

# Going Back to the Basics of Christianity- Jim Poitras

I feel crippled by the unknown. I ponder the next step in God's plan in the maze of my troubled life. I try to make sense of who is really in charge and to decode their motives. I struggle with being suffocated by frustration and taunted by hopelessness. I deliberate over who owns the controls of my life. Is it me? Is it others? Is it God? Is it a combination of all three? In turbulent times it is essential to allow God's Word to thunder.

The great coach, Vince Lombardi, of the Green Bay Packers, had an interesting way to approach pre-season training. At the first team meeting the legendary leader wasted no time getting to the point. He delivered one of history's best one-liners. He held out a football to his players and said, "Gentlemen this is a football." In those five, simple words, he took his team back to the basics.

Four simple words unfold the Bible in Genesis 1:1 serve as the platform of the basic tenants of Christianity.

## **"In the beginning God" (Genesis 1:1)**

If I don't believe that then my Christianity shakes on insecure footing. Every decision point on the path I trod becomes questionable. I become captive; chained by apprehension. Without that firm foundation I am tempted to throw in the proverbial towel, sulk under the closest tree, or hang myself out to dry in the nearest desert (not that I'm feeling dramatic or anything).

**"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, *which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*" (Revelation 1:8).**

Ladies and Gentlemen, regardless of what you are going through today, let us return to the basics of Christianity. They provide stability in unsettled time, direction in the fog of your future, and answers to life's pressing, perturbing questions.

### **1. God is:**

Most of the reminders that "God is" that follow are taken from the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua during a time that God repeatedly encouraged His people to "Possess the land." Is there any promise that He is encouraging you to hold onto today?

"(For the Lord thy ***God is a merciful God;***) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them" (Deuteronomy 4:31, Emphasis mine).

"For the Lord your ***God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty,*** and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward" (Deuteronomy 10:17, Emphasis mine).

"For the Lord your ***God is he that goeth with you,*** to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (Deuteronomy 20:4, Emphasis mine).

“The **eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms**: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them” (Deuteronomy 33:27, Emphasis mine).

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for **the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest**” (Joshua 1:9, Emphasis mine).

“And Joshua said, **Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail** drive out from before you...” (Joshua 3:10, Emphasis mine).

“**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble**” (Psalms 46:1, Emphasis mine).

“Behold, **God is mine helper**: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul” (Psalms 54:4, Emphasis mine).

## 2. God is in control:

“The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the Lord; he guides it wherever he pleases” (Proverbs 21:1, NLT).

“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But **God is** the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psalms 75:6-7, Emphasis mine).

“For the battle is the Lord's...” (1 Samuel 17:47).

“...Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's....Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you...fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you” (2 Chronicles 20:15-17).

“The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalms 24:1).

“Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool” (Acts 7:49).

## 3. God is the Director of our Paths:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take” (Proverbs 3:5-6, NLT).

## 4. God is the one that orders our footsteps:

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Psalms 37:23-25).

“Stalwart **walks in step with God; his path blazed by God**, he's happy. If he stumbles, he's not down for long; **God has a grip on his hand**. I once was young, now I'm a graybeard — not once have I seen an

abandoned believer, or his kids out roaming the streets” (Psalms 37:23-25, The Message, Emphasis mine).

“The Lord directs the steps of the godly. **He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.** Once I was young, and now I am old. Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned or their children begging for bread” (Psalms 37:23-25, NLT, Emphasis mine).

#### 5. God is able:

“And **God is able** to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8, Emphasis mine).

“Now unto **him that is able** to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20, Emphasis mine).

#### 6. God is a rewarder:

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that **he is**, and that **he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him**” (Hebrews 11:6).

I recall listening to a senior minister earnestly praying. He kept saying, “I put my tiny, little hand into your big, big hand.” Sounds like a great idea. I put my hand in His and humbly plead, “Take me back to the basics of Christianity. I can find the right road from there.”