

EXCERPT



Does God Really Like Me? *Discovering the God Who Wants to Be With Us*

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Cyd Holsclaw is a pastor at Vineyard North in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as well as a ministry and life coach and spiritual director. Follow her on Twitter: @cydholsclaw. **Geoff Holsclaw** (PhD, Marquette University) is a pastor at Vineyard North, as well as affiliate professor of theology at Northern Seminary in Lisle, Illinois, and coauthor of *Prodigal Christianity*. Follow him on twitter: @geoffholsclaw. Visit his website and read his blog at geoffreyholsclaw.net.

We're Told That God Loves Us.

But the real question is, Does God really like me?

God Has To . . .

Parents sometimes say that while they certainly love their children, they don't always like them. We get it. We both love our children with a fierce and uncompromising love. We would never abandon them or hurt them. But there are times when it's hard to like them.

Sometimes it's because of what is going on with us, and sometimes it's what's going on with them. Sometimes the best we can do is just tolerate our loved ones until it gets better—putting up with them because we have to.

And we've all been on the receiving end of this experience too. A parent or some other loved one tells us they love us when they clearly don't like us very much at that moment—and maybe they would rather not be with us either. We get the real message loud and clear.

After enough of these experiences it's easy to believe God feels the same way about us. God promises to love us. But we actually come to believe that God is just putting up with us, tolerating us because he has to, not because he wants to.

God has to love me, we think, but God doesn't like me.

But What If?

What if God really does like you?

What if God is always glad to be with you?

What if God is filled with joy because of you?

What if God is always moving toward you and not just keeping his distance? What if God likes you so much that he truly enjoys being with you? What if God appreciates you so much that he wants to partner with you to accomplish all his purposes in the world?

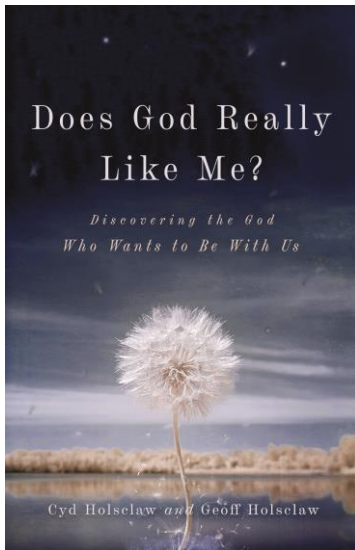


Tara Burns, print and online publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



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“Geoff and Cyd Holsclaw have given the church and the seeker a gift with their first book together. Their vision of the grand narrative of the Bible, personal vulnerability, and invitations to application and reflection present the reader with multiple avenues for receiving their important message. God’s invitation to intimacy and deep desire to dwell with humankind is presented with accessible breadth and depth.”

—**Charlie Self**, professor of church history at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, director of learning communities for the Made to Flourish network

You might be skeptical. Maybe you think all this sounds cheesy or naive. Maybe it’s even offensive or disgraceful to think the God of the universe likes you and wants to be with you. Maybe it doesn’t line up with your understanding of God’s sovereignty or majesty. Maybe it makes God sound pathetic or needy or all too human.

But here’s the thing: We’ve become convinced—through studying the Bible, through meeting God personally in prayer, and through living with God in community with others—that it’s all true.

We’re convinced that everything changes when we believe God is glad to be with us. It changes how we experience God’s presence. It changes how we live. It will change your life. When we trust that God wants to be with us, we learn to live as if we belong with God, as if we’re really wanted by God. When we trust that God is giving purpose to our lives, we can freely offer our lives as a blessing to others.

Why This Book?

We wrote this book for two reasons. First, you belong in God’s presence (*God with us*). Second, you have a place within God’s purposes (*God through us*). In other words God is always glad to be with you and wants nothing more than to draw you closer into his family. And from this place God invites you into the family business, the business of blessing the world. We will see that both of these produce joy in us, a joy matched only by God’s joy in us.

We would like to take you on a journey from the beginning to the end of God’s work with humanity, from Genesis to Revelation. We’ll show you how God continually demonstrates a desire to be with his people—no matter what we do. And we’ll highlight the ways God always invites people to join him in his unfolding plan to spread new and unending life throughout the entire world.

—Adapted from the introduction



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