



He was **Patient**, knowing and understanding our frailties. He was and is "**patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance**" (2 Peter 3:9). These are traits that all believers should desire to become

a part of their "personality" and character. The things that drew people to Jesus should be the very things that draw people to us. Jesus has given those who believe in Him His Holy Spirit, who enables us to be constantly changing into His image, "**For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn within a large family**" (Romans 8:29). This will only come about as we **Yield** to Him for who He truly is...LORD of the universe! We must **believe** that He is conforming us into His image, and not resist His will for us. Even as Jesus never drew attention to Himself, (but rather to His Father), even so, we ought to say as John the Baptist did, "**He must increase, but I must decrease**" (John 3:30).

Jesus was sent by God to reveal God the Father to the world. Jesus the Messiah was truly the gift from God. Jesus was born to died on the cross to rescue us from ourselves. All our efforts to improve ourselves, to be successful, to be liked, to be wealthy, are in fact motivated by the same desire : to justify our existence. We all want to matter. Unfortunately, there is no end to this treadmill. Some of us work really hard and seem to be fairly successful at it, or at least tell ourselves that we are making it, and eventually we become prideful and self-righteous. Others among us, who are honest with themselves, admit they can't keep up or fail repeatedly and eventually become burnt out and discouraged and give up trying. **And This Is Repentance : Coming to the end of ourselves, seeing that we are irrevocably broken, recognizing that willpower and determination will never be enough because "good enough" will always be out of reach, and then turning to the One Who is sufficient to rescue us, Jesus Christ.** Here is what He says: "**Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke, and learn of Me, for I Am gentle and humble in heart, and I will give rest for your souls. For My burden is easy, and My yoke is light.**" (Matthew 11:28-30) The way of salvation is to place our trust 0% in ourselves and 100% in Jesus to get us into heaven. Our mistakes and failures, the way we've hurt others, and the darkness in our own hearts disqualify us from the holiness that God requires for entrance into heaven. And our successes, our accomplishments, and the way we have loved and served God and others will never be good enough to get us into heaven, because hidden selfish motives taint even our good works. Only Jesus, the Son of God, lived a life with no mistakes, perfectly in tune with God, and He is willing to be our substitute. **We can't get to heaven on our own credentials, but thank God that Jesus lets us borrow His.**



God's mind is absolutely undivided. In practical application, this means that **His sovereignty** can never be separated from **His love**; **His grace** cannot be separated from **His omniscience**; **His judgment** cannot be separated from either **His mercy** or **His wrath**. **God is absolutely constant** because **His faithful**

**providence** cannot be separated from any other of **His attributes**. **God is whole and complete**. Under every circumstance, He is never confused or uncertain about what to do. He is always headed in the same direction, which is to complete His purpose.

It is absolutely impossible for Him to do anything that is not wise and at the same time loving. It is He Who tells us how to live and how to be like Him. What God is has awesome ramifications for us because we are so different, and He wants us to be like Him, to be one with Him, to be whole, to be complete, to be undivided in mind like Him.

There are problems here because becoming this way requires a measure of cooperation from us. Compared to God, our mind is all over the place, and thus we are so easily distracted from our focus.

### GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO US THROUGH JESUS



If we want the most accurate picture of God, we don't need to look any further than Jesus Christ. In Jesus we meet God as God really is. "**Anyone who has seen Me,**" Jesus said, "**has seen the Father**"

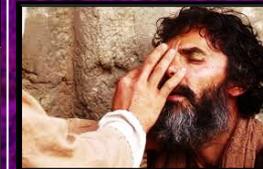
(John 14:9). The Son of God, Who is united from eternity to the Father and the Spirit, is now also joined to humanity because of His incarnation—His becoming a real flesh-and-blood human being. "**And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.**" (John 1:14). We summarize this by saying that **Jesus is both fully God and fully human**. That fact will never change, because He remains, in His divine nature and His human nature, the One mediator between God and humanity for all time. "**For there is One God; there is also One mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, Himself human.**" (1 Timothy 2:5). His Incarnation did not end with His death or with His ascension. It continues forever. He was resurrected bodily and He ascended bodily. He will return bodily, the same as He departed. So when we say Jesus Christ, we are referring to God, and we are also referring to humanity. The miracle of the Incarnation is not something that happened "**once upon a time,**" now long past and simply affecting one person, Jesus. He has now become our Lord and Savior, not as an external agent, but from the inside, in His humanity. He changed the life and course of humanity forever!

## JESUS HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S NATURE

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, and through Whom He made the universe" (Hebrews 1:1-2). One of the main stumbling points for both Christians and non-believers is reconciling the differences between their view of God in the Old Testament and their idea of who Jesus is in the New. These views can appear to contradict each other unless we understand this important truth: the Old Testament only gave partial revelation of God's nature, but **Jesus gives us the clear and perfect image**. God has always tried to communicate with us. He sent messengers, prophets and kings to show us His intentions. Each one gave a portion of the truth. But we could not fully understand God's character by the limited revelation they conveyed, so God sent Jesus to communicate His full nature to us.

## "THE HUMANITY OF JESUS"

"Although He had **"no beauty that we should desire Him..."** (Isaiah 53:2), it was His **"Personality"** that drew men to Him. He was a man of great character. He had a **Compassionate Nature**. He had compassion on the crowds **"because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"** (Matthew 9:36). Because of His compassion for them, He healed their diseases (Matthew 14:14; 20:34), and because of their hunger, He compassionately created enough food to feed more than 5000 (Matthew 15:32). Jesus was **Serious and Focused**. He had a mission in life and never got sidetracked from it, knowing the weightiness of it and the shortness of time. His attitude was that of a **Servant**. **"He did not come to be served, but to serve"** (Mark 10:45). **Kindness and Selflessness** characterized His personality. Jesus was **submissive** to His Father's will when He came to earth and subsequently went to the cross. He knew that dying on the Cross was the only payment His Father could accept for our salvation. He prayed the night of His betrayal by Judas, **"O My Father, if it be possible, take this cup of suffering from Me: but let what You want be done, not what I want"** (Matthew 26:39).



He was a submissive Son to Mary and Joseph, as well. He grew up in a normal (sinful) household, yet, **"He continued in subjection to them..."** (Luke 2:51). He was **Obedient** to the Father's will. **"He learned obedience through the things that He suffered"** (Hebrews 5:8). **"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One Who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin"** (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus had a heart of **Mercy and Forgiveness** - **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"** (Luke 23:34). **"...If we admit that we have sinned, He will forgive us our sins..."** (1 John 1:9). He was also **Loving** in His relationships - **"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus"** (John 11:5). **John was known as the disciple "whom Jesus loved"** (John 13:23). He had a reputation for being **Good and Caring**. He healed often and in most places where He went in order that they might know who He was! Truly He proved to be the Son of the living God by all the miracles He did, all the while showing concern for the afflictions of those around Him.

**Honest/Truthful** - He never violated His own Word. He spoke Truth wherever He went. He lived a life we could follow explicitly. **"I Am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE..."** (John 14:6). At the same time, He was **Peaceable**. He did not argue His case, nor try to bully His way into people's hearts. Jesus was **Intimate** with His followers. He spent quality and quantity time with them. He coveted their fellowship, taught them, and helped them focus on what was eternal. He was also intimate with His Heavenly Father. He prayed to Him regularly, listened, obeyed, and cared about God's reputation. (Angered at the moneychangers who were buying and selling in the temple, He said firmly and **Authoritatively**, **"It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you have made it a robbers den!"**) He was obviously a **Strong**, but quiet **Leader**. Everywhere He went (until the inevitable decline), the people followed Him, eager to listen to His teaching.