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# God Is In The Details

## JOHN 3:16-17

### Introduction

1. Details are important, but sometimes we miss them, simply because we weren't paying attention.
2. Have you ever had a teacher give you an exam and tell you to read it all the way through before you began filling in the answers?
3. Were you one of those who ignored the instructions and immediately began answering the questions only to find the last statement on test telling you that all you had to do was put your name on the exam and turn it in?
4. It was a test to determine how well you follow instructions.
5. Have you ever begun putting something together without the instructions only to find yourself disassembling it a little later because you didn't read the instruction which told you to insert part F through the opening in part H before attaching part G?
6. Have you ever noticed the details to be found in a sunrise, a sunset or a majestic night sky?

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7. In Psalm 8:1, David wrote, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!"
8. Two verses later, David added, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?" (Psalm 8:3-4, NASB95).

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9. Jesus' declaration to a man named Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16), is filled with details.

10. Details are important and God is found throughout the details.
11. This morning I would like for us to consider first, two ways in which God has reached out to us, and lastly how we should respond to Him.

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## I. God Has Spoken To Us

### A. YOU AND I ARE INQUISITIVE BY NATURE

1. Our minds are always prying into the unknown (i.e., our children).
2. We are always exploring, investigating, researching.
  - a. Where is a certain place? Who is a certain person?
  - b. How does this work? What is that made of?
  - c. How can I find out more about this topic?
3. We never really grow out of our childhood desire to ask "Why?"

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### B. WE HAVE AN IMPOSSIBLE QUEST TO UNDERSTAND GOD

1. However, when our minds begin to concern themselves with God, we are like fish out of water, like a person stumbling in the dark.
2. This shouldn't surprise us, because God is infinite, while we are finite.
3. You and I cannot climb in to the infinite mind of God, and even if we could, He is beyond our comprehension.
4. In the book which bears his name, Job was once asked by his friend, Zophar, "Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?" (Job 11:7).
5. The simple answer is 'No'.
6. Long ago, God spoke through His prophet Isaiah and said, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9, NASB95).
7. Had God not taken the initiative to disclose Himself to us, you and I would continue to remain in the dark about who He is and what He Has done.
8. Thankfully, He has revealed to our minds what would have otherwise been

hidden from us.

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## C. HOW HAS GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO US?

1. He has done this in two ways.
2. The first is through 'general' or 'natural' revelation.
  - a. '*General*' revelation because it is revealed to all men everywhere.
  - b. '*Natural*' revelation because we see it in nature.

(David) "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." (Psalm 19:1, NASB95)

(Paul) "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they [we] are without excuse." (Romans 1:19–20, NASB95)

- c. Such revelation makes us aware of God's existence; His divine glory, power and faithfulness.
- d. But it is not enough.
- e. It doesn't help us to know Him personally, the relationship we may have with Him, or even why things seem so wrong in our world.
3. For this we need a second type of revelation, God's '*special*' or '*supernatural*' revelation.
  - a. It is special because it was given . . .
    - 1) To a special people (Israel)
    - 2) Through special messengers — Prophets and Apostles

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- b. It is '*supernatural*' because . . .
  - 1) It was given through a process we commonly call '*inspiration*.'

"for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:21, NASB95)

"All Scripture is God-breathed . . ." (2 Timothy 3:16, NIV84)

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- 2) It found its greatest expression in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Hebrews 1:2, tells us that “in these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.” (Hebrews 1:2, NASB95)
  - b. He goes on to tell us that this Son “is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.” (Hebrews 1:3, NASB95)
4. The way the Bible explains and describes this type of revelation is to say that God has ‘spoken’.
  - a. You and I typically communicate with each other through the things we say.
  - b. It is through our words that we reveal the things on our minds.
  - c. Because God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts, He has revealed them to us in words.
  - d. God began by speaking through men like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
  - e. Later, after He gave the law through Moses, He spoke through men called prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Jonah, etc.
  - f. Finally, He communicated us through His Son, Who “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) — the One we know as Jesus.
  - g. You and I come to know God, not through our own wisdom, but through His [God’s] Word.

[The good news for those of us here today is this. Not only has God spoken to us, He has acted on our behalf.]

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## II. God Has Acted

### A. IN RESPONSE TO OUR NEED

1. All that is wrong in our world and wrong in our lives can be traced back to one thing — sin.
2. Sin results in our lives when we either . . .

- a. Do what God has told us not to do (transgression), or
  - b. Fail to do what God has told us to do (omission).
3. Our sin puts a barrier between ourselves and God, thus preventing us from enjoying the life and relationship with Him which He first intended.
- “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God . . .” (Isaiah 59:2a, NASB95).
4. Because of this God took action to save us from our sins.
5. All of this began some 4,000 years ago when God . . .
- a. Called a man named Abraham from the ancient city of Ur, in what is now modern Iraq.
  - b. He made of him and his descendants a great nation.
  - c. God delivered this nation from slavery in Egypt.
  - d. At Mt. Sinai, He entered into a covenant with this nation, which came to be known as Israel.
  - e. From there, He led them for almost 40 years in the wilderness until He brought them into the land which he had earlier promised through Abraham.
  - f. He continued to guide and teach them as His special people.
6. However, God’s action on our part did not end there.

**Slide 10****B. BY REDEEMING US THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS**

1. All of this action of which we read in the Old Testament was preparation for God’s greater deed of redemption in Christ.
2. As I said earlier, people needed to be delivered . . .
  - a. Not from slavery in Egypt, or exile in Babylon,
  - b. But from their slavery to sin and estrangement from God.
3. It was primarily for this reason that Jesus came.
4. He came from God as our Savior (Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15; Luke 19:10).

(An angel told Joseph) “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”” (Matthew 1:21, NASB95)

(Paul told Timothy) “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.” (1 Timothy 1:15, NASB95)

(Jesus told the crowd on the way to Zaccheus’ house) “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10, NASB95)

5. Jesus was like the shepherd who went searching for the one sheep which was lost from his flock until He found it (cf. Luke 15:3-7).
6. Christianity is a religion unlike every other world religion in that it tells us of a God who loved lost sinners so much that He left His eternal throne to come here and die for us in order to bring us back to Himself.

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### III. How Should We Respond?

#### A. WE MUST SEEK

1. God has sought us and continues to seek us — now we must seek Him.
2. God, however, says that we do not seek Him as we should (Psalm 14:2-3).

“The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.” (Psalm 14:2–3, NASB95)

3. Jesus commands us to keep seeking God’s kingdom and His righteousness first (Matthew 6:33).
4. His promise is that if we will keep seeking, we will find (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9).
5. God desires to be found, but only by those who are truly seeking Him.

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#### B. WE MUST SEEK *DILIGENTLY*

1. All of us tend to be diligent about those things which are important to us and far less diligent about those things which we have little concern.

2. Through His prophet Jeremiah, God said to the people of Jerusalem, “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).
3. Our search for God must be diligent because He has little patience with us if we aren’t committed to our search.
4. In Hebrews 11:6, the writer of this letter to the Hebrew Christians said that God “rewards those who keep seeking Him.”

**Slide 13****C. WE MUST SEEK *HUMBLY***

1. If we aren’t careful, pride can hinder us in our search.
2. We must be willing to admit that our finite minds are incapable of discovering God on their own without His self-revelation.
3. This doesn’t mean that we don’t use our minds at all, but that we admit our limitations while using our minds to their fullest extent.
4. On one occasion after condemning the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, Jesus prayed, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants” (Matthew 11:25, NASB95).
5. One of the reasons Jesus loved little children is that they are teachable — not proud, self-important or critical.
6. We each need to develop that same open, humble and receptive mind.

**Slide 14****D. WE MUST SEEK *HONESTLY***

1. Not only must you and I come before God without a prideful mind, but also without a prejudiced mind.
2. Our seeking of God must be done with an open mind.
3. I dare say that most, if not all of us, have encountered a person who comes to a study of the Bible with their minds already made up.
4. In Jesus’ parable of the soils, He compared the seed in the good soil to those “who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance” (Luke 8:15).

5. Only those who search for God with a good and honest heart will ultimately find Him.

**Slide 15****E. WE MUST SEEK *OBEDIENTLY***

1. In seeking God, we must be willing not only to revise our ideas, but also to change our lives.
2. God's word includes a moral challenge — if we believe His word to be true, we must accept the moral challenge.
3. Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).
4. As the hymn we sometimes sing, written by John Sammis, so powerfully states, **"Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."**
5. We must be willing, not only to believe, but also to obey.

**Conclusion**

1. There is one more very important detail that I wish to leave with you this morning — anyone here today who has not had their sins washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ is lost.
2. Your sin is separating you from God and will condemn your soul for all eternity.
3. The good news is that God has made your salvation possible through the sacrifice of His only Son.
4. Will you come to Him in obedient faith, turning from your sin, confessing His name as your Lord and Savior, and be baptized into His name so that your sins might be forgiven and you may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
5. To neglect this detail is to keep yourself from the life which God longs to give you.