

LIFEGROUPS

LIVING GOD

Our God is a Living God, but what does that mean? And what difference does it make to our lives?

Isaiah mentions the futility of praying to idols that have no power to save (Isaiah 45:20). This is because they are not alive – they are just images made out of wood or stone or some other material; a statue. We might not worship idols in our culture but do we treat God as a statue; someone who's kind of in the background doing something but it's really all just a bit hazy and unreal?

In Hebrews, the writer declares that:

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
(Hebrews 12:18-24)

In other words, "if you thought the tangible mountain where Moses and the Israelites encountered God was real, that's nothing. You have come to heaven itself which is far more real than that!"

God is alive and there is a spiritual reality that maybe we've become numb to.

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WARMING UP

1. What are the characteristics / attributes of being alive?
2. Do you acknowledge that God is alive? How does this show in your life?

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Revelations 1:4-5, 1:8 and 1:17-18.

3. What do we learn about the Living God from these passages? And what implication does that have for us?

Read Revelations 1:1-3 and John 15:14-16.

4. How does God communicate with us?
5. What difference does a Living God make to the Christian belief?

Read Revelations 1:7, Luke 12:39-48.

6. Why will all the peoples of the earth mourn (Rev 1:7)?
7. Do we treat the return of Jesus as a reality?
8. How can we be prepared for His return?

MOVING FORWARD

We are often too focussed on ourselves that we forget that God is Alive: that he created and brings abundant life (John 10:10); that he want to have a relationship with us and live life with us; that he has a plan for the world which culminates in his return.

If these things were at the forefront of our minds it would change the way we live.

LIFE TOGETHER

When are you least aware of God as the Living God?

In your Life Groups, pray for one another and encourage one another to keep your focus on the Living God.

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Leaders Guides

These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Revelations 1:4-5, 1:8 and 1:17-18.

3. What do we learn about the Living God from these passages? And what implication does that have for us?

The Living God is eternal - he has always lived, is alive now and will live forever. Not only is He the Living God but He is the God of Life - he has conquered death. The Living God offers us life - life that is eternal.

Read Revelations 1:1-3 and John 15:14-16.

4. How does God communicate with us?

A few ways are shown in the Revelations passage - through revelation (vision), through an angel, through the recorded word - John's is recording what he sees for others (i.e. the Bible), through the testimony of people we know, through prophecy. God is alive and can communicate with us in dynamic ways.

5. What difference does a Living God make to the Christian belief?

A Living God means that He is relational - we can communicate with him; live life with Him. Throughout the Bible there are examples of God's relational character (He is involved in our lives): the Person of Jesus; Adam and Eve walk with God in Eden; Abraham encounters God on several occasions; Jacob wrestles

with God; Moses speaks to God face-to-face; Paul meets God on the Road to Damascus; etc.

Read Revelations 1:7, Luke 12:39-48.

6. Why will all the peoples of the earth mourn (Rev 1:7)?

When Jesus returns all the world will realise who He is and what He has done and be appalled at how they have treated Him; we will realise how sinful we are and how unworthy we are to come before a Holy God who is more powerful, more esteemed and more 'God' than we ever realised.

7. Do we treat the return of Jesus as a reality?

8. How can we be prepared for His return?

We need to recognise that He will return - if we recognise this it will lead us to live in a way that honours him. A focus on God will help us stop focussing on our own lives and living for Him.