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Make Some
Waves!



**Why God Is Not Real
to Most People**
By Herbert W. Armstrong

Why God Is Not Real to Most People

Millions of adults say they believe in God — but WHY does He seem so FAR OFF to them? They have heard ABOUT God, but do not KNOW God. This article tells you HOW you CAN!

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Are you like the college graduate who said to me, “Oh, I believe in God all right, but it seems like He is *so far off* — SO UNREAL”?

WHY did he feel that way? WHY should God seem UNREAL — like an almost invisible filmy wisp — or a phantom — or something shapeless and ethereal?

Born without knowledge

The instant you were born you knew nothing about God. You knew *nothing* — *period!* You were born with a mind capable of receiving, but as yet unfilled with knowledge.

Whatever you may know — or *think* you know — about God, has come into your mind since birth.

How did knowledge *begin* coming into your mind? There are only five channels through which knowledge may come, naturally, into the human mind — the channels of sight, sound, taste, smell, feel.

But also there are three dimensions of knowledge or consciousness: the *around*, the *within* and the ABOVE. Yet the natural mind

of a mortal human comprehends only the first two. Babies grow into childhood with awareness of only the *around* and the *within*.

But as a child, through the sense of hearing, you probably were *told* something about God. But understandable knowledge of God comes from the third dimension — the ABOVE. And the ABOVE is spiritual. God is a Spirit. Spiritual things cannot be *seen*, nor heard, nor felt, nor tasted, nor smelt. Understanding of spiritual things simply cannot enter the human mind through the five sensual channels.

Therefore, it is probable that the adults trying to tell you about God did not have true perception and understanding. And it is natural that whatever knowledge about God entered your mind — through the ear, or the eye — was vague, misty, UNREAL.

You couldn't *hear* God. You had no actual conscious *contact* with Him. You probably formed some *imaginary* picture in your mind of what you *supposed* He must be like — based on what might have been told you, or what you may have read. But you didn't SEE or HEAR *Him* — you read or heard only something ABOUT Him! And the picture was unclear, clouded, out of focus,

ethereal. Is it any wonder He did not seem REAL — that He seemed so far off?

So what is usually told to a growing child *about* God usually is a very distorted picture, indeed!

Still, hearing *about* a person is not really *knowing* the *person!*

Getting to *KNOW* God is quite different from *HEARING* about Him.

So, what does the average adult know about God? They all started out, from youngest childhood, knowing whatever they had *heard* or been told, by parents or others.

Perhaps some children were told *NOTHING* about God at all as they were growing from babyhood toward adolescence and into early adulthood. But most probably they have been *told* more or less *about* God before they actually *read* anything about Him *IN THE BIBLE*. Also they very probably had read what others had written about Him before reading anything in the Bible for themselves.

So what did they know? They knew only what had been told or communicated to them by those *AROUND* them. They knew only what they, in turn, had gathered from still *other* misinformed and

deceived *people*. Not from the ABOVE — but from the AROUND! Not from God Himself, but from the AROUND. And your Bible says the *other people* constitute a deceived world!

And when such a person, approaching or reaching early adulthood, does read the Bible, his concept of God has been so firmly implanted in his mind *by other people*, he continues picturing God in the same way.

He probably is just as I was for many, many years: I did read the Bible at times — but I then said: “I just can’t understand the Bible.”

Well, *NO WONDER*, then, that many who profess to “believe in God” say God seems unreal to them!

They are like Job. Job’s source of knowledge, before his personal confrontation with God, had been from the *around* — he had heard *about* God by the hearing of the ear, *from other people*. God did not seem real to him until he gained *PERSONAL CONTACT* — until he got to really *KNOW* God!

There is a way in which YOU can establish *actual direct personal contact* with God — if you have not done so already. Then He will become *REAL!*

The person of God revealed

I can tell you that *I* know God — and that I also know the living Jesus Christ — for I represent Him as His servant. I read about Him — not as other people *MIS-describe* Him — but as He describes Himself in His *BIBLE!*

But, I said a while ago that more than 55 years ago I “just couldn’t understand the Bible.” *NO ONE CAN, really*, until they have gained contact with God (the Father) through Jesus Christ, and have received His Holy Spirit, begetting them as His begotten children.

That requires the same kind of *REPENTANCE* Job was put through — a genuine abhorring of the self, an unconditional *SURRENDER* to OBEY Him and His

Law, and a real faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior. When I was brought to that kind of repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ, in early 1927, and was baptized, He gave me the most precious *GIFT* in all the universe — His Holy Spirit.

His Spirit *opened my mind* to *SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION*. I could *UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE* — a bit at a time, of course. In it, the living Christ began talking to me. I began to talk to Him — often, daily, in a sense constantly, in spirit. When I studied the Bible,

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it was like listening to the most wonderful Friend I had ever known! It was *WONDERFUL!* It was *INTERESTING* — *INSPIRING* — *REVEALING!* So I studied the Bible often *on my knees*.

You see, as I *read* the Bible, God was talking to *me*. But as I prayed, I was talking to *HIM!* And by studying His Word *on my knees*, I was able to carry on a two-way conversation with Him — mixing prayer with listening to Him through reading His words. It was invigorating, rejuvenating beyond words to describe. He was *TEACHING ME*. I was gaining new *KNOWLEDGE* — *spiritual knowledge* — knowledge to *LIVE BY* — knowledge to put into action — instruction to be *acted on* — commands to *OBEY* by *doing!*

As He told me about Himself

— as He talked to me, instructed me — as I talked to Him — *I got to know Him!* He *BECAME REAL!*

He was no longer *WAY OFF!* He was very *NEAR* — in Spirit, in the very same room. I have never seen God or Jesus Christ *PHYSICALLY* — with my physical *eye* — but I “see” in my “mind’s eye” eyes flashing out like a flame of fire — His face shining as brightly as the sun in full strength — His head and hair white as the cleanest, whitest snow. And all around where He is sitting is gleaming, glistening beautiful *SPLENDOR* and brightness, with lightning flashing forth. Perhaps I don’t “see” this as distinctly as I expect to after I enter His Kingdom as an inheritor, *BORN* of His Spirit in *SPIRIT COMPOSITION* — no longer a mortal human composed of flesh and blood.

It is, of course, as the apostle Paul was inspired to say: We see at best now, as through a darkened glass, but then, in the resurrection, in His Kingdom, face to face (I Corinthians 13:12).

WHY is God “so far off — so unreal”? It is because people are so *far off* from *HIM* — so *close to* the physical, material things and interests of this evil world! Because their minds are on physical pursuits all the time. Because *they have no time for God!*

You get to *KNOW* those you are *close to* — in *constant contact with* — in conversation with!

But, with most, *their sins* have *CUT THEM OFF* from contact with God. Is it, then, impossible for them to *GAIN CONTACT?*

Not at all! But *IT IS NOT EASY!*

WHY? Because you have to *REPENT* — and that is *NOT EASY*. To just say the words “I abhor myself,” does not mean you really *do*. To really *CONFESS* that you have been *WRONG* — that you are *NOT GOOD* — that there is nothing good *IN YOU* — that you not only have *DONE* wrong and

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'Wise Up!'

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tongue (Proverbs 6:16-17).

Because of its common sense approach to everyday situations, Proverbs is probably the most practical book in the Bible. It speaks to all the contemporary issues facing us today: religion, sex, drugs, money, the work ethic, hatred, fear and anger. It mirrors our shortcomings to us and instructs us, in detail, how to live wisely.

If we are going to acquire wisdom, which is the foundation for easier and better living, we need to incorporate into our daily lives the godly behavior patterns presented in Proverbs. At first they may seem odd, old-fashioned and somewhat restrictive. But they really work!

There are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs. A chapter for each day of the month! I believe that the wisdom of the book is such that it can equip a teen to meet any problem that could possibly come his or her way.

The meaning of the Hebrew word that is translated as *wisdom* is "strong" or "firm." To make wise is to make strong and sound in character, and this is the purpose of the book of Proverbs.

Dynamite for living

The Proverbs are God's dynamite for living — they pack a lot of punch in a small parcel. I find each proverb condenses the meaning and power of a thousand words into one short and simple sentence.

Start by reading a chapter a day, thinking about what you read and applying the principles you learn. If there is something you don't understand, ask your parents for help or have a family discussion. Talk about these principles with your friends. Remember, iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17).

The beginning of wisdom is to make the effort to acquire wisdom (Proverbs 4:7). So start now to "wise up!" □

God Not Real?

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sinned, but that you ARE wrong and sinful — that is not easy.

The SELF has to DIE — and your human nature will fight that *to the death*. To make an UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER to God and HIS LAW — His authority over you — His commandments — His teaching — HIS WAY of living that is so UTTERLY CONTRARY to the way your friends and associates are living — that is NOT EASY.

SELF within you will shout out: "But what would my friends — those I have been close to — what would THEY think?" You'll have to be willing to GIVE THEM UP — for they probably will throw you over — IF you surrender to God, let Him turn your life right-side-up, live a totally *changed* life according to His teaching!

Are you too big a coward to do it? You have to be WILLING to GIVE UP — everything! — for HIM. Do you want HIM that much? Do you want the happiness of a REAL Christian LIFE that much? Do you want ETERNAL LIFE in His Kingdom that much? Few do!

That's why God is not REAL to most.

Of course they are not really HAPPY. But they are unwilling to live THE WAY that *causes* happiness. They would rather keep on TRYING to gain it some other way. They NEVER WILL, however. All humanity has been trying that for 6,000 years! NONE ever yet succeeded. Do you think YOU can? You CAN'T!

God CAN be real to you — but are you willing?

There are the THREE DIMENSIONS. Most people have consciousness of only the first TWO! They seek pleasures, happiness, in the AROUND — things, people — this world! There are some temporary thrills, delights, pleasures. Sure! But they NEVER LAST! And you pay too big a price for them. They're a bad bargain.

You may look to the within — but it's like looking down into a

well that's gone DRY. There's nothing there to quench that inner thirst.

You CAN contact the ABOVE! If you're willing to pay the PRICE — that is. It isn't easy. But it's the ONLY dimension that SATISFIES — that fills that inner void — that feeds that gnawing soul HUNGER — that expands your horizons — that opens your MIND to the glories of SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION — of understanding SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE — of really UNDERSTANDING the Bible, in a way that produces happiness brimful and running over!

It's WORTH the price YOU pay a million times over. Jesus Christ paid the REAL price — the BIG price. The price you pay, in GIVING UP in surrender to Him, is as nothing by comparison.

It's the GREATEST BARGAIN in the world — but the world does not offer it, or ANY bargain. GOD DOES!

There are TWO directions you can go in life. Most people go the direction of SELF — vanity! It's the way of self-centeredness. Everything is coming INWARD. Toward SELF. Getting! Taking! Acquiring! And you keep shrinking smaller and smaller.

The other direction is the way of God's LOVE. Love fulfills His law. LOVE is *outgoing concern*! It is, first of all, GOD-centeredness. It is LOVE to God, in worship, adoration, faith, obedience.

It is, second, LOVE to fellow-man — loving others AS yourself. That's a lot of love. That is the WAY of the ABOVE. That way constantly EXPANDS your horizons. That way you GROW — and GROW — and GROW! You DEVELOP! You develop GOD'S CHARACTER! You GROW in love — in happiness — in abundant well-being! LIFE becomes abundant and JOYFUL!

Willing to pay the price? It's not giving up so much MONEY — it's giving up things you've had your heart set on that are BAD for you. It's coming to a new sense of VALUES — values that MAKE SENSE!

Everyone CAN have it — if they want it deeply enough. □