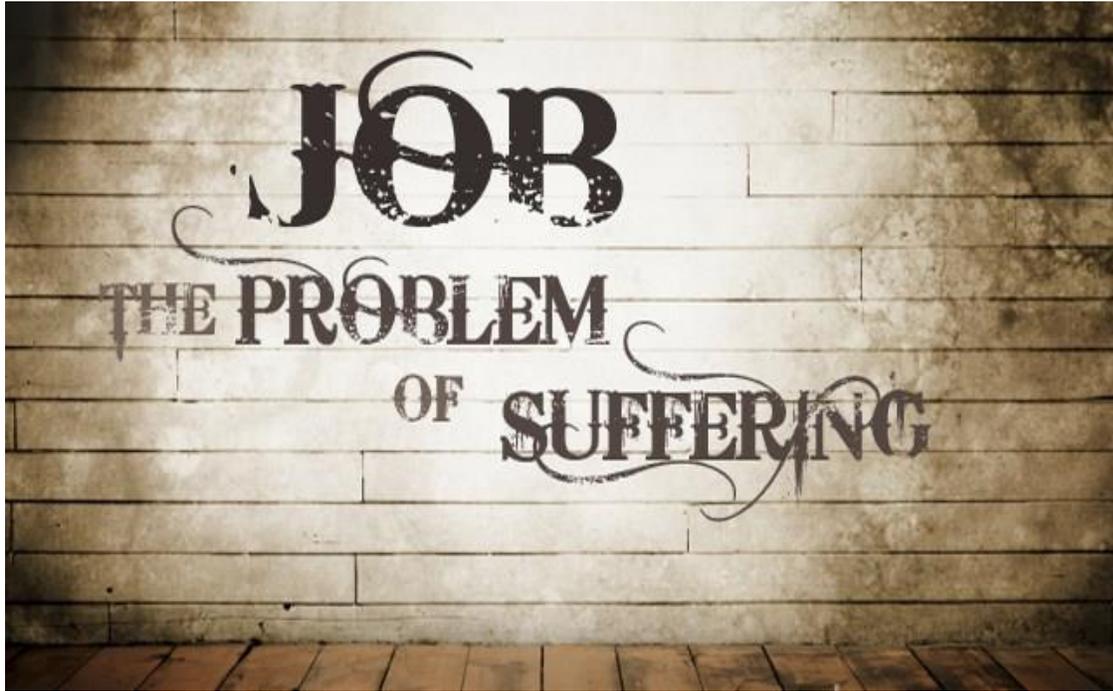


**Daily Life with Christ. Love-40: Understanding the objective, universal, unchanging, eternal nature of proper love. Job-2, Discussion of God's gender, wings, and transcendence.**



**Characters:** **George** is an evangelical Christian who is a biblical scholar with expertise in the original languages of Scripture. However, he rejects philosophy because he believes it corrupts one's view of the Word of God. He identifies himself as a Bible-only believer. **Stephen** is also a biblical scholar with expertise in the original languages of Scripture. However, he is philosophically informed. He identifies himself as a philosophical realist (as per the realism of Aristotle and Aquinas). He is adamant that philosophy is important to keep the believer from falling prey to modern philosophical ideas that have infected Christianity in respect to views of God, the Bible, and the spiritual life. **Richard** is an atheist who is a diligent follower of Richard Dawkins. He loves to engage Christians in attempts to show them how wrong they are about believing in God, let alone that He could be loving and good. He loves to destroy Christians' faith.

**After Richard leaves, George criticizes Stephen for his genderless portrayal of God to Richard.**

**George:** I did not know that you did not believe God was male. That just shows me how much philosophy has corrupted your view of God. This just demonstrates how important it is to eschew all philosophy and just follow the Bible. We do not need philosophy.

**Stephen:** Everyone does philosophy. It is just a matter of good or bad philosophy—real philosophy grounded in reality or a philosophy that is created by the mind.

**George:** I don't do philosophy. I just follow the Bible.

**Stephen:** Does God have wings?

**George:** No! Of course not!

**Stephen:** But the Bible literally says God has wings. Psalm 36:7, How precious *is* Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. Psalm 57:1, To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave.> Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until *these* calamities have passed by. Psalm 61:4, I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah. Psalm 63:7, Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. Jeremiah 49:22, Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, And spread His wings over Bozrah; The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.

**George:** But everyone knows God does not have wings. He is not a giant bird.

**Stephen:** On what basis do you know this under "Bible-onlyism"? The Bible does not tell you that He does not have wings. In fact, it says the opposite.

**George:** It is just common sense. Men do not have wings.

**Stephen:** So, your standard is a man? But doesn't the Bible teach that God is not a man in Numbers 23:19 and 1 Sam 15:29?

**George:** Those passages say He is not a man in that He does not lie.

**Stephen:** So, are you saying that He is like a man who always tells the truth—an infinite truth-telling Man?

**George:** We are made in His image so He is like us.

**Stephen:** Do believe that God has eyeballs (2 Chronicles 16:9), a face (Lev 20:6), hands (Ex 7:5), arms (Psa 89:10)?

**George:** Of course not, those who anthropomorphisms.

**Stephen:** But the Bible does not tell you that they are anthropomorphisms . . . that word is not in the Bible. Seems like you are doing philosophy.

**George:** No, because the Bible says God is invisible, immaterial. If He is immaterial, then he has no material forms.

**Stephen:** Why can't God have invisible and immaterial eyes, a face, hands, and arms? True Bible-only advocates, like Finis Dake, in his Bible-only theology, make that claim. He rejects the idea of God having wings, but accepts that God has a body, soul, and spirit. In fact, he teaches that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each have a personal body, soul, and spirit and distinct from all others. At least his position is consistent with only comparing Scripture with Scripture. He takes the passages where God is described as having body parts and then integrates them into passages which teach that God is Spirit (John 4:24). He also ends up in heresy because

he ends up with three gods with three immaterial bodies instead of one triune God. Can you tell me based on the Bible alone why you reject his views?

**George:** As I first noted, my criticism of you is your claim that God is not male. That sounds so liberal . . . like these people who go out and call God mother nature.

**Stephen:** Like I said, God is neither male nor female. Gender, like body parts, are biological characteristics creatures. God is the Wholly Other—totally outside of any category of creatures.

**George:** But the Bible describes God in male terms, like Father. The Bible does not call God “Mother.”

**Stephen:** The Bible also describes God with hands, feet, a back, and eyeballs. The Bible also describes God in female or motherly terms (Hosea 11:3-4; 13:8; Deut. 32:18; Isa 66:13; 49:15; Psa 131:2; 123:2-3). But God neither has human parts or gender.

**George:** Then what about all the passages where God is referred to as “He”?

**Stephen:** “He” is the appropriate pronoun for several reasons. First, God is a person (has intellect and will). “He” captures that. Second, for one to say “She” is to put God in a gender category, which is totally inappropriate.

**George:** I still think it was a bad witness to tell Richard, the atheist, that God is beyond our categories . . . especially when you told him that God is not under human moral categories.

**Stephen:** Do you believe that God is Holy?

**George:** Yes, of course.

**Stephen:** While holy does have implications regarding righteousness, the core meaning of holy is “totally set apart” for all others—He is transcendent—He is not like us—He is far greater not just in degree, but in kind. God is indeed Holy. This is what we need to focus on in our next meeting with Richard.

(Pdf copy at <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/042418.pdf>; for background and complete series, see <http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>).