
God's frame of reference

Hello, Reader-of-whom-we-don't-know-the-name-yet, first read **John 4:19-24**

What is Jesus talking about?

At a certain point we find Jesus speaking to a foreign woman, someone who had probably only heard about God from hearsay. Jesus has what is really a rather peculiar conversation with her, for it seems to jump from one thing to another. Many subjects are addressed, yet they seem to more or less come together around the question: "Who are you?"

Jn 4:24

We won't analyse the whole conversation now, as it is too comprehensive for that. For at the end, Jesus connects at least five concepts together: "worship", "spirit", "truth", "Father", and "God". That's quite a list, isn't it? But what is He talking about?

For us this text might be a bit unclear, but for Jesus this whole text has a clear meaning, which He also sees as clearly related to the whole conversation. But we may be getting confused just by the different terms that Jesus uses - how can we come to see how these hold together? Why does Jesus make things so difficult?

Everyone has their own frame of reference

If we pose the question in this way, then we actually make God the cause of the problem. But is this right? Communication always involves *both* of you, one as speaker and the other as listener. For example, read the following quotation:

"I was just too late. I was dead because I only had one eye left. Trying to escape did not make sense as my ladder had a dead end. I therefore did the best thing I could in the circumstances and cut him from behind. While he was still alive, his influence on the middle was gone. If I were just able to connect, then I would live on the left side."

Strange text? Perhaps you even think that we have simply thought up some weird sentences to get you off track. But no, the sentence is not nonsensical. Its speaker has a clear and well thought out intention. Try to see what it is about before you read on...

Did you manage?

There are no real unknown words here; why is it that you (probably) do not understand this? This is because the speaker is communicating from a specific frame of reference. If you don't know that frame of reference, then you will try to understand the quotation from within *your own* frame of reference.

What you read here forms part of the description of a tournament of *Go*, the oldest board game that exists. The terms "eye", "live", "cut" and "ladder" also refer to specific game actions. In reality, the above speaker is saying that she is facing a bad situation, but that she can perhaps see one possibility of limiting the damage.

Is 55:8-9

Those who know the game *Go* will also be familiar with the frame of reference that accompanies it. The same is true for God's speaking. When God speaks, He speaks very clearly and deliberately - from *His* frame of reference! But if you listen to His speaking from another frame of reference - yours - then you will not be able to grasp the meaning of His speaking as He intended it. You will fill in *your* definitions of the terms "spirit", "truth", and so on. Result: you will not be able to fully understand what God tries to tell you. You'll end up with confusion.

Eph 4:23
Rom 12:2

Amen seeks to make you familiar with God's vision of the reality within which you live. But becoming familiar with this does not simply happen automatically... It is a process, and a process that can only happen with your collaboration. You are the one who makes the choice to let go of your own insights - your own frame of reference - in order to become familiar with God's frame of reference.

We gladly invite you on this exciting journey!

... and now you... your fundament

Mal 3:6
Jas 1:17

God doesn't change. That means that His will also doesn't change. God's definitions of for example "love", "sin", "church" are fixed. How can it be that we human beings have so many different opinions about that - including yours perhaps?

The answer is: everybody has her own frame of reference. This is not a judgement, just an establishment. The result is confusion, and that does not help when it comes to the unity we all long for. It makes it difficult to understand God's purpose for your life. Because if this person tells you *this*, and the other person tells you *that*, and your own impressions are again different, then how can you know what God wants to tell you? How do you decide which voice to follow?

1Thess 5:21

The question behind it all is: what is the fundament of your thoughts, your opinions? You can discover this by asking yourself the following questions:

- **What exactly is your own insight?** Make this specific. How do you define "love", "sin", "church"? Write this down.
- **What is your insight based on?** Which influence do personal experiences have? What is your source? Or maybe there are multiple sources? On which ground do you choose them?
- **How reliable is that source?** How do you know? How seriously have you ever tested the reliability of your source? And which criteria do you use to test it?

Our opinions (and therefore also your opinions) develop through a complex process in which different influences play a role. We are not always conscious of these influences, and because of that in all of us there is the risk of some "impurity" to sneak in. Again, we don't say this to be judgmental, but to make you aware. Not everything that seems to be of God *is* of God, and in the beginning this is quite tricky to discern. But the more you get to know God personally as Who He is, the more easy it becomes to recognize His speaking. That's what you want, isn't it? We all benefit from that.

In the first ten letters of *Amen* you will discover five "spiritual laws" from the Word of God, which you will also recognize in your daily life. You will discover that God's Word "works" - it's not just "a nice theory up there" but a concrete life practise down here.

These five "spiritual laws" will enable you to gradually get familiar with God's frame of reference. This will make it easier to discern His speaking. By spending time with Him you will get to know Him better - and yourself - and His love for you will gradually become more real and concrete.

1Cor 13:10

Gradually, because it is a process. We want to support this process with our *Amen*-letters. You will discover how rich and beautiful the Word of God is, and how much more there is hidden in the Christian faith. You will indeed learn God's definitions of "love", "sin", "church". This will make it an exciting and confrontational journey, during which you will learn many new things, but also will "unlearn" things. The latter is often more challenging than the first, but we promise you that it will be worthwhile. "When perfection comes," says Paul, "all imperfect things will be of no more use."

Jn 8:32

What Paul calls "perfect" is what Jesus calls "the truth". That implies that there are lies in our lives that influence our thinking... How much are you willing to invest in unmasking the lies in your thinking and start living the full truth? We can't make the choice for you, but we want to be honest. God will lead you to many high peaks, but the higher the peak, the longer the climb. We want your dedication and perseverance to produce as much as possible, and therefore we will support you with solid preparation and training. But we cannot do the climbing for you - that is your job.

Our wish for you is that you come to your maximum fulfilment. How deeper you root, the higher you can grow. You are worth it!

So maybe we meet you with *Amen*. You're welcome.

FATHER GERT
Father Johan