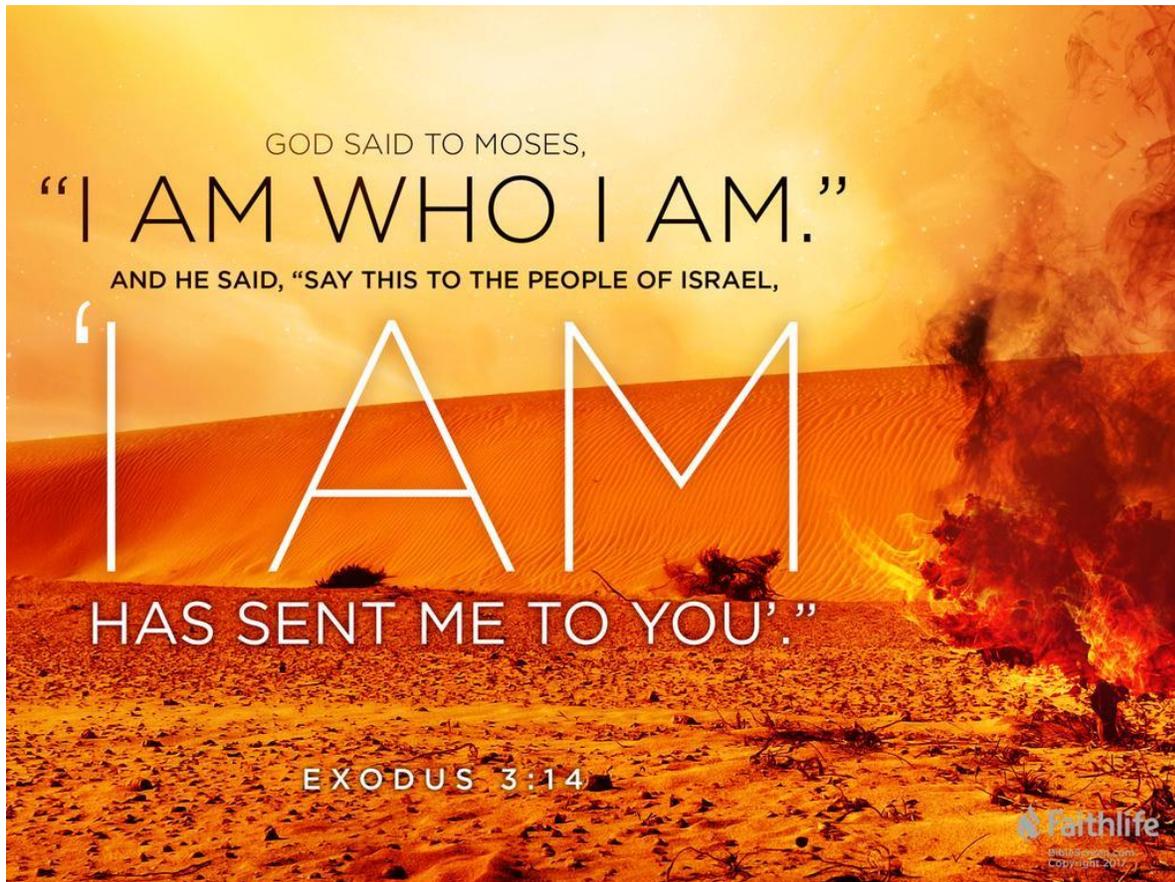


**Daily Life with Christ. Love-41: Understanding the objective, universal, unchanging, eternal nature of proper love. Job-3, continuing discussion of God's gender and introduction to God as BE/IS/AM/Esse (Exod. 3:14).**



**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 to show them how wrong they are about believing in God. He loves to trash the notion of God, especially that God is loving and good. He enjoys destroying the faith of Christians. He sees this as his "mission" in life.

**(In the previous conversation, George has been criticizing Stephen for his statement that God is not male).**

**George:** I have been thinking about what you said about God not being male, because as you say, ‘male is a biological category of created things and God is not part of creation. God transcends all categories of beings in creation.’

**Stephen:** That’s right.

**George:** I am still having trouble with the idea that God is not male. First, if He is neither male nor female, does that not mean that He is neuter?

**Stephen:** No. To put God in gender categories—male, female, or neuter—is a category mistake. It is like trying to put God in categories of race: white, black, brown, or to talk about how much God weighs, or how big He is, or if He conforms to human moral categories.

**George:** YOU ARE DEAD WRONG about God not being in a moral category. I hope you do not say that when Richard the atheist rejoins us. His whole point is that God is an immoral monster not worthy of worship. If you assert that God is not moral, you conceded to Richard’s portrayal of God. But before he comes, I want to talk a little more about God not being male. If God is not male, then why did Jesus call Him Father? Why are we to address God as Father in our prayers as per Matthew 6:9? “*Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.*” Jesus did not tell us to pray to God the Mother.

**Steven:** But this is not a biological category. If this was a biological category, namely that God the Father is the biological father of Jesus, then who is the Mother? Surely, you do not agree with Islam that the Christian Trinity includes Mary as the mother. You do realize that God the Father is a title that precedes the incarnation? God the Father is the eternal Father of the eternal generation of the eternal Son (John 1:14; 3:18). If this is a biological category, how does a Father beget the Son? Isn’t begetting something mothers do? Likewise, we Christians are begotten of the Father (1 Pet 1:3). This makes no sense if we think of Father in biological or gender terms. “Father” is not pointing to God’s gender. The category of gender does not apply to God—again, this is a category mistake. It is like saying how big are numbers, how much do numbers weigh, what color are numbers?

**George:** I think you are giving into modernism and the plain reading of the Bible which depicts God as male. I think your logic and philosophy cause you to distort God’s Word.

**Steven:** Well, I think by placing God in human moral categories and making Him a giant Man is paganistic. Recall how the Greeks and Romans depicted their gods in male and female terms—in fact, the gods were very much like people—just more powerful. Much of modern Christianity sees God in very human terms—just a giant invisible human moral being who exists mainly to bless the believer. Most view God as a Giant Genie whose function is to make their life better. There is very little interest in understanding God as such. The lack of knowledge of and interest in God as such today is astonishing—even among Christians. Even study of the Word of God is not generally motivated by a pure desire to understand God as much as it is to get His blessings. Seems like most do not study the Bible for learning theology of God as much as for personal temporal blessings. Do megachurches focus on theology, learning about the nature of God, or do they focus on positive thinking and getting more goodies from God?

**George:** I do not agree with your assessment of Christianity. Plenty of believers study the Bible so they can better understand and love God. Besides, can you show me in the Bible where it teaches God absolutely exceeds all human or creation categories.

**Steven:** Yes, there are three universal and undeniable theological and philosophical principles in Scripture that speak to God's transcendence: God is IS/BE/EXISTENCE (Exodus 3:14); God is the invisible and all-powerful cause of all that exists, Romans 1:19-20; and God is Holy (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). These descriptions take us beyond all of the figures of speech that describe God in terms of having wings, arms, hands, and a back. We must start with absolute and universal principles, which preclude God being composed or having accidents like gender. Besides, if God was male, then what about women also created in the image of God? Seems like that image refers to intellect and will, not biological, unless you think God is both male and female.

**George:** What do you mean that God is IS/BE/EXISTENCE as per Exodus 3:14?

**Steven:** Exodus 3:14 is the central passage in the Word of God on the nature of God. It is the only passage in the Word of God that completely describes His intrinsic "nature." It is the most proper name of God. The Latin phrase used throughout church history is *Esse*, to be.

**George:** How so?

**Steven:** Because the name is the verb of existence. It is not a noun or an adjective or even a nature/thing. It is the verb of existence. You see, everything that exists is comprised of two things: a nature and the existence of that nature. The difference between me and a unicorn is that I have a nature that exists and a unicorn has a nature that does not exist. God is existence, the great I AM does not refer to God as a thing but as existence as such. As existence, He gives all things existence every instant. God is literally BE, not a nature that "bes"/exists, but Existence as such. Quite literally, it is not I AM, but AM. Moreover, if God had a nature in addition to its existence, then the question could be raised, Who gave that nature existence? He is just existence! His nature is BE. By the way, this BE is the highest concept of God, so any view of God that is less than this is a lesser God. By the way, God as IS/AM is the same God one runs into by looking at creation philosophically and understanding what is required to keep all things in existence as per Romans 1:19-20—since natures in and of themselves do not have the power for their own existence. To orient to God as *Esse* revolutionizes one's view of God by enabling one to transcend all pagan categories and concepts of God—including gender. Quite literally 'we live, and move, and be in BE' (Acts 17:28). Given this, it is not hard to understand why God said not to make any image of Him—there is no image (noun/thing), including gender. He is Existence as such, which literally cannot be depicted since quite literally existence is not a concept in and of itself; rather, it is a judgment.

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