

Who Defines God?

By Lynn Warner

To give a testimony is to affirm a fact of truth or genuineness. But who defines truth and answers the questions: Who is God? Who am I? Why are we here? The New Testament is filled with testimony – the testimony of Gabriel, Simeon, and Anna; the testimony of John the Baptist, Jesus, the Father, and the disciples. And we also are instructed to testify.

God defines God; God defines Jesus as His Beloved Son Whom He delights in, and He gives Him the Spirit without measure. And God defines us: who we are, what we need, and why we are here. Jesus reveals God the Father and baptizes those who believe in Him with the Holy Spirit. We who believe are given the power to become God's children, and Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit. Jesus abides in God's love, and we abide in Jesus' love and love others. All these relationships are our Testimony. John tells us the testimony we share with others: *"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son does not have life"* (1 John 5:11-12 ESV).

Jesus, in His prayer for His disciples in John 17:3, defined the eternal life God gives us: *"And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."* This "knowing" is relational and intimate, not just a mental knowing. In 1 John 1:3, John describes in his testimony the relational fellowship of eternal life: *"That which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."*

Eternal life is knowing God and being known by Him. To be known by Him is to be loved by Him. God loves Jesus. At the baptism He declared publicly: *"You are My beloved Son; with you I am well pleased"* (Mark 1:11b). God the Father loves Jesus, and Jesus loves us. We abide in His love: Jesus said, *"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in My love"* (John 15:9). John testifies of this love given to us in 1 John 3:1: *"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God, and so we are."*

As His children, we are to be filled with all the fullness of God. Paul tells us how we may be filled with all the fullness of God in Ephesians. He prays that we may be granted *"to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God"* (Ephesians 3:16b-19).

Being loved changes everything. We become connected to God, Jesus, ourselves, and others. We are given the strength to experience real fellowship. And God gives us discernment to know when a relationship isn't real. God defines reality and truth. God defines us – when we trust (believe) in Him, He defines us as His beloved children. And He relates to us as His beloved children – we have special fellowship with Him and His other children. And we have the gifts that come with His love. He wants us to abide in His love and to share – to testify of His great love and forgiveness. *"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me"* (John 17:22-23). Amen.