

Uniqueness of the Christian God (and why it matters)

- I. **God is Personal (*John 1:14; Matt. 6:9; Mark 14:36*)**
 - a. God can be known and understood in a personal sense (purpose)
 - b. Biblical references: *Matt. 6:9*—Jesus tells disciples to call him Father
 - c. Personalness is irreducible and fundamental in the universe (we're not just a collection of atoms and by accident become alive)
 - d. This by nature gives dignity to the individual; you matter!

- II. **God is Absolute (biblical God distinct- both personal & absolute) (*Isaiah 44:6*)**
 - a. God is self-sufficient
 - b. God is fundamental (not able to be broken down into parts)
 - c. Why this matters? We cannot have a universal moral law and justice without an absolute being behind it; otherwise, everything is relative.
 - d. This means that there is such thing as right and wrong; not *might makes right*

- III. **God is Relational (*Mark 14:36; Matthew 3:16-17*)**
 - a. God did not simply become relational after he created others, but he is relational in essence because of his tri-une nature (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
 - b. Therefore God wants to know us and wants us to know him; we were created to know him and be known (*John 17:3*)
 - i. Our being is not simply doing religious rituals or trying to appease an angry god, but rather living in relationship with God
 - c. Part of our being image bearers of God is living out our relationships with others; we are not meant to go it alone; our individual identity is shaped by this reality. Being made in the image of a relational God makes us inherently relational. Our relationships thrive when they are about service and mutual submission; also differs from various eastern religions

- IV. **God is Love (*1 John 4:8*)**
 - a. This is quite different from the ancient deities of the Near East and Mediterranean world
 - b. God is love is expressed most in Jesus laying down his life for us (*1 John 4:10*) and our response to his love is following his commands (*1 John 5:3, 2 John 1:6*) which causes to properly enact God's love towards each other.
 - c. Life is about expressing love to God and for one another; not fighting for what we want or what we think we are entitled to

- V. **So what?**
 - a. What this should not do: create an 'us versus them' mentality or a condescending attitude towards people of other faiths
 - b. We should find common ground to those with different beliefs, but also recognize the uniqueness of Christian claims and why they matter personally and to society
 - c. As God's image bears, we are to live into these distinct attributes of who God is
 - d. God has a plan for you to know Him personally
 - e. Christian faith gives a healthy balance toward the individual & collective society