

## BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Donald Barnhouse was a well-known preacher during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over a decade after he graduated from seminary, he returned by invitation to preach to the students. Present that day was Robert Wilson, a professor who had taught Barnhouse at the school. After the message, Wilson approached Barnhouse and said, "When my boys come back, I come to see if they are big-godders or little-godders, and then I know what their ministry will be."

When Barnhouse asked for clarification on the terminology, Wilson replied, "Well, some men have a little god, and they are always in trouble with him. He can't do any miracles. He can't take care of the inspiration and transmission of the Scripture to us. He doesn't intervene on behalf of his people. They have a little god and I call them 'little-godders.' Then there are those who have a great God. He speaks and it is done. He commands and it stands fast. He knows how to show himself strong on behalf of them that fear him."

Whether in preaching or in prayer, we must be "big-godders."

Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, *"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:20-21). Paul's message is clear: God is a "big God." No matter how lofty the idea, how magnificent the request or how grand the goal might be, God's ability is more glorious and far greater than anything we might be able to pray for or begin to imagine.

Throughout the Bible, we find passages pointing us to the grandeur of God...

His thoughts are higher: *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:9).

His power is infinite: *"Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you"* (Jeremiah 32:17).

His purpose will stand: *"Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps"* (Psalm 135:6).

When you pray, are you a "little-godder" or a "big-godder?"

**Prayer prompt: Ask God to work in your life, the life of your family and the life of your church in such a way that he brings the most glory and honor possible to himself. Pray that God would reveal his greatness clearly and show you if any of your expectations are less than his best. Ask God to show you whether your prayer life reflects a view of him that is too small. Pray that God will align your prayers with desires that befit his greatness.**

*"It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak...like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."*

– C.S. Lewis

*Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For his grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much.*

*"Behold, I am the LORD,  
the God of all flesh.  
Is anything too hard for me?"*

- John Newton

- Jeremiah 32:27