



# TRAINING FOR GUYS

No 16 22nd December 2012

## Isn't God just a Meglomaniac to demand worship?

Lots of people ask this question. If God is so good, why is He an egomaniac who expects us to bow down and worship Him?

The first thing to say, is that this question often comes from a wrong perspective. We are forming God in our own image...or rather, in the image of some human dictator who demands worship. 1984's Big Brother, or Saddam Hussein or Castro maybe.

If we start by thinking of God like that, He certainly ends up looking bad. But Jesus makes it very clear that that is not a right image of God. He's not a 'lording it over you' sort of leader but one who gets among His people and serves them. After washing His disciples' feet He said: "Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him." (John 13:16). Apart from maybe a photo opportunity (all politicians seem to kiss babies) I can't imagine the dictators of this world truly being servants.

But it is not "God the Leader" who asks us to worship Him.


But "God the Father" and "Jesus the Groom". We are called to worship by our Father, and by our



lover. If we start with that picture, we see this in a very different light.

A human father wants his children to love him. A young man, wooing a certain girl, wants her to respond with love for him that matches the love he has for her.

The word 'worship' has at its root the idea of *drawing near to kiss*. It is the heart of a loving response to someone. If you love someone, you draw near to kiss or embrace them, so you worship them.

 @CiaranM87  
Ciaran

@HuffPostUKCom Oh no, my overly-festive neighbours are at the door. \*Ding dong\* "Mary, Leon.. Hi!" #xmasjokes

**God wants us to worship Him because He worships us!** He is not an egotist looking for forced adulation, but a lover longing for the love He has to be both received and reciprocated!

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illustrations this week sourced from the internet

**Our Father, I dunno what this is all about, but....**

**For the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen!**

The prayer ends on a crescendo of praise. Everything we have prayed about, we remind ourselves, is in the context of God having the power. His is the Kingdom, the one that will last forever and be there long after all the failed kingdoms of this world and the satanic realm are destroyed. God will answer us, but He gets the glory for it, not us. You might have laid your hands on the sick person who was healed...but that's all you did. God gets the glory!

In many ways we have come full circle. We started the prayer by reminding ourselves of who He is, where He is, and that everything is about Him. We end in much the same place. Whatever we have wrestled with in prayer...whatever tragedies we have been addressing, we leave prayer and go 'back into the world' knowing that God is in control and He is the Lord.

**Amen** is a declaration again, that we line ourselves up with all we have prayed and all that we have reminded ourselves about *God's perspective*. Let it be as He sees it, as He wills it. We're happy with that.

It's a good place to end this year.. God's will being done. Let's pray that for the year to come too.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

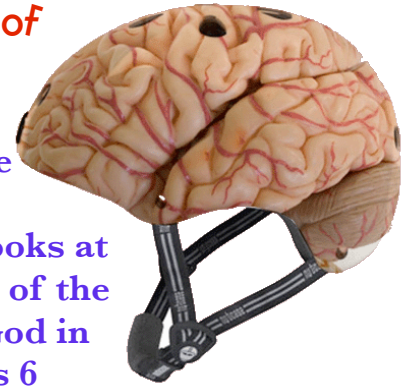
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.

Amen.

## The Helmet of Salvation

This week's Bible Study, the fifth of 6 sideways looks at the elements of the Armour of God in Ephesians 6

[www.tfg.org.uk/podcasts](http://www.tfg.org.uk/podcasts)



Though there was no printed edition last week, and won't be next, there was a talk last week on the Shield of Faith and next week the sixth talk, on the Sword of the Spirit, will also be available by Saturday.

 @CornishCalzone  
Martha

@HuffPostUKCom How did Darth Vader know what Luke Skywalker was getting for Christmas? He felt his presents.



 @LilythePurr  
Lily Claus

@HuffPostUKCom My favourite joke's the one about a cardboard tube wrapped in fancy paper containing a hat, motto and toy. It's a cracker!



# The Big Question

The legend of Santa has been built up and become little more than a complete lie. Satan is the father of lies, and uses the story of Father Christmas to hide the true meaning of Christmas

But Father Christmas is such a great illustration of grace! Getting something for nothing, surely that is the essential teaching of grace in salvation?

Advent is supposed to be a time of preparation for the coming of Christ. It's been reduced to a chocolate filled calendar counting down to the arrival of Father Christmas

Father Christmas teaches us the joy of giving. Ho ho ho!

There's nothing about grace in the Father Christmas story. "He's gonna find out who's naughty or nice"...you have to deserve it.

Yes, but we all know everyone gets something anyway. Even if they've been naughty!

So that's another lie then... and children grow up realising behaviour doesn't affect things. He's not really watching, so probably God isn't either

But you just said God gives good things anyway!

The point is, Father Christmas isn't an illustration of God or Jesus but a lie that has replaced Jesus from most people's understanding of Christmas. It started out harmless enough, but it pandered to commercialism and has now grown too big. I went to some church services last year which started off singing carols and talking about the coming of Jesus, then there were jingling bells and 'ho ho ho's and in comes the big guy in red. It wasn't clear that he wasn't part of the original story...and that was in church!

I can't see that it hurts though. Father Christmas is fun, and everyone knows (even young kids really) it's all made up. It lifts the spirits at this gloomy time of year, and adds to the general sense of excitement and good will in the community

To mix something 'everyone knows is made up' with the Gospel Truth just confuses unbelievers even more. How do they know Jesus is real if Christians mix him up with a lie?

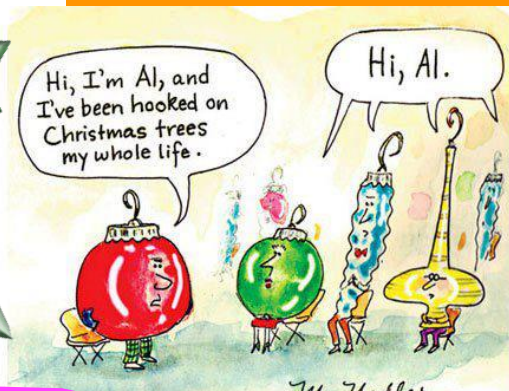
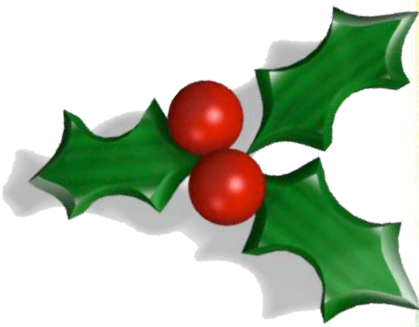
What do you think? Continue this conversation on the Training for Guys FACEBOOK page ([www.tfgministries.org.uk/facebook](http://www.tfgministries.org.uk/facebook)). Has the Church let Father Christmas steal the real meaning of the season?

*A big thank you to all those of you who have contacted me over the past few months.*

*It seems this is something a lot of you find helpful.*

*Don't forget to let me have any questions you might want answered next year... and do add your friends to the Facebook group or just forward the links to this stuff to them.*

*Have a blessed Christmas and a Kingdom building New Year!*



The Catholic Church have announced they're swapping wafers for Pringles. It's beginning to look a lot like crisp mass.

That's all now from *Training for Guys* for this year. More in 2013, but I'm off next week as I have other fish to fry...