

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

→ The ***Incommunicable*** Attributes of God (attributes that God does not share)

DEPENDENCE (*self-existent & self-sufficient*)⁸

God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation glorify him and bring him joy.

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (Acts 17:24-25)

How does God differ from humanity in his independence?

IMMUTABILITY (*unchangeableness*)⁹

God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.

For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

Why is the attribute of God's immutability important?

ETERNITY (*infinite*)¹⁰

God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.

1. God is timeless in his own being
 - *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:2)*
2. God sees all time equally vividly
 - *For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. (Psalm 90:4)*
3. God sees events in time and acts in time
 - *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)*

What comfort is found in God's eternal attribute?

⁸Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 71-73.

⁹Ibid., 73-76.

¹⁰Ibid., 76-78.

OMNIPRESENCE¹¹

God does not have size or spatial *dimensions*, and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in different places.

1. God is *present* everywhere
 - *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.* (Psalm 139:7-10)
2. God does not have special *dimensions*
 - *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!"* (1 Kings 8:27)
3. God can be present to *punish*, *sustain*, or to *bless*
 - to *punish*: (Amos 9:1-4)
 - to *sustain*: *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* (Colossians 1:17)
 - to *bless*: *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* (Psalm 16:11)

What types of emotion does the omnipresence of God conjure up inside of you?

UNITY¹²

God is not *divided* into parts, yet we see *different* attributes of God emphasized at different times.

How can a right understanding of the *incommunicable attributes of God* strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the *incommunicable attributes of God* strengthen our missional activity?

→ The *Communicable Attributes of God* (attributes that God does *share*)

HOLINESS¹³

God is *separated* from sin and *devoted* to seeking his own honor

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (Isaiah 6:1-7)

¹¹Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 78-81.

¹²*Ibid.*, 81-82.

¹³*Ibid.*, 92-93

Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy! (Psalm 99:9)

What are the implications of God's holiness for your life?

OMNIPOTENCE (*all -powerful*)¹⁴

God is able to do all his holy will

The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:13-14)

And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:23-26)

We must remember that divine power is optional in its exercise. Whereas God is infinitely powerful in his eternal being, it is not necessary or an essential part of this attribute that he always and in every way exercise his power. (Sam Storms)¹⁵

What are the implications of God's omnipotence for your life?

WILL (*all -sovereign*)

God has absolute rule over creation as King and total control and determination over all that happens.

...for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" (Daniel 4:34-35)

...keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:14-16)

¹⁴Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 98-99.

¹⁵Sam Storms, "The Omnipotence of God," *Enjoying God*, May 21, 2006, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/the-omnipotence-of-god>.

The sovereignty of God affirms that God *plans* and *carries out* His perfect will completely as He alone knows is best, over all that is in heaven and earth and He does so without *failure* or *defeat*.

What are the implications of God's sovereignty for your life?

OMNISCIENCE¹⁶

God *fully knows* himself and all things actual and possible—past, present, and future—in one simple and eternal act.

... for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. (1 John 3:20)

[Elihu] *Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge...* (Job 37:16)

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:13)

*God foreknows everything that will come to pass in the future because he has foreordained everything that comes to pass. Humans are free moral agents insofar as they act voluntarily according to their desires. But all such desires and subsequent volitional activity fall within the sovereign and pre-temporal (or eternal) purpose of God.*¹⁷ (Sam Storms)

What are the implications of God's omniscience for your life?

WISDOM¹⁸

God always *knows* and *chooses* the best goals and the best means to those goals.

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. (Psalm 104:24)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

The wisdom of God is the application of God's infinite knowledge in a manner that accomplishes his morally perfect ends by the best means possible.

What are the implications of God's wisdom for your life?

¹⁶Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 88.

¹⁷Sam Storms, "The Omniscience of God," *Enjoying God*, May 13, 2006, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/the-omniscience-of-god>.

¹⁸Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 88-89.

LOVE¹⁹

God *freely* and *eternally* gives of himself to others.

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:8-10)

... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

What are the different ways the Bible speaks of God's love?

What are the implications of God's love?

RIGHTEOUSNESS²⁰

God always acts in accordance with what is *right* and is himself the final *standard* of what is right.

The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

... I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right. (Isaiah 45:19)

In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.' (Jeremiah 23:6)

... This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:25-26)

What are the implications of God's righteousness?

WRATH²¹

God intensely *hates* and responds with anger to all *sin* and *rebellion*.

And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them..." (Exodus 32:9-10)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (Romans 1:18)

¹⁹Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 91-92.

²⁰Ibid., 93

²¹Ibid., 94-95.

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb..." (Revelation 6:15-16)

4 Truths About God's Final Wrath²² (John Piper)

1. It will be eternal—having no end
2. It will be terrible—indescribable pain
3. It will be deserved—totally just and right
4. It will have been escapable—through the curse-bearing death of Christ

How can a right understanding of the *communicable attributes of God* strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the *communicable attributes of God* strengthen our missional activity?

*It's essential...to get the doctrine of God right...Either God will be the center of one's doctrinal solar system or something else will. What we believe about God determines what we believe about everything.*²³

Jonathan Leeman

²²John Piper, "God's Wrath: "Vengeance Is Mine, I Will Repay," Says the Lord," *Desiring God*, February 27, 2005, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/gods-wrath-vengeance-is-mine-i-will-repay-says-the-lord>.

²³Jonathan Leeman, "God: Not Like You," in *Don't Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day*, ed. Kevin DeYoung (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 57.