

# God & me,

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## A C T U A L L Y

**H**all of Fame player and coach Yogi Berra once said that baseball is 90% mental ... and the other half physical. He humorously acknowledges that our thinking controls how we perform in life.

### **Our stories**

We arrive in adulthood with a jumble of beliefs and feelings about God and ourselves, all shaped by past people, events, and circumstances. Sometimes, the meaning we draw from our history is flawed or mistaken and, left unchecked, can influence our lives forever.

This can be challenging to sort out—to know what is true and what isn't.

For example, some view God as a harsh, judgmental 'Scorekeeper' who punishes us for our moral failings. Others see Him as abandoning, distant, or indifferent, having given up on us.

Similarly, if we grow up with the 'message' that we are hopelessly flawed, worthless, or have no purpose in life, we will likely experience the effects of these beliefs throughout our adult lives.

This is the power of the past in the present.

What we think about God and how we experience Him, just like how we think about and experience ourselves, is grounded in our lived experience.

### **The most important thing about us**

Some say that what we think about God is the most important thing about us.<sup>1</sup>

Others believe that knowing what God thinks about us is most critical.<sup>2</sup>

Maybe these are ‘two sides of the same coin.’

*God and me, Actually*, is a nine-week expedition into the Old Testament book of Zechariah.

In it, we get an astonishing picture of God and what He thinks about us.

Note the comma in the title. It introduces the word “actually,” which means “*what is true, what is real.*”

Zechariah 3:1-7 challenges any distorted beliefs or emotions formed in the past by giving us a window into the objective truth of who God is and how He thinks of us.

It’s natural to feel intimidated by a 2,600-year-old text filled with crazy images. Relax! We’re here to guide you and help you thrive. Be curious and open. Good things ahead!

**actually**  
adverb  
[ak-choo-uh-lee]  
*What is true, what is real.*

Why Zechariah 3:1-7? Is it even relevant for today?

While the Old Testament was not written *to* us, it was written *for* us. It provides a front-row seat to observe God’s personality and purpose. We learn what matters to Him, how He thinks, and experience how He feels and responds. We discover His passion and plans for His creation and, on occasion, even get a glimpse of His humor.

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<sup>1</sup> “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” (A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, 1961).

<sup>2</sup> “How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us.” (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 1941).

Zechariah 3:1-7 addresses foundational 21<sup>st</sup>-century issues that influence how we understand and live our lives today:

- Growing past guilt and shame
- 21<sup>st</sup>-century life in a 'supernatural world'
- When we're stuck and need a way Home
- What God is *really* like
- How God thinks about us
- Finding our true identity
- How to know God

Zechariah presents a jarring picture of what God is like and what we mean to Him and gives us practical wisdom for growing a transforming friendship.

## CALENDAR

Week of:

### SEPTEMBER

- |    |                |                            |
|----|----------------|----------------------------|
| 16 | Session One:   | Interacting with the Bible |
| 23 | Session Two:   | The Story Behind the Story |
| 30 | Session Three: | A Supernatural World       |

### OCTOBER

- |    |               |                              |
|----|---------------|------------------------------|
| 7  | Session Four: | Accusation and Vulnerability |
| 14 | Session Five: | Sin and Forgiveness          |
| 21 | Off           |                              |
| 28 | Session Six:  | Our True Identity            |

### NOVEMBER

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|----|----------------|---------------------------|
| 4  | Session Seven: | What God is Really Like   |
| 11 | Session Eight: | Fidelity with God         |
| 18 | Session Nine:  | A Transforming Friendship |
| 25 | Off            |                           |

### DECEMBER

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| 2 | Small Group Celebrations—Have a party! |  |
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