

The Nature of God – Attributes of God

Context: Individual

Focus: Christ/Character/Competencies

As we continue our study of the nature of God we will now talk about the attributes of God. The attributes of God are those unique characteristics or qualities of God that define who He is. We will examine each attribute individually for the sake of clarity, but in reality they cannot be separated from each other. For example, God is love and God is just. God's love and God's justice are absolutely consistent with each other and together with God's other attributes define who He is.

Over time man has invented many different ways of classifying or organizing the attributes of God. One of the traditional classification methods is to divide God's attributes into His incommunicable and His communicable attributes. God's incommunicable attributes are those that are unique to Him & Him alone. God also has many attributes which man, being made in His likeness, can ultimately relate to. These communicable attributes are those which man, to a certain extent, shares with God. It is important to note however, that these communicable traits can only be found in their fullness and perfection in the unchanging, perfect character of God.

Exercises:

Day 1 – Included in this project's appendix is an outline summarizing God's incommunicable and communicable attributes. Today, review the first 3 incommunicable attributes: life, unity, and spirituality. Read the scriptures for each and in addition...

1. Read Psalm 115: 2-8; Jeremiah 51: 17-19; Acts 14:11-18; and 1 Thess. 1: 9.
Compare and contrast the life of God with the deadness of false gods.
2. Answer these questions:
 - What is the source of God's life? What scripture clearly states this?
 - If God is one and cannot be divided, why does the Bible speak of God in terms of individual attributes [e.g. God is Spirit (John 4:24), God is love (1 John 4:8), I [God] am holy (Lev. 11:44), etc.]?

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3. Read Psalm 18:6-15. If God is invisible Spirit, why does David describe Him in human terms here?

Day 2 – Review the next 5 incommunicable attributes: eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and perfection. Read the scriptures for each and do the following:

1. Read 2 Peter 3. What is the context of this chapter? In verse 8 Peter gives us an awesome statement of God's eternal nature and how He is not bound by time. How should our understanding that God is eternal be affecting our daily lives?
2. God's omnipresence means that there is no place where you can hide from Him. For the next 30 minutes go and hide yourself somewhere quiet. Take your Bible with you and read Psalm 139 several times. Meditate on King David's words in vv. 7-12. Thank God for His wonderful presence. Allow the Holy Spirit to convict you of any hidden sin in your life that you thought had been done in secret. Repent of this sin and ask God to remind you of His presence in times of temptation.
3. Read Isaiah 40:28-31 and 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. How could Paul boast in his weakness and infirmities? How about you; are you able to boast in your weakness? Is the omnipotent Creator the source of your strength?

Day 3 – Review the final 2 incommunicable attributes: immutability and independence. Read the scriptures for each and additionally...

1. If God was not unchanging, how would your Christian faith be different? What would be some of the consequences? Because He is unchanging what promises has He made to you that you have no doubt He is going to fulfill?
2. Find examples from the Bible of God demonstrating passion or emotion.
3. Did God create man because He was lonely? Does God need man or the rest of His creation? What scriptures support your answer?

Day 4 – Review the first of God's communicable attributes: wisdom, holiness, justice, wrath, and jealousy. Read the scriptures for each and do the following:

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1. Read James 1:5 and Proverbs 2:3-7. The all-knowing God of the universe has promised to give you wisdom if you ask for it. What do you need wisdom for? Ask and receive!
2. Read Isaiah 6:1-8. The revelation of God's holiness in turn revealed what to Isaiah about himself? What was required of Isaiah? Read 1 Peter 1:15-16 again. What is to be our response to the revelation of God's holiness?
3. Read Romans 1:18-2:10; Rev. 11:16-18; and 19:11-16. What is your response to the statement, "God was a god of wrath in the Old Testament but a god of love in the New Testament"?

Day 5 – Review the next 4 communicable attributes: righteousness, truthfulness, faithfulness, and goodness. Read the passages for each and complete the following:

1. Cite 4 examples of God's faithfulness to His people Israel. Read Romans 11. How will God show His faithfulness to Israel one last time? God's temporary rejection of Israel was a revelation to the Gentiles of which of His attributes?
2. "Your [God's] word is truth" (John 17:17). We serve a God who cannot lie and whose word is absolute truth. What area of doubt concerning truth clearly taught in the Bible is God asking you to give up today? Read Numbers 23:19; John 17:3, 17; and Titus 1:2 again. As you do ask God to replace your doubt with genuine faith. Repent for doubting Him and His word.

Day 6 – Review God's communicable attributes of love, grace, mercy, benevolence, persistence, and personality. Read the scripture references for each and additionally...

1. Read 1 John 3:10-5:5. What is the ultimate revelation of love? What are some practical ways that we share in and walk out God's love? Why are we able to share in this aspect of the nature of God? If we know God, what can we expect to happen in our lives?
2. Read the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:21-35). God's forgiveness of our sins is an outworking or application of His grace and mercy in our lives. How are you showing grace and mercy to others in obedience to God's command to forgive others as we have been forgiven? Ask God to show you areas in your

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life where you need to forgive others for the wrongs they have committed against you. Surrender those things to God and ask Him to help you forgive.

Day 7 – Complete the following to wrap up our study of the attributes of God:

1. Select 3 attributes that you will research and find additional scripture references for. Collect your scriptures and turn them in to your Cx mentor next week. These will be reviewed and included in the project appendix next year.
2. Review the communicable attributes of God once again. Examine yourself and identify how each is being reflected in your life. Note areas where there is room for improvement; ask God to help you realize growth in these areas.

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APPENDIX

God's Incommunicable Attributes

- ❖ Life – God is life and the ultimate source of all life (Deut. 30:19-20; Ps. 36:7-9; Jer. 10: 10; John 4:10-14; 5: 26)
- ❖ Unity – God is one (Deut. 6: 4)
 - God is not divisible into parts or more prominent attributes
 - Different of His attributes may be emphasized at different times but at any moment God possesses all of His attributes in their entirety
- ❖ Spirituality – God is immaterial, invisible Spirit (John 1: 18; 4: 24; 1 Tim. 1: 17; 6: 15, 16)
- ❖ Eternal – the uncaused One
 - God exists outside of time; He is without beginning and without end (Ps. 90: 1, 2; Is. 44: 6; Jude 25; Rev. 1: 8)
 - God views all events in time, whether past, present or future, with the same clarity (Ps. 90: 4; 2 Pet. 3: 8)
- ❖ Omnipresent – outside of space
 - God is transcendent (i.e. not anywhere) to His creation because He is not contained by it (1 Kings 8: 27)
 - Yet, He is immanent (i.e. everywhere) in Creation because He is accessible and entirely present at any point within it (Ps. 139: 7-10; Jer. 23: 23, 24)
- ❖ Omniscient – all-knowing
 - God's understanding is without measure (Ps. 139: 1-4; 147: 5; Is. 40: 28)
 - God is infinitely knowledgeable and wise (Rom. 11: 33)
- ❖ Omnipotent – all-powerful
 - God is able to do all things that are consistent with His unchanging nature and will (2 Chron. 20: 6; Mk 10: 27)
 - God's sovereign will cannot be frustrated (Is. 14: 27; 43: 13; Jer. 32: 17; Dan. 4: 35)
- ❖ Perfection (Mtt. 5: 48)
 - God completely possesses all excellent and good qualities

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- He does not lack any desirable part of any excellent thing
- ❖ Immutability – God is unchanging (Malachi 3: 6; Ps. 33: 11; James 1: 17; Numbers 23:19)
 - The unchanging nature of God does not mean our living Creator is inactive or impassible (i.e. not subject to passions or emotions)
 - God’s unchanging nature does not prevent Him from responding in different ways as man changes in response to God’s conditional dealings with him (Is. 38: 1-6; Jonah 3: 4, 10).
- ❖ Independence – God’s self-existence (i.e. aseity)
 - God is absolutely self-sufficient and independent from His creation (Ps. 50: 10-12; Acts 17: 24, 25)
 - Though God is absolutely independent, we and the rest of His creation do bring Him glory and do have meaning in His universe (Ps. 19: 1-4; Is. 43: 7; Rev. 4: 11)

God’s Communicable Attributes

- ❖ Wisdom – God has infinite wisdom in all that He does. He makes all of His decisions in His wisdom and His will is rooted in the fullness of all knowledge (Ps. 104:24, 147:5; Col. 2:2-3).
- ❖ Holiness – God’s holiness separates Him from evil of any kind. His holiness cannot be violated. (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). It is demonstrated by His...
 - Justice – God follows the laws that He established in absolute rightness (Ps. 19:9, 89:14, 119:172).
 - Wrath – God’s hatred of sin. The rightful punishment for unrighteousness and sin is ultimately the wrath of God (Exodus 32:9-10; Deut. 9:7-8, 29:23; 2 Kings 22:13; Rom 1:18; 2:5-9, 9:22-23; Col. 3:5-6; 1 Thess. 2:14-16)
 - Jealousy – God is continually looking to protect His honor. God is jealous for the affections and worship of all creation (Ex. 20:4-6; Deut. 4:23-24)
- ❖ Righteousness – Righteousness is referring to God’s holy interactions with others. It is the interaction of His holiness with all else in accordance with the laws He has put in place. He is entirely right in all that He does (Ps. 19:7-9; Jer. 9:24).

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- ❖ Truthfulness – God is a God of truth. In everything He sets the standard for truth. He is the final authority for truth in the perfection of His veracity (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; John 14:6, 17:3, 17; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18).
- ❖ Faithfulness – In God’s nature is the essence of faithfulness. He proves true completely and entirely, without question (Ps. 89:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 2 Cor. 1:18-22; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; 2 Pet. 4:19).
- ❖ Goodness – The goodness of God speaks of His moral attributes such as His grace, love, and faithfulness. No one is good except God only (Ex. 34:5-6; Ps. 100:5; 145:8-9; Matt. 19:16-17 (cf. Mark 10 17-18, Luke 18:18-19)).
- ❖ Love – God has an unending, undying, everlasting love for His children (Deut. 33:12 (NIV); Ps. 63:3, 103:17; Rom. 8:35-39; Eph. 2:4-5; 1 John 4:7-12).
 - Grace – God’s grace is His undeserved favor and love that He has for His children. He did not love man because of something man did to earn it, but He loved him with extravagant love and grace that man could never earn (Ps. 103:8; Eph. 1:5-8; Titus 2:11).
 - Mercy – God’s mercy is the love that does not give sinful man what he deserves but instead made a way for redemption for him through Jesus’ blood. God’s mercy is His act of compassion on man (Ps. 103:11-13; Matt. 9:36-38; Rom. 9:15-18).
 - Benevolence – God loves with a selfless, benevolent love (Deut. 7:7-8; Matt. 5:45; John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Rom. 5:6-10).
 - Persistence – God does not abandon or give up on those He loves; He is long-suffering. He persistently seeks to draw them closer to Himself & patiently waits for them to turn to Him (Ps. 86:15; Rom. 2:4, 9:22; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15).
- ❖ Personality – God is personal with self-cognizance and will
 - He has a name (Ex. 3: 14) which is used to not only describe Him but also to address Him personally
 - He is capable of mutually fulfilling relationship with other personal beings (Gen. 3)