

**8. Explain each of the following attributes of God describing the practical implications of each attribute for life and counseling: wrath, mercy, holiness, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.**

**I. Breakdown the Question**

- A. Define wrath.
  - 1. Describe the practical implications of this attribute for life and counseling.
- B. Define mercy.
  - 1. Describe the practical implications of this attribute for life and counseling.
- C. Define holiness.
  - 1. Describe the practical implications of this attribute for life and counseling.
- D. Define omnipotence.
  - 1. Describe the practical implications of this attribute for life and counseling.
- E. Define omniscience.
  - 1. Describe the practical implications of this attribute for life and counseling.
- F. Define omnipresence.
  - 1. Describe the practical implications of this attribute for life and counseling.

**II. Wrath**

A. Definition

- 1. “The wrath of God is His eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the displeasure and indignation of Divine equity against evil. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin. It is the moving cause of that just sentence which he passes upon evildoers. God is angry against sin because it is a rebelling against his authority, a wrong done to his inviolable sovereignty.”<sup>1</sup>
- 2. “God’s wrath is his anger toward and punishment of wickedness.”<sup>2</sup>
- 3. Wrath is “. . . an attribute of God, the doctrine that God intensely hates all sin.”<sup>3</sup>
- 4. Verses
  - a. The Fall of Man (**Gen 3:14-19**)
  - b. Cain and Abel (**Gen 4:10-14**)
  - c. The Flood (**Gen 6:5-7; 7:17-23**)
  - d. Sodom and Gomorrah (**Gen 19:24-25**)
  - e. **Rom 1:18** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 106-107.

<sup>2</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1257.

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### B. Practical Application for life and counseling.

1. A robust understanding of the wrath of God establishes a fear and reverence for God. This reverence for the wrath of God fosters a need and desire to discipline yourself and seek to live in a way that is pleasing to God, avoiding His wrath. This applies to everyone, especially to an individual who is flippant about their sin.
2. “The wrath of God is a perfection of the Divine character upon which we need to frequently meditate. First, that our hearts may be duly impressed by God’s detestation of sin. We are ever prone to regard sin lightly, to gloss over its hideousness, to make excuses for it. The more we study and ponder God’s abhorrence of sin and his frightful vengeance upon it, the more likely are we to realize its heinousness.”<sup>4</sup>
3. **Rom 12:17-19** *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*
  - a. “This passage has a command and a promise. The command to all who have been wronged and suffered injustice is to live peaceably with all people and to avoid vengeance. This command, however, is grounded in a promise that God, in his wrath, will exact vengeance. The command is not to avenge is not grounded in a reality that sees vengeance as bad. It is grounded in the reality that vengeance is something that only God, who is both good and wrathful, knows how to do.”<sup>5</sup>
4. **Rom 2:5** *But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.*
5. **John 3:36** *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*
6. **Hebrews 12:26-31** *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he has sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of Grace? For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.”*

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 108.

<sup>5</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 132.

III. Mercy

A. Definition

1. Mercy can be thought of as giving someone relief from some pain, distress, or punishment. The difference between God's grace and Mercy is this, God gives his undeserved kindness and goodness to those who don't deserve it. Mercy is when God gives undeserved kindness and goodness to those who are suffering.
2. "God's goodness toward those in misery and distress"<sup>6</sup>
3. "The mercy of God has its spring in the Divine goodness. The first issue of God's goodness is his benignity or bounty, by which he gives liberally to his creatures as creatures; thus has he given being and life to all things. The second issue of God's goodness in his mercy, which denotes the ready inclination of God to relive the misery of fallen creatures. Thus, 'mercy' presupposes *sin*."<sup>7</sup>
4. "Then there is Paul's teaching in Romans 3:23-24 . . . Here guilty sinners receive the priceless gift of justification, which they could never deserve, and it is seen as a manifestation of the kindness of God that often overlap with one another, there is biblical warrant for seeing mercy as emphasizing God's kindness toward the needy and grace as emphasizing his kindness toward the undeserving."<sup>8</sup>
5. Verse
  - a. **2 Sam 24:14** *Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."*
  - b. **2 Cor 1:3-5** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion (or mercy) and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.*
  - c. **Matt 5:7** *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

B. Practical Application for life and counseling.

1. If we are born-again believers, we are God's children, adopted into His family, having become heirs with Jesus Christ (Eph 1:5; Rom 8:15; John 1:12; 1 John 3:1). As God's children, we have received, among other things, God's mercy. We were lost, but now we are found. We were blind, but now we see. As heirs, we have received a level of mercy that is unparalleled in a worldly sense. If that's the case, if we are to be followers of Christ, if we attempt to make the Word become flesh, we must live it out. We must give mercy to those around

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<sup>6</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1247.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 92.

<sup>8</sup> Heath Lamber, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 131.

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us who are suffering, providing comfort to those who are hurting. This includes the counseling room.

2. Parable of the Unmerciful Servant - **Matt 18:21-35**
3. “Everyone who comes to counseling needs to know God’s mercy and grace because people usually do not seek out counseling unless they need help, and as sinners they will never deserve such help.”<sup>9</sup>

### IV. Holiness

#### A. Definition

1. “The doctrine that God is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor.”<sup>10</sup>
2. “God’s holiness is his devotion to himself as God above every other reality. In the Bible, something is holy when it is set apart for exclusive dedication to God and his service . . . God is supremely and infinitely holy because he has supreme and infinite insight into his own awesome character. God’s insight in this regard leads him to the ultimate devotion to himself. God’s holiness—his devotion to himself—is a necessary attribute. If God were ever more devoted to something other than himself, that something, as the primary object of his worship, would make God an idolater.”<sup>11</sup>
  - a. **Rev 22:13** *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*”
  - b. **1 Samuel 2:2** *There is no one holy like the Lord, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.*
3. Verse
  - a. **Leviticus 19:2** *“Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.*
  - b. **Exodus 15:11** *“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”*

#### B. Practical Application for life and counseling.

1. **1 Peter 1:15-16** *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*
2. **2 Tim 1:8-14** *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the*

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<sup>9</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 131.

<sup>10</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1243.

<sup>11</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 125.

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*appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*

### V. Omnipotence

#### A. Definition

1. “The doctrine that God is able to do all his holy will (from latin *omni*, ‘all,’ and *potens*, ‘powerful’).”<sup>12</sup>
2. “Omnipotence means that God is able to do anything consistent with his desires as God.”<sup>13</sup>
  - a. **Ephesians 1:11** *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,*
  - b. **Psalms 33:6** *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.*
3. “It is not true that God can do *anything*. There are things that God cannot do. For example, the Bible makes clear that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18). And God cannot stop being God.”<sup>14</sup>

#### B. Practical Application for life and counseling.

1. “The doctrine of God’s omnipotence teaches us that any power we have is derived from the sovereign God, the source of all power.”<sup>15</sup>
  - a. “There can be no effective counseling without the powerful working of the omnipotent God. Faithful counselors believe that, confess that, and point their counselees to that.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1249.

<sup>13</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 119.

<sup>14</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 120.

<sup>15</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 122.

<sup>16</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 123.

VI. Omniscience

A. Definition

1. “The doctrine that God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.”<sup>17</sup>
2. “God’s omniscience means that he has complete knowledge of everything. There is no event in the past, no situation in the present, no possibility in the future, and no element of his infinitely holy character of which God does not have perfect knowledge.”<sup>18</sup>
  - a. **Psalm 139:1-6** *O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.*
  - b. **Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 46:10; 1 John 3:20**

B. Practical Application for life and counseling.

1. “God knows us. He knows when we sit and when we rise. He is acquainted with all of our ways. God knows everything we will say before it comes out of our mouth. This truth means that God’s knowledge of us is one of intimacy and familiarity.”<sup>19</sup>
  - a. “Consider how important this knowledge is in counseling. No counselor can offer meaningful help to a counselee without accurate and careful knowledge of the counselee’s problem. Biblical counselors know the importance of careful listening in counseling . . . As counselors seek to gain knowledge about their counsees, they have two obstacles to overcome. The first obstacle is competency. Biblical counselors must grow in the skill of gleaning information in the context of counseling. The second obstacle is their natural limitation as a person. The most skilled biblical counselor will never be able to access all of the information relevant to a counselee’s situation. It is simply not available to us. The doctrine of divine omniscience means that God faces none of these limitations.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1249.

<sup>18</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 115.

<sup>19</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 116.

<sup>20</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 117.

VII. **Omnipresence**

A. Definition

1. “The doctrine that 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.”<sup>21</sup>
2. “That God is omnipresent means that he is always present everywhere with the fullness of who he is.”<sup>22</sup>
  - a. **Psalm 139:7-10** *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.*

B. Practical Application for life and counseling.

1. “The omnipresence of God is a truth we need for counseling because it is a truth people need when they require help. The fact that God is always present with you in the fullness of his deity is a strong comfort when you are suffering. God shares this truth of his existence with us because he wants us to have the comfort that an infinitely good God is always with us no matter where we are.”<sup>23</sup>
  - a. **Psalm 23:4** *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, the comfort me.*
2. “The fact that God is always present with you in the fullness of his deity is also a strong encouragement to you when you are sinning. God tells us this truth about himself to provide an accountability we need when we are tempted to sneak off alone and sin. You can never hide your sinful actions from God because he is always there with you.”<sup>24</sup>
3. “The doctrine of the divine omnipresence is a profound cure for the problem of loneliness. Omnipresence does not mean that it is unnecessary to be around other people since that reality is biblical too (e.g., Rom 14:15; Eph 4:15-16; Heb 10:24-25). But omnipresence teaches that God’s presence, though unseen, is just as real as any human being we might be with. God’s presence is also more important than any other person we might be with.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1249

<sup>22</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 113.

<sup>23</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 114.

<sup>24</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 114.

VIII. **Further Resources**

A. ACBC Approved Reading List

1. **Heath Lambert, A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 102-135.**
2. **Jay E. Adams, A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption, The Jay Adams Library (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 38-56.**
3. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Basic Theology (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 35-44.
4. John MacArthur, ed., Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 160-188.
5. Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 3rd ed (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 234-269.
6. Paul P. Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 187-197.
7. Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, Complete ed (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2018), 57-81.
8. John M. Frame, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013), 231-420.