

DG Guide: Attributes of God

#2 - Immutability (Unchanging)

Opening Prayer

Starter Question

What's something in your life that you thought would never change but did? How did that make you feel?

Sermon Summary

Three Facets of God's Immutability:

1. God is immutable in His essence (being)
 - He doesn't grow, decay, or develop
 - He exists outside of time and creation
 - He is unchanging from eternity past to eternity future
2. God is immutable in His attributes (character)
 - His love, justice, holiness, and wisdom never fluctuate
 - He doesn't have "good days" or "bad days"
 - His character provides stability for our relationship with Him
3. God is immutable in His decrees (purposes)
 - His plans are not improvised or revised
 - He accomplishes what He sets out to do
 - His promises are eternally secure

Discussion Questions

Understanding God's Nature

1. **Contrasting Change:** The sermon contrasted how everything in creation changes with God's unchanging nature. What are some examples from your own life where you've experienced significant change? How does this help you appreciate God's immutability?
2. **Beyond Reliability:** Daniel mentioned that God isn't just "reliable" like a dependable person—He's fundamentally unchanging. What's the difference? Why does this distinction matter?
3. **God's Knowledge:** The sermon stated that God doesn't learn new information. How does this challenge or comfort you? What does this tell us about prayer and our relationship with God?

God's Character

4. **Unchanging Attributes:** Read Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17 together. How does knowing that God's love, justice, and holiness never fluctuate affect how you view:
 - Your sins and failures?
 - Your prayers?
 - Your future?
5. **God's Emotions:** The sermon addressed how God doesn't experience emotions the way we do—He's not reactive or subject to mood swings. Does this make God seem distant, or does it provide comfort? Explain your perspective.
6. **Progressive Theology:** The sermon rejected the idea that God "learns and grows" as He interacts with humanity. Why is this understanding of God problematic? What would be the consequences if God could change His mind about His character?

Practical Application

7. **Justice and Mercy:** The sermon emphasised that God cannot compromise either His justice or His mercy. How does the gospel resolve this tension? How should this shape our evangelism and our own approach to sin?
8. **Assurance in Struggle:** Read 2 Timothy 2:13 ("If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself").
 - Share a time when you felt distant from God or struggled in your faith.
 - How does God's immutability provide assurance during spiritual dry seasons?
 - What lies do we believe about God when we're struggling that His immutability corrects?
9. **Prayer Life:** The sermon stated that God has eternally decreed to use our prayers as means to accomplish His purposes. How does this change:
 - The way you approach prayer?
 - Your expectations when you pray?
 - Your persistence in prayer?

Personal Reflection

10. Where Do You Need Stability? In what area of your life do you most need to remember God's unchanging nature right now? (Examples: a relationship, financial stress, health concerns, doubt, persistent sin)

Key Scriptures to Review

- Psalm 90:2 - God's eternal existence
- Psalm 102:25-27 - Creation changes, God doesn't
- Malachi 3:6 - "I the Lord do not change"
- James 1:17 - No variation or shadow of change
- Numbers 23:19 - God is not a man that He should lie or change His mind
- 2 Timothy 2:13 - He remains faithful
- Isaiah 46:10 - God declares the end from the beginning
- Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever

Practical Applications for This Week

Individual Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. Meditation Exercise: Each morning, spend 5 minutes meditating on one aspect of God's unchanging character (His love, justice, faithfulness, etc.). Journal about how this truth applies to something you're facing that day.
2. Prayer Shift: Identify one area where you've been praying with anxiety or trying to "convince" God. Reframe your prayers this week to appeal to God's unchanging character and promises rather than trying to change His mind.
3. Scripture Memory: Memorise one of the key verses about God's immutability. When you feel uncertain or anxious, recite it to remind yourself of God's stability.

Group Challenge:

Share with the group one specific way you'll apply this teaching this week, and commit to checking in with one other group member mid-week about how it's going.

Closing Reflection Questions

- What was most challenging about this sermon for you?
- What was most comforting?
- How has your view of God shifted after studying His immutability?

Closing Prayer

Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for His unchanging nature
- Confess areas where we've doubted His faithfulness or tried to manipulate Him in prayer
- Ask for help to trust His immutable character, especially in current struggles
- Pray for assurance of salvation based on God's unchanging promises

For Further Study

Recommended Reading:

- Anselm of Canterbury's work on God's perfection (mentioned in the sermon)
- *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer, Chapter 7: "The Unchanging God"
- Psalm 103 - A meditation on God's steadfast love

For Next Week: Come prepared to share one way God's immutability has impacted your week and one question you still have about this doctrine.

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to group members who may be struggling with doubts or feeling distant from God. God's immutability should be presented as comfort, not condemnation.
- If discussing "regret" passages (Genesis 6:6, 1 Samuel 15), emphasise that these are anthropomorphic expressions showing God's real moral opposition to sin, not actual changes in His being or plans.
- Encourage honest questions. This is a deep theological topic that can be difficult to grasp.
- Keep bringing the discussion back to practical application—how does this truth change how we live today?

Or, if you just want a bunch of discussion prompts:

1. How does understanding God's immutability change the way you approach prayer, especially when you feel like you're in a spiritual rut or struggling with recurring sin?
2. In what ways do you find yourself projecting human changeability onto God, and how might recognising His unchanging nature reshape your relationship with Him?
3. How does God's immutable justice both comfort and challenge you, particularly when you consider both your own sin and the injustices you see in the world?
4. What does it mean practically that God has eternally decreed to use your prayers as a means of accomplishing His purposes, and how does this impact your prayer life?
5. How can meditating on God's unchangeable attributes help you grow in stability and faithfulness in your own Christian walk?
6. When Scripture uses language suggesting God 'regrets' or 'changes His mind,' how do we balance taking these passages seriously while understanding God's immutability?
7. How does God's immutability provide assurance for your salvation, especially during seasons when your feelings and spiritual performance fluctuate?
8. In what ways does God's unchanging nature differ fundamentally from even the most reliable and stable people in your life?
9. How does the gospel demonstrate God's ability to remain perfectly just and perfectly merciful simultaneously without compromising either attribute?
10. What false hopes or misconceptions about God might you be holding onto that are challenged by the doctrine of divine immutability?