

What Not To Say To Someone With Anxiety

BY MCKENNA PRINCING

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- There's a difference between normal, everyday anxiety and having an anxiety disorder.
- If an anxious friend decides to confide in you, it's important to respond in a way that offers support and doesn't minimize their experience.
- If you don't have an anxiety disorder, avoid offering advice without listening to your friend.
- Show support by telling them you're there for them, asking how you can help and listening to what they have to say.

- Don't say: "I know what you mean. I had a panic attack when I saw Seattle rent prices!"
- There's a difference between the uncomfortable but rational anxiety we all get in stressful situations and the sometimes paralyzing but illogical anxiety super anxious people get in situations that aren't actually stressful or threatening. People with anxiety disorders experience anxiety over things others wouldn't and with such intensity that it interferes with their ability to function and do things they enjoy. So unless you have a diagnosable anxiety disorder, comparing your anxiety to someone else's isn't helpful.

- Instead say: “I’m always here for you.”
- You don’t have to understand what your friend is going through to be there for them. Showing you care will help if your friend is self-conscious about their anxiety or has a hard time opening up about it. Listen without judgment to what they have to say and what their experiences are like. Being there for someone even when you can’t relate is a powerful way of showing support.

- Don't say: "Have you tried meditation/yoga/ [insert some other wellness trend here]?"
- Meditation, yoga, deep breathing, and all the other anti-anxiety trends might be helpful for some people - maybe even your ultra-anxious friend - but they might not.
- Extreme anxiety can feel consuming, which means that small things like taking a few deep breaths might not be enough to counter panic in the moment.
- Everyone with anxiety has different relaxation techniques that work for them—and some people need to do something active, like go for a run, instead of sitting and breathing. Don't offer unsolicited advice unless you've been trained to treat people with anxiety disorders or you have one yourself.

- Instead say: “What can I do to help you?”
- If your friend has been dealing with anxiety for a while, chances are they already know what does and doesn’t help them feel better. Ask what they need and then do it, even if their request seems silly to you. (They may ask “could we just not talk at all until I’ve calmed down?”) Showing you’re willing to offer assistance helps anxious people feel like they’re being taken seriously.

- Don't say (for the hundredth time):
“Are you OK?!”
- If your friend told you they're feeling super anxious, they clearly are not OK. Constantly asking them for a status update can make them feel pressured to get better now. When we see someone we care about suffering, our instinct is often to try to fix it. But some things, including anxiety, can't be fixed by outsiders.

- Instead say: “Let’s go to a quieter place or go for a walk.”
- If you want to try to help your friend get out of anxiety mode (and you know them well), you can try grounding them back in reality. Anxiety makes people hyper-focused on the thoughts, emotions and physical sensations that are causing the distress, so to get your friend’s mind off of those things, ask if they want to take a walk, listen to some music or go to a quiet corner. Sometimes we need a supportive push to help break us out of our vicious cycle of panic and panicking about panic. Techniques like this are similar to what trained psychologists and therapists use as part of cognitive behavioral therapy, the gold standard of treatment for people who have anxiety disorders.

- Don't say: "Why aren't you seeing a therapist or why aren't you on medication?"
- There's nothing wrong with showing concern for a friend, but be careful it doesn't come across as accusatory. Suggesting your friend should be doing something can create a sense of shame if they aren't, or make them feel like they're being judged. If they do need to see a counselor or take medication, those are decisions they need to make on their own and at their own pace.

- Instead say: “I’ve noticed you’ve been anxious a lot lately, and I’m concerned.”
- If you notice your friend getting more and more anxious and you know they haven’t sought any kind of professional help, it’s OK to express your concern if it comes from the heart. Focus on how you’ve seen the anxiety change them: maybe they aren’t going to concerts anymore even though they used to love live music, or they haven’t been socializing as much and you’re worried about them being lonely. If they’re open to getting help but feel overwhelmed, offer to do some research on good therapists or to wait for them in the lobby during their first appointment. Remind them that anxiety is treatable, even without medication, and that this isn’t something they have to fight alone.

If someone confides in you that they're feeling anxious or having a panic attack, the most important thing to remember is that the feelings—and telling you about them—are a big deal. It takes trust to show that kind of vulnerability. Listen and respond in a way that doesn't minimize their experience.

Even if you can't take your friend's anxiety away, showing support can help them feel more comfortable and take away some of the stigma that compels them to hide—which is a pretty amazing thing to do for someone you care about.

TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE



THE GOD- SHAPED BRAIN

How Changing Your View of God
Transforms Your Life

Timothy R. Jennings, M.D.

Review of Chapters 1 - 3

- Chapter One - “God is Love”
- Chapter Two - “The Human Brain and What Went Wrong”
- Chapter Three - “The Infection of Fear”

Although we have the
power over what we believe,
what we believe holds real power over us.

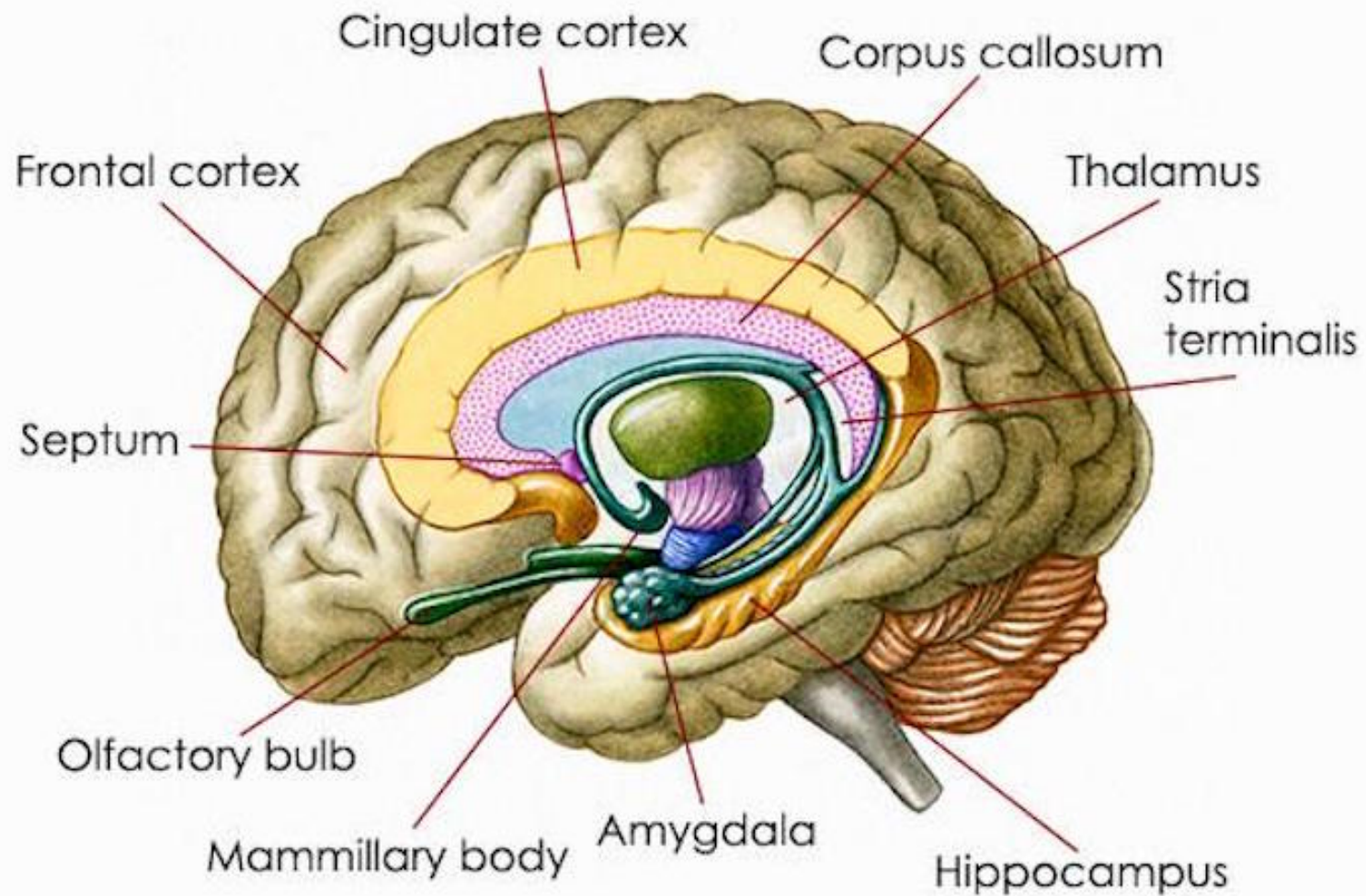
*POWER TO HEAL and
POWER TO DESTROY*



**Remember The Story of
Vance Vanders**

**THE WAY
YOU VIEW GOD
WILL EVENTUALLY
SHOW UP
IN THE WAY YOU
LIVE YOUR LIFE.**

CHARLES H. SPURGEON







Fear and Love are Inversely Proportional

When fear increases, love, growth and healthy thinking decreases.

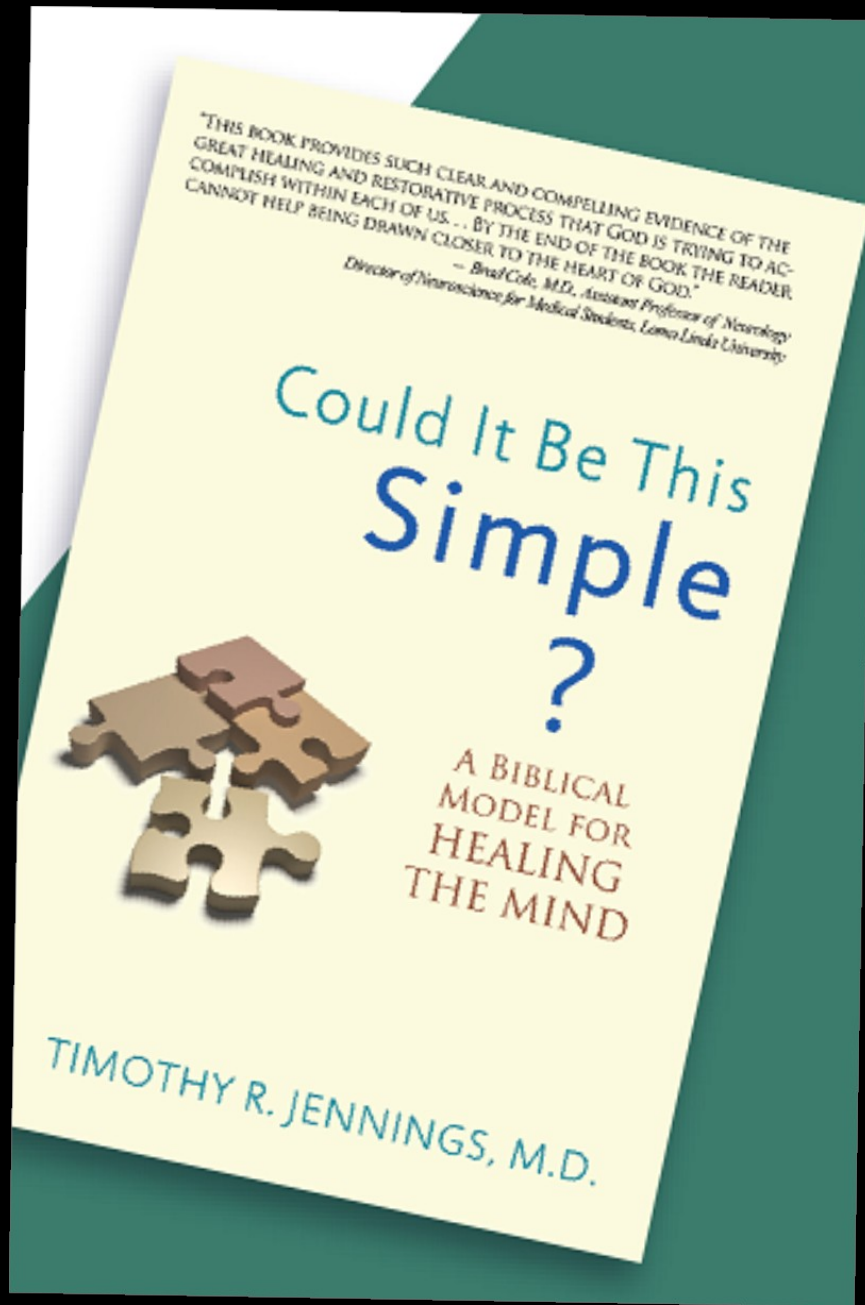
When love increases, not only does fear decrease, but there is improvement in development and healthy thinking



Section One:
God, The Brain and What Went Wrong
Chapter 4: Freedom To Love



The Law of Love and The Law of Liberty



Love can not exist in an atmosphere without freedom.

This is the subject of Dr. Jennings book, *Could It Be This Simple? A Biblical Model For Healing The Mind*

Whenever Liberty is Violated, 3 Predictable Consequences Occur:

- Love Is Always Damaged And Eventually Will Be Destroyed
- A Desire To Rebel Is Instilled In The Heart
- Individuality Is Slowly Eroded And The Person Becomes A Mere Shell

Stories of Joe (Pg 59) and Lynda (Pg 60)

Love Cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom.



This is one of the principles on which life is designed, and our health and happiness are dependent on harmony with it.

God will never violate His own character of love, which means God does not take away freedom or operate contrary to the law of liberty.

The war we are in is the war
against the truth about God -
who He is and what He is like.

*Love cannot flow where lies are
retained, so we war against
those lies in order to restore trust
and reopen the channels of love.*

**“As a man thinks
in his heart,
so he becomes.”**

Proverbs 23:7



“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:5

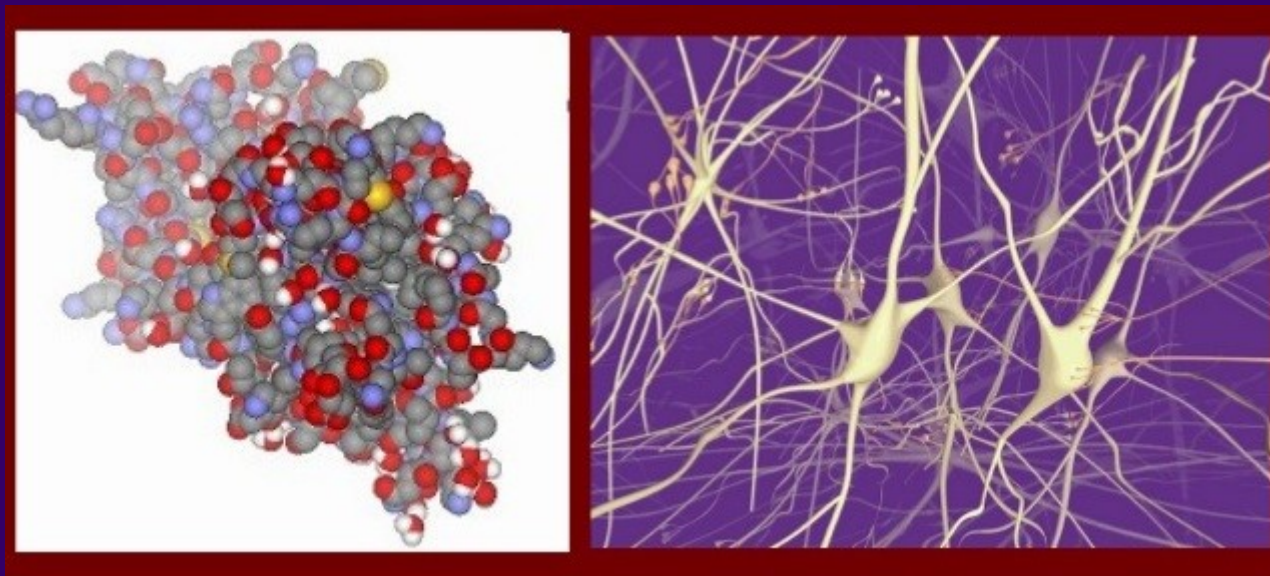
Fertilizer vs. Weed Killer



In Chapter 3, we learned about BDNF, a protein which acts like a fertilizer for our brain. When this protein leaves our DNA, it is it is actually a precursor protein called proBDNF, which will act more like a weed killer on our brain's neurons unless a certain enzyme is present.

It's the activity of the neural circuit which produces that enzyme making the circuit grows stronger and form new connections.

If the circuit is idle, it doesn't produce the enzyme, and over time, the circuit is slowly pruned back.



(example from page 64 regarding foreign language)

This is why it's so important to bring every thought into captivity.

If we don't stop firing unhealthy neural circuits, those unhealthy thought patterns will not go away and our characters will not be conformed into Christ's likeness.

In Matthew 5: 27-28, where Jesus talks about adultery, He says that it is possible to sin in your mind, without even physically performing the action.

Committing sin, even in your imagination, makes unhealthy circuits grow stronger, and blocks healing.

A Scary Picture of God



Is God like the enemy alleges, or is God like Jesus revealed Him to be?

Our eternal salvation depends on which conclusion we draw.

In *Rediscovering The Scandal Of The Cross*, Joel Green and Mark Baker recognize that the Bible provides no basis for a fear-inducing God-construct. They say, “The Scripture as a whole provides no ground for a portrait of an angry God needing to be appeased in atoning sacrifice.”

There is either the God of love, as revealed in Jesus, or a god that is something other than love – a being who requires some action to be taken in order to merit his mercy, forgiveness and grace.



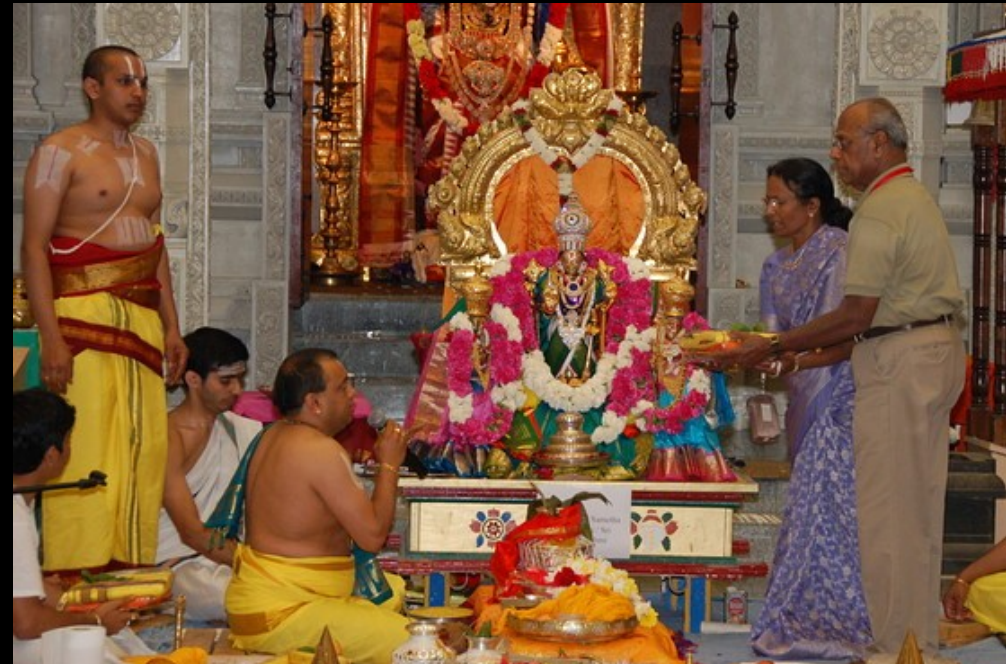
If we make the Cross
the appeasement
of God's anger instead
of the revelation of God's love,
we will end up with
a distorted Christianity.

Brian Zahnd



In every false religion in the world, the central fallacy is a distorted picture of God.

He is either a being who is too busy to care, who is detached and disinterested, or one who is a cruel tyrant of absolute power that must be appeased.



The kind of God you worship changes your brain. Only the worship of a God of love brings healing. Holding to lies obstructs the healing process.

For God so loved
the world..



**What is the result of
worshiping a deity who
does not value freedom?**

Such beliefs violate the law of liberty and, just as in human relationships, the outcome is predictable:

- love is destroyed**
- rebellion is instilled**
- individuality is eroded**

Jesus said that in the end times, the love of most will grow cold.

(Matthew 24:12)

Why? Because of wickedness.

In Romans, Chapter 1, the Apostle Paul says that by their unrighteousness, men suppress the truth. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

***They exchanged the truth
about God for a lie.***

Paul is not talking about atheists or agnostics, but people who claim to believe in God, but deny the truth about Him – His character of love.

When we have a form of godliness, but worship a god like Satan alleges, love is destroyed, fear is increased, and over time we become shadow people, like Joe and Lynda, who have lost, or are losing their ability to reason, people who worship out of fear of punishment, people who become unthinking empty shells and are afraid to have an independent thought.

One example is the notion that faith only means:

God said it. I believe it. And that settles it.

But faith does not mean that we don't ask any questions at all, that we take faith on faith. That type of *blind faith*, far from being a virtue in itself, causes us to become people who rigidly cling to rules, rituals and ceremonies, without understanding what they mean, and then criticizing those who practice different rituals.

“Faith” in an abusive god causes us to become like the abusive god we serve, and use our power to control others and coerce others into our way of living.

**Can You Think Of Any
Example Of This?**

God's promise is to give us new hearts, heal our minds and re-create us from within.

Take Saul of Tarsus as an example.



He was legalistic, rigid and intolerant, and he had no problem using the power of the state to promote his religious beliefs.

But after his conversion, Saul – the apostle Paul – was gracious, liberal in charity, self-sacrificing, patient, and ultimately willing to give his life for others.

Such a drastic change would most certainly require the activation of different brain circuits.

When we worship distorted characterizations of God, love is destroyed and individuality is eroded.

Sadly, many people who do continue to think and reason for themselves, having never heard of the God of love, reject the idea of God altogether and become agnostics or atheists.

God will not win this war for our hearts and restore us to love by the use of might and power.



Not by might nor by power,
But by My Spirit,
Says the LORD of hosts.

Zachariah 4:6 (New King James Version)

Real change only occurs when it happens in the mind, when the thoughts change, thus changing the brain.

Locking a criminal in jail may control his behavior, but it cannot control his imagination.



If the thoughts do not change,
the brain does not change
and the character does not change.

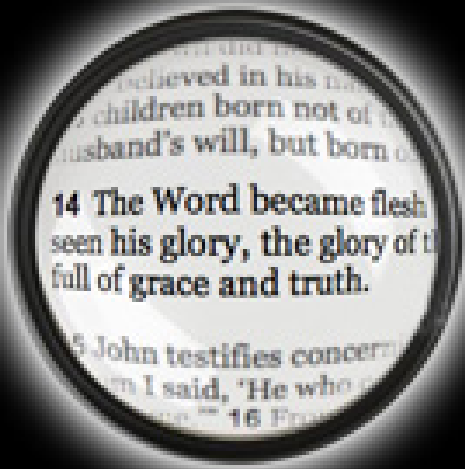
While God has the power to enforce a change in our behavior, He cannot do so without destroying the individual and creating robots.

Love cannot be demanded,

therefore God cannot tell us, “Love me or I will be forced to torture you in hell forever.”

All such concepts –
when compared to the law of love and liberty –
are revealed to be lies.

When Examining God's Word We Need To
Let Jesus Be The Lens Through Which We
Understand Scripture.



The Jesus Lens

Reading Scripture in the Light of His Revelation

*We Need The Living Word To Define
The Written Word.*

Look to the cross for the truth of how God treats sinners. Jesus was not a helpless victim like the two thieves. All power had been given to Him. (John 13:3)

Jesus only had to think, “Be gone,” and the entire mob would have been wiped out.

But in the midst of that horrible abuse, Christ never had a single thought to harm His attackers or to save Himself. He will never use His power in self-interest.

We have freedom and liberty in God!

Love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom. God is love, and what He wants can only be obtained through the use of His methods:

- ♦ TRUTH
- ♦ PRESENTED IN LOVE
- ♦ LEAVING OTHERS FREE

The breach in
love began
when lies about
God replaced
the truth. God's
healing remedy
begins with the
truth.



YOU SHALL
KNOW THE
TRUTH
& THE
TRUTH
SHALL SET
YOU
FREE

JOHN 8:32

Still To Come

- Section 2: The Battle Between The Conflicting Views About God
- Section 3: Embracing The Goodness of God



The End

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