

# PERCEPTION OF GOD



## THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

The pages that follow are an assessment of sorts, but it is not a typical assessment. Assessments are often quantitative. You're asked a series of questions, and the questions produce a score or graphs. Quantitative assessments have an important place, but this isn't one of them. This assessment might be thought of as qualitative. Don't expect numbers or graphs. Simply expect a series of thoughtful questions.

The questions do not have right or wrong answers. Even more, they will often be answered in degrees. To a certain degree, you'll see things from one perspective. To another degree, you'll see things from a different perspective. Some of your answers may even conflict with other answers. Let the conflicts stand. The purpose of this exercise is to gain greater insight into your own perception of God. Your perception of God may be simple, or it may be complex. Either way, engage the questions boldly to carefully consider your perception of God.

As you go through the questions, do so prayerfully and thoughtfully. By prayerfully, it is not meant that you'd pray a quick prayer and move on. Rather, talk to God as you go. Ask for uncommon insight. Ask him to bring influential memories to mind that have influenced your perception of who he is. By thoughtfully, it is not meant that you'd think overly hard about this, as if it is a math problem. Rather, let the questions linger. No doubt, some of the questions won't do much for you. That's expected. Skip those. But it's also expected that you'll come into at least a few questions that give cause for pause. Make the most of these.

The questions are grouped by categories. As always, don't limit yourself to the questions—color outside the lines.

## **FAMILY**

What were your earliest thoughts of God? Did you voice these thoughts? If so, how were your thoughts received?

As best you can tell, what was your family-of-origin's god? Was it God? Was it something else (money, achievement, adventure, escapism, social status)? Was the family god said to be God but was actually something else? If you had multiple family experiences in your early years, through divorce or foster situations, consider each of those families or the most influential of them.

Generally speaking, was your relationship with your parents, or those who raised you, healthy or unhealthy? As best you can tell, to what degree is their representation of authority and leadership in your life now projected on God?

## **PERCEPTION OF GOD**

## **FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS**

Life has seasons. As best you can, broadly group your life into seasons (young years, young adult, etc...). For each season write the names of significant relationships and friendships.

As you consider the seasons and relationships in those seasons, what relationships positively influenced your perception of God? Why?

As you consider the seasons and relationships in those seasons, what relationships negatively influenced your perception of God? Why?

## **EXPERIENCES**

Life has hardship. Make a list of seasons or events in your life that have had a heightened degree of hardship.

As you consider your list of hardships, did these hardships make you want to pursue God or run from God. Why?

Life has happiness. Make a list of seasons or events in your life that have had a heightened degree of happiness.

As you consider your list of seasons or events of heightened happiness, did these make you want to pursue God or run from God. Why?

## **CULTURE**

Consider your world (not the entire world, but *your* world, the portion you touch). Where are you most at home? Are you most at home at home? Are you most at home with a certain group of friends? Are you most at home at work or at school? Why?

How does this “home” (virtual or literal) influence your perception of God?

Consider entertainment. What do you watch, listen to, or enjoy? Are there shows you watch consistently? Is there a certain genre of movie you consistently go to? If so, how do these influences typically perceive God?

What do you do for fun? Is there a relational scene associated with this fun? If so, how does this group or activity influence your perception of God?

Consider your formal education. Have educational influences been supportive or unsupportive to your pursuit of God? How have you responded to this influence?

## **OTHER**

Who else or what else has influenced your perception of God (positively or negatively)?

## **SUMMARY THOUGHTS**

List insights you have gained from this exercise. Use additional paper if needed. Bring these to your next Running Partner conversation.

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