

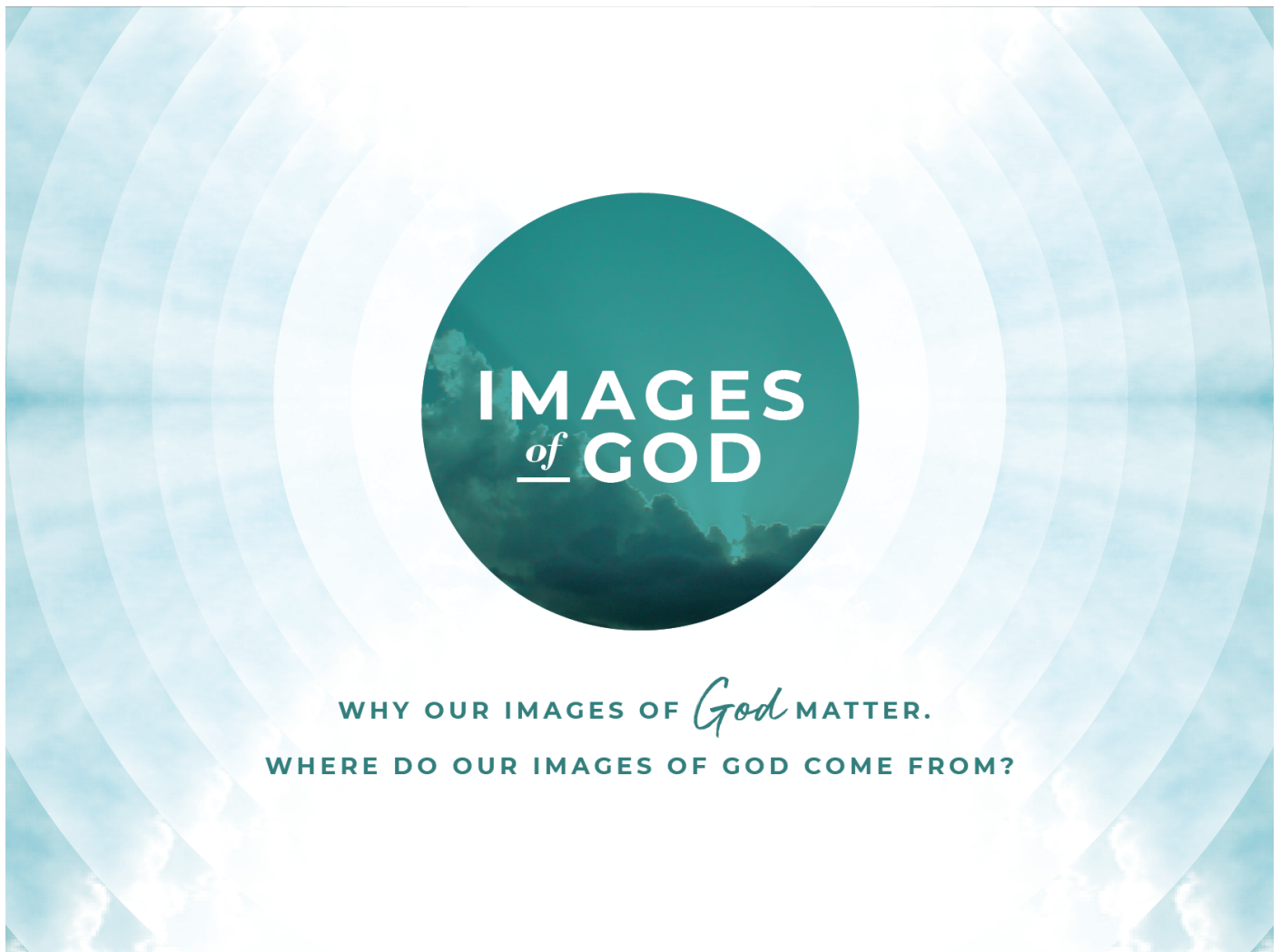
# York St Small Groups

## Sermon Based Studies

SUNDAY 31 May 2020

**Images of God – Why do they matter?  
Where do they come from?**

Ephesians 1:17



**These studies are designed to be explored after hearing the Sunday sermon and also to be accompanied by a time of prayer/sharing.**

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**YORK STREET**  
CHURCH OF CHRIST

## **For personal reflection –**

### **Take some time to ponder your current image of god.**

Here are some questions you may like to consider around your image of God. Take some time to pray first, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what you need to see.

**Be as honest as you can be.**

**As you reflect on these questions, note any negative components in your God picture. Can you remember where these came from? How do these negative components affect your relationship with God?**

1. What are you most overriding images (pictures) of God?
2. Do you believe that God wants to relate with you personally and individually?
3. Do you feel that God is for you or against you?
4. When life goes wrong, do you assume that God is punishing you?
5. When did you first become aware of God's personal love for you?
6. How would you describe your trust level when it comes to God? Have things happened to you that made you doubt that God is trustworthy?
7. Do you see God as Abba? Abba is best translated "Dear Father".
8. Do you genuinely feel loved by a loving God? If not, why not?
9. Do you feel you need to earn God's grace?
10. Do you believe you need to achieve God's affirmation?
11. Do you sense that God will withdraw His blessings if you don't measure up?

12. Do you see God as an angry judge? If you do well you will be blessed, if you sin you will be punished?
13. What are your worst fears about God?
14. When do you find yourself pulling away from God?
15. How do you think God sees you?
16. What do you think God expects of you?
17. How do your feelings about God tell you what you view God as?
18. Consider your predominant mental images of your mother or father. How might these have influenced your relationship with God, or shaped your concept of God, for better or worse?
19. Is your image of God consistent with the God Jesus revealed (it might be easier to answer this one after week 3 of our sermon series)?
20. What would it mean for you to begin redrawing your picture of God? How would this affect your everyday way of life?

## FOR SMALL GROUPS TO DISCUSS...

**If possible, ask your group members to spend some time reflecting on their images of God BEFORE you meet as a group, using the questions on the previous two pages as a guide.**

They are challenging questions, so looking at them in private may be helpful for some.

1. As much as you are comfortable, share with your group what your time of reflection was like. Did you find it easy or difficult? Were there new insights? Is it possible that some of your images of God might need to be re-drawn?
2. What were your images of God you had growing up? Was God good? Was He approachable? Was He distant? Was He passive? Was He mean?
3. Understanding God's character is the basis of understanding the Bible. Nothing will enrich our study of the Bible more than seeing God as He truly is. What does **Ephesians 1:17-18** tell us about knowing Him better?
4. Why do so many of us have a distorted view of God? What keeps us from knowing him more deeply and accurately?
5. What experiences have most shaped your spiritual life for the better? What has sparked transformation? What's moved you from head to heart, from abstract to concrete, from God-out-there to God-right-here?
6. Below are statements from two great Christian Spiritual Leaders. Choose one and discuss...

AW Tozer said, "Always the most revealing thing about the church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is more eloquent than her speech."

William Temple, the great Anglican minister and spiritual leader rather provocatively observed that if people live with a wrong view of God, the more religious they become, the worse the consequences will be, and eventually it would be better for them to be atheists!

7. Break into smaller groups (2's or 3's) to pray into any specific things that may have come up for each other during this discussion, or personal reflection time.

### **AN ALTERNATIVE - GET CREATIVE**

Take a piece of paper and draw images and symbols that depict your image of God as a child, adolescent, young adult and currently. Show it to the others in your group and explain what you see, then ask what they see.