

The Wrong End of the Telescope

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Matthew 17:14-21; John 14:7-14

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*Churchmen who look at God, so to speak,
through the wrong end of the telescope,
so reducing Him to pigmy proportions,
cannot hope to end up as more than pigmy Christians.*

J.I. Packer

The markings of someone who really knows God:

Their heart is not troubled.

John 14:1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

Confident in their eternal destination.

John 14:3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Their lives are lived with the depth, empowerment, conviction and excitement that comes from having true faith.

The markings of someone who does not really, personally know God:

Their faith is lacking in such a way that they do not take Christ at his Word.

John 14: 8 Philip *said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

⁹ Jesus *said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

¹¹ Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

They've heard it, they get it (head knowledge)

... but they don't got it (heart knowledge)

They don't fully grasp Jesus' deity.

The work of someone who really, truly gets it:

John 14:12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

¹³ Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

The Key: John 15:4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

The work of someone who does not get it:

Matthew 17:14 When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying,

¹⁵ "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

¹⁶ I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him."

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me."

¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.

¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?"

²⁰ And He *said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

²¹ [But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]"

Application:

- Are we seeing God move mountains in our lives?
- Are we seeing God move mountains in our church's ministry?
- Do we really believe in the God we serve?
- Do we trust that He is Jehovah-Jireh?
- Do we *live daily* in that level of faith?
- Do we know God so well that we readily and actively assume the risks and sufferings of being Christ's witnesses?

Conclusion:

The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.
