

The Heart of the Father

Most of my writings on this website center around theology and logical observations about theology. The reason why is I am passionate about writing non-fiction, and I love to share my faith through writing. However, I wanted to do something different with this piece. I want to write about the heart of God as I have seen it throughout my Christian journey, and throughout my life. You could call this article my personal testimony of God's goodness in my life. My hope with this article is for you to know the God I know, and know Him for yourself if you don't already. I love to write in topical chunks with a header, so that is how I will present the God I have come to know. Here is the heart of God as I have seen it in my life:

God makes the unimportant feel special:

If life were an elementary school dodge ball game, and people were picking teams, I would be picked last. I have been disabled since I was 20 years old. I am being tested next month to see if I have autism that went undiagnosed my entire life. I'm single at an older age, and I am well aware I'm nobody's prince charming. I've lived an incredibly broken life, and I've expressed that brokenness through many poor decisions over the years. I'm not the brightest, most educated, or most successful person you will meet. By the world's standards, I'm not a winner.

But you would never know that with God. I'm not a Christian by accident. I believe, because God spent four years drawing me to Himself in ways that are pretty unimaginable for someone like me. God pursued me as though I were the most desirable person you ever met. At one point in the process of leading me to Christ, God worked in my short-lived military career so that I would be promoted into the non-commissioned officer ranks by the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. God did all of that for the person you get stuck with on your dodge ball team. And it's not like I immediately believed in Jesus when I realized what God was up to. I resisted God the last year before my conversion more fiercely than I resisted anything else in my life. He still pursued me.

Plenty of people can give that same testimony. The heart of God is beautiful that way. God has the ability to love those the world throws away as if they were treasures to be desired.

God is fun:

God is called our Heavenly Father, and I believe God loves to have fun with His children. Like any good parent, God will make you do your homework, do your chores, and eat your vegetables. But in my journey, I've seen that God will also surprise you with a fun day at the amusement park. I've had God bless me in ways that actually brought me to tears, and I can testify that God will make you feel like the most special person alive at times.

Something I get a geeky kick out of is when God does things that correspond to biblical numbers or works out events in my life that correspond to meaningful dates. He does that in my life all the time, and I think He does it because He knows how much I love it. One story of this both reveals how odd I am, and how fun God is. There was a time in my life where God was

deepening my faith and developing my beliefs in ways I wasn't able to before. It was a season of explosive growth, and it happened around my birthday. I am a goofball at times, and I made a silly prayer that God answered. I asked God to give me a montage. A montage is a training scene in a movie where you see someone prepare for a competition or challenge they will encounter later in the movie. I asked God for a spiritual montage leading up to my birthday where I would experience breakthroughs in my faith that I could celebrate with Him on my birthday. He answered the prayer, and revealed His sense of humor in the process. In a typical 80's movie with a montage, it isn't uncommon for the hero to have a moment after the montage where they realize it doesn't matter whether they win or lose, because for some reason they already won at life. One of my breakthroughs resembled that stereotypical moment you see in 80's movies, and when I thought about it, I thought "Wow. Not only did God give me a montage, He gave me an emotional 80's movie moment of clarity. That's hysterical!"

That is a silly story that reveals how playful and funny God can be. I have another story that is a little more serious. God taught me to enjoy Christmas. I enjoyed Holy Week since I converted to Christianity, but I never got into the Christmas spirit. By the time I converted, I was so turned off by the commercial aspect of Christmas that I generally didn't feel the excitement of the holiday after my conversion. All of that changed in 2023. I already said I have a disability, and I have been seeing doctors for it since I was 23 years old. For a long time, I was taking medications for it that gave me horrible health problems that flew under the radar. In love, God spent two years working in my life to lead me off of that medication and onto a different one without the decision of a doctor. When the medication cleared out of my system, I got my health back. The day that happened was Christmas day. God's gift to me that year was my health, and that changed my attitude towards Christmas. God will take a Grinch and make Christmas special to him.

God is fun, and I'm not the only person He has blessed in special ways. I've seen that He delights in making us feel special.

God is a healer:

I've experienced physical healing miracles in my life before. I once had a health problem for six years that God healed with the prayer of a clergyman. I reached a point of being hopelessly addicted to smoking, and God took away the addiction with a healing miracle. I have smaller testimonies of God doing things with my health. People say God only works through doctors and natural processes, but God is still in the business of healing today.

But that is not the healing I am speaking of. God is a healer of the soul. The message of the gospel is come as you are and let God do the work of changing your life. I have seen He is faithful to do that. There are three wounds I have seen God do a tremendous healing work in my life with. God has greatly healed me of perfectionism. God is healing me of the belief that I am inherently flawed and unlovable. And He has healed me of false guilt people have saddled me with over the years. I had a hard time relating to God at first because of my brokenness, but God lovingly worked in my life to grow me past that. I can't say I don't have insecurities in my

relationship with God, but they are far fewer than they were before. And God isn't done with me yet.

This is God's specialty. He finds people in all their mess, adopts them, loves on them, and makes them new people. It's beautiful what God does in people's lives. God can even take hopeless people and make them shining examples of how He can touch a heart.

God has a soft spot for the troubled:

I thought about making this header "God is merciful," but I chose this title to stick with the personal nature of the piece. I'm the type of person who can't help but get himself in trouble. There are many reasons for why this has been the case over the years, but it is enough to say that I've put myself in some pretty sticky situations. And more times than I can count, God has intervened to protect me from myself. I wrote an article recently about preaching that misrepresents God as an angry deity with no patience for our nonsense. I made a biblical argument against that in that article, and I will make a personal argument against that in this one. If God really was an uptight stickler with no mercy and no patience, He wouldn't have protected me as much as He has throughout my life. The fact that my life isn't in total shambles is a testimony of how much of a soft spot God has in His heart for those who don't know how to look out for themselves.

The message of the gospel is mercy, and the world is full of examples of God's mercy. I believe God loves to give second chances, and I've seen Him give me them after doing something as simple as working up the nerve to ask Him for one.

God will move Heaven and Earth to help us:

God has helped me in some pretty spectacular ways over the years, but one story feels worth sharing. One day during a season where I was dealing with depression, I went into the city to do street evangelism. Because I was depressed, I called it quits before I even began. I didn't have it in me to paste a smile on my face and be social, so I got some wings and headed back to the train station. When I got there, I had a chance encounter with someone I knew from high school.

We weren't friends back in high school, but I bumped into him a couple of times locally over the years, so I knew he was a cool guy. When we started talking, I realized how absurd my depression was, because he was going through something way worse than I was. I won't share personal details of his life, but he had been homeless for a long time and had just moved into a homeless shelter. He needed a job, but he had commitments that made working impossible at the moment. Like me, he was also a Christian, and God used that chance encounter in a large city to help both of us.

In the four months that followed, I tried to help him out. I gave him rides when he needed them, tried to give him jobs to make some money, and tried to help him take care of some basic expenses. According to him, I single-handedly carried him through that season of his life. He was poor and desperate, and God orchestrated an encounter that he said got him through.

If that was all there was to the story, I wouldn't be sharing it. The truth is, that encounter would be as much for my benefit as it was for him. Seven months later it was a new year, and this time I was in crisis. I had problems that I largely had to deal with on my own, and he was the only person I could reasonably turn to for help. He got me through that season of my life. Our chance encounter was something God used to help get my friend back on his feet, but it also put a friend in my life to help me get through something I couldn't get through on my own.

God has the power and love to make two people who barely know each other cross paths in a large city and bless each other in their hours of need. I've had healing miracles in my life before, but the miracles that blow my mind the most are when God works in the world around us in ways that can't be understood. And God will move Heaven and Earth to help a person in need. I've seen His over-the-top love on more than one occasion, and it is another one of His specialties.

God is willing to make the hard decisions for our good:

This last year was difficult. Early on, I entered into a season of trials that ended with a dark season where I suffered in ways I never thought I would suffer. But as it often happens, I saw those dark events get turned for my good. I am better because of what happened this year, and my life is better because of what happened. All of the pain was an expression of God's love. In a moment of praise that wasn't that long ago, I told God "Thank you that You love us enough to make the hard decisions. I believe every time I cried out in pain and confusion it broke Your heart, but You loved me enough to keep me on that road, because You knew it was for my good. I'm grateful You love us enough to walk us through pain and endure our tantrums when You have something better in mind than our immediate comfort."

God loves us enough to do that. That may very well be one of His greatest expressions of love. It's easy to give your children everything they want, but that isn't love. Everything we want isn't good for us. God is the perfect Father who will make the hard choices for us that need to be made, break inside as He watches us suffer, but keep us on those hard roads because of the goodness waiting for us on the other side. And we always thank God for that when we reach our happily ever afters.

God's love will surprise you:

I never thought I would become a Christian. Nothing in my life suggested that would ever happen. I didn't grow up in a Christian home. I wasn't seeking religion before my conversion. I was quite bent on being a 21st century pluralist who believed all roads lead to God. So, when I converted, I had to say to myself "This is the last thing I thought would happen, but it happened."

In some ways, the surprise has grown. My surprise these days isn't that I converted. My surprise these days is that God would lead me to Himself knowing all my failures that would take place after my conversion. God has done some pretty amazing things in my life in this last year, but my Christian journey hasn't been characterized by victory. I've blown it bad at times, but God has still been good to me. I've gone astray more than once, and He keeps bringing me

back to Himself. After all my failures, He never gave up on me. And it's not like I have it all together now either. But for some reason, God's love continues to hold me.

There is a lyric that perfectly captures this. "It wasn't until I stumbled, and made my mistakes, that I could know in my soul how amazing is grace." I'm obviously not the only person to have those thoughts. That's the beauty of God's love. We can never come to a full knowledge of it in this lifetime. It is beyond comprehension, and we can always experience it in new ways.

God revealed Himself:

This is my closing expression of adoration for God. God has revealed Himself in my life, and it is my joy to share the God I know. But God revealed Himself to all mankind 2,000 years ago in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God's Son, and as God's Son, He is God. When Jesus came, He gave us the greatest revelation of the heart of God we will ever get. If a person wants to know the heart of God, they need look no further than the life of Jesus. Jesus loved everyday people, and fellowshiped with those others looked down on. More than once, Jesus stood up for those who were judged by others as low-life sinners. The life of Jesus reflected joy, and more than one Bible teacher has pointed out instances of Jesus displaying humor. And Jesus went to the cross to pay for our sins. Jesus gave us the greatest revelation of God's heart we will ever get.

If you don't know God, you can come to know Him as I have. God's invitation is for whoever will believe. This includes you. If you don't know the message of Christianity, I invite you to check out this ministry's one-page flyer or free booklet. Both are found on this ministry's website. God bless you.