadu*”, which means mountains or breasts (**Genesis 17:1, 28:3, 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25**)
- **Job 38:29** – Yahweh “gives birth” to creation from his “womb”.
- **Exodus 3:14** – God’s name, I am who I am, is genderless.
- **Isaiah 49:15** – God’s love is like a mother who could never forget her child.

- **Matthew 23:37** – Jesus pictures himself as a mother hen.
- **Ruth 2:12; Psalm 17:8** – God is like a protective mother bird.
- **Hosea 13:8** – God is like a protective mother bear watching over her cubs
- **Luke 13:20-23; 15:8-9** – Jesus pictures God as a woman.
- The “Spirit” of God in Hebrew (*ruach*) is feminine, and in Greek (*pneuma*) it is neuter.
- **John 3:5; 1:13; 1 John 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18** – we are “born” of the spirit.
- **1 Peter 2:2-3** – we are born from the Spirit and feed on his sustaining milk.

TWO QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the Bible, and why should we, call God “Father”?
2. Why was Jesus male?

TAKE OUT: Listening To The Feminine

THE QUICK RESPONSE...

- God is the Father God with a Mother’s heart.
- He is both Creator and Care Giver, Saviour and Sustainer.
- God is the Creator Spirit who birthed us all into existence, and continues to nurture us with pure spiritual milk.
- Jesus came to show us that the God of power and judgement (thought of as male), is also the God who lays down his life to serve, sustain, embrace, and nurture (thought of as female).
- Jesus helps us rethink our idea of God as more than male.

IN THE MEANTIME...

If you are a woman, _____.
If you are a man, _____.
If you are a Christian, _____.
If you are not a Christian, _____.

NEXT WEEK: BAD IDEA #2

BAD IDEA #2: *We Don’t Need God To Be Good*

(Homework: Watch “Religulous” or read Sam Harris’ book *The Moral Landscape*)

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. What are you most looking forward to in this series? What are some bad ideas you've heard?
2. After reviewing Sunday's message, talk about something you learned or some question that remains.
3. **ROLE PLAY!** Take turns in pairs, or as a group, responding to someone who says...
 - a. "I don't need God, since I draw my energy from Mother Earth."
 - b. "I believe in God, but I can't trust him. When I think about him, all I see is the face of my own abusive father."
 - c. "Men just want to use women for themselves, and your God just wants to use us all to boost his own fragile ego."

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

4. Read **1 Peter 1:21-2:3**.
 - a. What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why?
 - b. In **1:21**, Peter suggests that Jesus is our route to believing in God rightly. Why is Jesus so important to understanding who God is?
 - c. Contrast **1:22 & 23**. What is our role and what is God's role in our own spiritual growth?
 - d. What does loving one another deeply look like? Describe some of the attitudes and actions that would express this "deep love"? Is there something you can do differently this week to contribute to our own church culture of deep love?
 - e. What is "the living and enduring word of God", "the word of the Lord", and "the word that was preached to you" that is talked about in **1:23-25**? Is this Scripture? The Gospel? Jesus? (How do Jesus' words in **John 5:37-40** help figure this out?)
 - f. Think of the image of a newborn baby hungrily breast feeding. That is what we are called to be like in our pursuit of spiritual growth. Review **2:1-2**. What can you get rid of or begin doing this week to become more of a hungry baby?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

5. Use your Huddle Handout Questions and pray for one another.

Quotes

Welcome to our new series about common bad ideas that interfere with people knowing God.

Today's bad idea – God is male – has been used throughout history to justify horrific attitudes toward feminine ideals and women themselves. Men are made in God's image. Women? Well...

Every woman should be filled with shame by the thought that she is a woman...the consciousness of their own nature must evoke feelings of shame.
~ Clement of Alexandria (Greek Father of the Church, 2nd Century)

Women are the devil's gateway.
~ Tertullian (African Father of the Church, 2nd Century)

Woman is the root of all evil.
~ Jerome (Christian Scholar, 4th & 5th Centuries)

For as the sun is more glorious than the moon, though the moon is a most glorious body, so woman, though she was a most beautiful work of God, yet she did not equal the glory of the male creature.

~ Martin Luther (Commentary on Genesis, 16th Century)

God has made Christianity to have a masculine feel. He has ordained for the church a masculine ministry.

~ John Piper (Contemporary Christian Leader)

The woman together with her own husband is the image of God, so that that whole substance may be one image; but when she is referred separately to her quality of help-meet, which regards the woman herself alone, then she is not the image of God.

~ Augustine (Bishop of Hippo, 4th & 5th Centuries)