

Series: **God is...So What?**
Today's Title: **"The Solitary Existing God"**

August 28, 2022 – *Select Passages* – Sermon 2 of 16

Objective: To help people know the independence of God makes His love for us even more amazing.

In this series, **"God is...So What?"**, we are looking at some of the attributes of God, but we are also making sure we ask the important questions: *"So What?" "Why does this matter?" "What difference do these attributes of God make in our life?"*

It's also important to remind ourselves that this topic (theology – the study of God – what is God like?) has been studied by the best minds in human history for the past 2,000+ years. Only in the last 100 years or so has society moved away from an elevated view of God – to an elevated view of mankind, of nature, and of science.

Before this shift, just about everything was viewed and understood through a divine oriented filter or lens.

Our nation's most prominent schools: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, were established to train ministers for leading churches. They were established as theologically oriented institutions.

(Sources: <https://www.allabouthistory.org/history-of-harvard.htm> / <https://christianheritagefellowship.com/the-christian-founding-of-harvard/> / <https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/traditions-history/> / https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Princeton_University)

So, as we discuss who / what **"God is"** over the coming Sundays, know there has been much work in this area in previous generations which bring us tremendous blessings

and enriches our own understanding of the person and nature of God.

In the study of God (theology), the term used to describe God is the term 'Attributes'. Some also refer to these as the 'perfections of God' – and I will use both terms.

I like the idea of the 'perfections of God' because it highlights the truth that each of God's attributes are perfect – flawless. Everything about God is perfect – without any flaws – absolutely holy and righteous.

But it's helpful to understand the...

2 Kinds of Divine Attributes...

When theologians discuss the attributes or the perfections of God, they classify them into 2 categories.

1. Communicable Attributes – an attribute that is in some degree shared between God and us. This is not the best way to explain this but think of a communicable disease. This is a disease which is easily transmitted from one person to another.

The communicable attributes of God are those that are transferred to His creatures.

2. Incommunicable Attributes – Attributes of God that are not transferred to us.

God is eternal, we are temporal.

God is immutable, we are changing every second of our life.

Today we are going to cover one of the incommunicable attributes of God that is totally foreign to anything we experience in our life.

Today we're looking at God's solitary existence.

This is the independence of God, which theologians call His *aseity*, which is from a Latin word that means 'from Himself'.

What do theologians mean when they speak of God's independence?

Definition: *"God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify Him and bring Him joy."*

(Systematic Theology, by Wayne Grudem, p. 160)

God is absolutely independent and self-sufficient.

The eternity of God has some overlap here – and we'll look at that attribute in a few weeks.

But the self-existence of God – His independence – that He needs nothing outside of Himself for His existence is one of the most important things for us to understand about God.

When the Apostle Paul arrived in Athens (Acts 17), Luke tells us that Paul's, "...spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols."

In Athens was a place called the Areopagus, also known as Mars Hill (picture of what it looks like today), and this was where the great minds of Greece – the intellectuals of Athens would gather to discuss their ideas.

Philosophers and stoics were the resident lecturers when Paul was there. (vs. 18)

Paul, being an intellectual himself, was speaking in the synagogue there and in the marketplace each day, and some of these resident philosophers and stoics heard him and invited him to come share his ideas with the rest of the group on Mars Hill.

When Paul spoke to them, he told them about Jesus – His death and resurrection – and he also told them about God as the Creator.

Acts 17:24-25

"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."

Paul's sermon had some new ideas for them to think about. Luke tells us that some of them mocked him and laughed him off as a nutcase (my words, not Luke's).

But there were some who put their faith in Jesus because of Paul's testimony on Mars Hill (Acts 17:34).

What Paul said in **vs. 25** is helpful for us today.

"...nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."

This tells us that God is fine without us – but we need Him.

Our very life and breath depend on Him!

God's independence makes His love more amazing.

I said a moment ago '*God is fine without us.*'

That sounds cold...impersonal, but it's not.

It's simply a reality of who God is – ***a perfection of who He is.***

He is self-existing – which means He has always existed – nothing created God.

He never had a beginning – He has always been.

He didn't create because He was bored or lonely and needed companionship.

He created simply due to the pleasure of His will.

Ephesians 1:11

"...who works all things according to the counsel of His will..."

Revelation 4:11

"...for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."

God simply wanted to create the universe – and us!

This truth highlights the love and desire God has for us – for relationship with us.

The fact that He doesn't need us – yet still wants us – gave His own Son for us – has revealed Himself to us so we can know Him – says volumes!

On the human level, we need each other.

In fact, if we don't have others – if we are alone, scientists have proven that isolation is unhealthy both physically and mentally.

According to an Australian news site, on November 21, poker player Rich Alati made a 100,000 bet that he could be in an isolated room with nothing but a bed, bathroom, and a fridge for 30 days.

He lasted for 20 days – and negotiated a buyout of \$62,400.

(<https://www.news.com.au/sport/sports-life/poker-player-locked-in-solitary-confinement-as-part-of-weird-wager-decides-to-bail/news-story/aed092036e7249b75d75f911bbbd329e>)

Researchers have found that isolation can be damaging to our physical and mental health. Isolated people have a harder time dealing with stress. They are more likely to feel depressed, have a more difficult time processing information, and are more susceptible to illness.

(<https://www.inverse.com/article/52760-expert-explains-the-impact-of-total-isolation>)

We are social creatures. God created us as social creatures.

When Adam realized he was alone – there was no other like him,

Genesis 2:18

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

There was no sin in the world – yet something about God’s creation was “not good”.

Adam was alone.

Adam was Perfect... sinless... absolute unity with God... yet he was the only human, and God said, “It is not good”.

So, when we hear that God is independent and doesn’t need us, it can come across as a negative – a off-putting reality about God.

But that’s because we need relationships, but God doesn’t.

If God needed us – if He needed to have a relationship with us, He wouldn’t be God!

He would be incomplete – imperfect in His being – if He needed anything outside of Himself for His existence.

He wants relationship with us – He loves us and has proved His love – yet He doesn’t need us.

This makes His desire to have relationship with us even more amazing!!!

Self-Existence in God's own words...

In fact, the self-existence of God – His *aseity* – is something He told Moses about Himself.

In **Exodus 3**, Moses has fled Egypt and is now a shepherd, and he sees a bush that is on fire – but the bush is not burning up.

This was weird – so he goes to investigate.

The fire was a visible manifestation of God – and God begins to speak to Moses – and in that discussion God tells Moses His name. His personal, primary name.

Names in the Bible are very important.

They play a big part of one's identity – it reveals their character.

The name God shares with Moses certainly tells us something amazing about God!!!

Exodus 3:14

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

This sounds a bit weird to us – "I AM"? What kind of name is that?

In the Hebrew – this is a 1st person verb – it means 'to be' – 'to exist' – 'I exist' – or "I AM"

In **3:15**, God says to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is

My name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”

In our English Bible, LORD – in all capitals – points out the special nature of the Hebrew word being translated.

LORD is probably the 3rd person form of the Hebrew verb ‘to be’ – and many scholars view this as the proper name / primary name of God.

In the Hebrew Bible, LORD is written with the four consonants YHWH – and in English we supply the consonants – and so the personal / primary name of God is Yahweh – which means: *‘The self-existing One’*.

Sidebar...

Hallelujah – This is one of those church words – that many new to church – new to Christianity – might be confused by.

It sounds like a foreign language – which it actually is!!!!

In Hebrew, ‘hallelu’ means praise.

‘Yah’ – is a shortened form of Yahweh.

Put together – Hallulu-jah – it means give your praise to God!

- ***We’ve looked*** at 2 kinds of divine attributes – communicable and incommunicable.

- ***We've discussed*** how God's independence makes His love more amazing.

- ***We've looked*** at God telling Moses His name – which reveals His self-existing nature.

Now...let's discuss how...

We need God for our existence.

One of the great distinctions between us and God is God is self-existent and needs nothing outside of Himself, but we are not self-existent.

We are the opposite.

We need others (Mom and Dad) for our very existence and from the moment of our conception we rely on others for life.

At birth we can only survive if others help us.

We can look at all our life phases, and we see that we are in need of others in various ways.

But ultimately, our very existence is dependent on God.

Our next breath is dependent on Him.

Job 12:10

“In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.”

Job 27:3

“...as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils...”

Job 33:4

“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”

Acts 17:25

“...since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.”

Acts 17:28

“In Him we live and move and have our being...”

1 Timothy 6:13

“I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things...”

“The ultimate difference between God and other beings lies in the fact that creatures are derived, conditional, and dependent.

However, God is not dependent. He has the power of being in and of Himself; He does not derive it from something else.”

(Everyone's a Theologian, an introduction to Systematic Theology, by R.C. Sproul, p. 62)

This is a great difference between the Creator and His creatures.

Since God is the source of all things – all things were created by Him – out of nothing He created all things, then it makes sense that all things exist by Him.

God sustains His creation.

In describing the preeminence of Jesus, the Apostle Paul said...

Colossians 1:16b-17

“...all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

God is... solitary, Self-existing – the Creator, the giver, and sustainer of life.

He is independent of everything outside of Himself.

He needs nothing except Himself, yet He has created all things – according to the pleasure of His will.

In other words, because He wanted to.

Apply it... So What?

The truth that God is independent – that He is self-existing – that He doesn't need us or any part of the creation – can seem like a tough one to apply to our life. But the opposite is true.

1. God's love for us adds to human significance.

God's desire to have relationship with us adds to our significance - beyond our appearance, skills, or accomplishments.

Our significance is based in the Biblical teaching that we are created in the image of God.

Every person has the fingerprints of God on their person.

God stated this as the basis for capital punishment – when someone commits murder.

Genesis 6:9

“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image.”

But there is even more to our significance, and the ‘more’ is based in God’s love for us – His desire to have a relationship with us.

Isaiah 62:3-5

“The LORD will hold you in His hand for all to see - a splendid crown in the hand of God...for the LORD delights in you and will claim you as His bride...”

Then God will rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.”

That’s a lot of rejoicing!!

Zephaniah 3:17

“The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing.”

God will serenade you – sing over you.

This is an expression of His love and care for you.

This speaks volumes to our significance.

God’s love and care for us is a marvelous testimony to our value, standing, and importance we hold in the heart and mind of God.

2. God’s independence makes His love and sacrifice more amazing.

He doesn’t need us, yet He gave His life for us.

He doesn’t need us, yet He has revealed Himself to us – most dramatically through His Son, Jesus.

His grace and mercy to us are more powerful because He is not obliged in any way to be gracious or merciful to us.

He is not trying to ‘buy’ our loyalty or love by being gracious or merciful.

He wants to give us grace.

He wants to be merciful.

He wants to love us.

He wants to be kind to us.

3. God’s independence (His Aseity) – informs and motivates our worship.

We don’t worship God because He needs our affirmation.

We don’t worship to fill a void He has – to boost His ego.

We don’t worship as some sort of ‘give and take’ – some divine deal-making with God.

He doesn’t need our worship.

But He is glorified by our worship.

He is pleased with our sincere worship.

But we need to worship Him.

We need to worship Him because He is God.

Because He is independent – and not needy – not dependent on us or on anything else in all of creation.

This truth should inform and motivate our worship.
He is deserving of our worship...

Because He exists in Himself – needs nothing
outside Himself – and still, He has created us – loved
us despite our sin and rebellion – Became one of us
– died for us – that we might be reconciled to Him.

Because we are the pleasure of His will.

Think about that...and your worship should reach
new levels of intensity and commitment.

4. God's love for us is an example for us to follow with
each other.

God doesn't need us, but He loves us and blesses us.
We often love others – because they can benefit us
in some way – 'return the favor'.

But God demonstrates pure love.

We need to love others – as God has loved us.

1 John 4:11

"Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought
to love each other."

Closing Prayer