



It is important for Christ-followers to understand God's nature and character, which is evident throughout Scripture as we watch how He interacts with and responds to His people. In fact, there are many dark chapters in the history of God's people when He became their adversary in response to their rebellion and disobedience. The reality of an "angry God" (think of the book of Jeremiah and Lamentations) stands in stark contrast to the contemporary Church's more casual presentation of grace. We've been coached toward a sloppy sense of personal fulfillment—God will help you be better and make you into a "better you"—resulting in a commitment to cultural accommodation and an imagination of a God who bestows blessings but avoids discipline. It's a false gospel. The truth is that God is both a God of love and a God of justice. Church, we *need* to understand His character and know that He greatly rewards those who honor Him.

I. AN ANGRY LAMB

Psalm 2:10–12¹⁰ *Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.* ¹¹ *Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.* ¹² *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Revelation 6:15–17¹⁵ *Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.* ¹⁶ *They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"* ¹⁷ *For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

Acts 8:1–3¹ *And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.* ² *Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.* ³ *But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.*

Acts 9:1–6¹ *Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.* ³ *As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.* ⁴ *He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"* ⁵ *"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.* ⁶ *"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."*

Isaiah 2:19–22¹⁹ *Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.* ²⁰ *In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship.* ²¹ *They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.* ²² *Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?*

1. Yielding to the Lord will bring blessings to you. What blessings have you received by submitting to the Lord in your life?

II. HONORING THE LORD IS THE BEST CHOICE!

Proverbs 3:9–10⁹ *Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;* ¹⁰ **then** *your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

Jesus, Worthy of Honor

John 5:23 *He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.*

Revelation 5:12 *In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"*

Honoring God in Our Homes

Exodus 20:12 *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

Matthew 15:4 *For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'*

2. We are experiencing challenges in our culture today that are trying to diminish the Church. What are some of those challenges? What choices can you make to be more God-honoring in the midst of these challenges?

An Esteem Bestowed by God

Proverbs 15:33 *The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.*

Proverbs 22:4 *Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life.*

Proverbs 29:23 *A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.*

3. What are some character traits that go along with humility? What opportunities do you have to demonstrate those traits?

The Final/Ultimate Reward of Righteousness

John 5:44 *How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise (honor) that comes from the only God?*

Luke 13:22–24 ²² *Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.* ²³ *Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"*

He said to them, ²⁴ **"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.**

1 Corinthians 9:24–10:5 ²⁴ **Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.** ²⁵ *Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.* ²⁶ *Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.* ²⁷ *No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

¹⁰ *For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.* ² *They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*

³ *They all ate the same spiritual food* ⁴ *and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.* ⁵ **Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.**

4. The influence of our faith has decreased in our culture. Why do people struggle with a lack of faith? How can you encourage others to lead a faith-filled life?
5. Sometimes it's not comfortable or convenient to serve the Lord. In what areas of your life have you been too friendly with the world? What attitude or action can you take this week to reverse it?

PRAYER

Proclamation

And **we sing** a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made **us** to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and **we** will reign on the earth." Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

In a loud voice **we proclaim**:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" **Let** every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, **sing**: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

Adapted from Revelation 5:9–13 (NIV®)