

# Theology

## *The Attributes of God* *pt. 2*



# God's Attributes

Incommunicable	Communicable				
	<i>Attributes describing God's being</i>	<i>Mental Attributes</i>	<i>Moral Attributes</i>	<i>Attributes of Purpose</i>	<i>"Summary" Attributes</i>
Independence (Self-Existence)	Spirituality	Knowledge (Omniscience)	Goodness	Will	Perfection
Constancy (Unchangeableness)	Invisibility	Wisdom	Love	Freedom	Blessedness
Eternity		Truthfulness (and Faithfulness)	Mercy, Grace, Patience	Omnipotence (Power, Sovereignty)	Beauty
Omnipresence (Immensity)			Holiness		Glory
Unity			Peace (or Order)		
			Righteousness, Justice		
			Jealousy		
			Wrath		

N.B. This is only a guide. There is **no** perfect, definitive categorization of the attributes of God. This lesson we will focus on the **communicable** attributes.

# Communicable Attributes

- attributes of God as He is related to His creatures, God as a personal Being
- those attributes God shares or “communicates” with us
- qualities of God for which at least a partial counterpart can be found in his human creations e.g., love is infinite in God and is found in partial form in humans

# Attributes describing God's being

## Spirituality

### References

- [John 4:24](#)
  - [Phil. 3:3](#)
  - [1 Cor. 14:14](#)
  - [1 Cor. 6:17](#)
  - [Rom. 8:16](#)
  - [Eccl. 12:7](#)
- Review these scriptures.
  - Why is God so strongly displeased at carved idols, even those that are intended to represent Him?
  - How then should we picture God in our minds when we pray to Him?

**God's *spirituality* means that God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence.**

- God is spirit. That is, he is not composed of matter, is not made up of parts, and does not have a physical body.
- Scripture references to God's hands and feet, eyes and ears, mouth and nose are all anthropomorphic figures of speech.
- God's being is different from *anything* else in the physical creation. He is not even exactly like our own spirits, for those are created things.

## Invisibility

### References

- [John 1:18](#)
  - [John 6:46](#)
  - [1 Tim. 1:17](#)
  - [1 Tim. 6:15-16](#)
  - [1 John 4:12](#)
  - [Ex. 33:20](#)
  - [1 John 3:2](#)
  - [2 Cor. 3:18](#)
- Review these scriptures.
  - How can we reconcile God being invisible with Jesus being the image of the invisible God ([Col. 1:15](#); [John 14:9](#))?

**God's *invisibility* means that God's total essence, all of his spiritual being, cannot be seen by us, yet God still shows himself to us partially in this age and more fully in the age to come.**

- God decides to whom he will reveal Himself. We must intentionally seek after fellowship with him & not take it for granted.
- God used analogies from human life and the created world to reveal aspects of Himself.
- God has also adopted human form to appear to people on occasion, as recorded especially in the OT (these appearances are called *theophanies*).
- Scripture tells us that in heaven those who are with God will "see him as he is" and will be "transformed into the same image".

# Mental Attributes (1)

## Knowledge (Omniscience)

### References

- [1 Sam. 2:3](#)
- [Job 37:16](#)
- [Ps. 147:4](#)
- [Isa. 40:27-28](#)
- [1 John 3:20](#)
- [1 Cor. 2:10-11](#)
- Review these scriptures.
- Consider the circumstances of your life. Will God ever make a mistake, or fail to plan ahead, or fail to take into account all the eventualities that occur?
- How is the answer to this question a blessing for you?

### **God fully *knows* Himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.**

- Even though God is infinite (unlimited) He fully knows Himself in every detail.
- God knows all things that exist, all things that happen throughout time, and all things possible. God is always fully aware of everything - He always knows all things at once. God knows the intimate details of each person's life in amazing detail.
- Even though He knows all (including what we will do) God has given humans the ability to think about what to do, consciously decide what we will do, and then follow the course of action we have chosen. Our choices have an impact on what happens in our lives.

## Wisdom

### References

- [Rom. 16:27](#)
- [Job 9:4](#)
- [Job 12:13](#)
- [Ps. 104:24](#)
- [1 Cor. 1:24, 30](#)
- [Rom. 11:33](#)
- [Rom. 8:28-29](#)
- Review these scriptures.
- Consider a "thorn in your flesh" that you are currently experiencing (similar to Paul in [2 Cor 12:7](#))
- When you reflect on God's wisdom at work in your situation, how does it affect your peace?
- If you don't see or believe in God's wisdom at work what might you do to change your attitude?

### **God's *wisdom* means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals.**

- God applies His knowledge to achieve His ends in a way that glorifies Him most. God always makes wise decisions about what He will do.
- God's wisdom should be a source of confidence to Christians since God uses all things to advance us towards His goal of our conformity to the image of Christ ([Rom. 8:28-29](#))
- God's people can ask Him confidently for wisdom when we need it ([James 1:5](#)), but we can never fully share God's wisdom. This means that there are many times in life when we will not be able to understand why God allowed something to happen.

# Mental Attributes (2)

## Truthfulness (& Faithfulness)

### References

- [John 17:3](#)
  - [1 John 5:20](#)
  - [Job 37:16](#)
  - [Deut. 32:4](#)
  - [Num. 23:19](#)
  - [2 Sam. 7:28](#)
  - [Titus 1:2](#)
  - [Heb. 6:18](#)
  - [Ps. 12:6](#)
  - [Prov. 30:5](#)
  - [John 17:17](#)
  - [Prov. 12:22](#)
  - [Ps. 25:10](#)
  - [Isa. 65:16](#)
  - [Jer. 10:10](#)
  - [John 14:6](#)
  - [Deut. 7:9](#)
  - [Ps. 89:33](#)
- Review & meditate on these scriptures.
  - Despite what society tells us there's no such thing as a 'little white lie'. All lies we tell dishonor God and diminish His glory since we are made in His image for the purpose of reflecting God's glory. Why then, are we sometimes so comfortable with lies?
  - Do you need God's help to more fully reflect His truthfulness in any area of your life (e.g.: promising to pray for someone; saying that you will be at a place at a certain time; exaggerating events to make a more exciting story; fairly representing your opponent's viewpoint in an argument)?

**God's *truthfulness* means that He is the true God, and all His knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.**

- God is the only one who fully conforms to His own idea of what God should be: namely, a being who is infinitely perfect in power, in wisdom, in goodness, in lordship over time and space, and so forth.
- All of God's knowledge is true and is the final standard of truth. He is never mistaken in His perception or understanding of the world. All that He knows and thinks is true and He sees things as they really are.
- God is reliable and faithful in His words. God will always do what He has said and fulfill what He has promised. We can depend on Him never to be unfaithful to His promises that He has made to His people.
- Christians should imitate God's truthfulness in our own reaction to truth and falsehood - like God, we should *love* truth and *hate* falsehood.

# Moral Attributes (1)

## Goodness

### References

- [Luke 18:19](#)
- [Ps. 100:5](#)
- [Ps. 106:1](#)
- [Ps. 107:1](#)
- [Ps. 34:8](#)
- [Ps. 119:68](#)
- [James 1:17](#)
- [Ps. 145:9](#)
- [Acts 14:17](#)
- [Ps. 84:11](#)
- [Matt. 7:11](#)
- [Rom. 12:2](#)
- Review these scriptures.
- How would you rate your attitude of thankfulness to God for the good gifts He provides you?
- What can you do to remember to thank Him more frequently?

**The *goodness* of God means that God is the final standard of good, and all that God is and does is worthy of approval.**

- Good is what God approves. When we evaluate things in the way God created us to evaluate them, we will also approve what God approves and delight in which He delights.
- God is good and everything that He does is good.
- Christians should do good and thereby imitate the goodness of God.

## Love

### References

- [1 John 4:8](#)
- [John 17:24](#)
- [John 3:35](#)
- [1 John 4:10-11](#)
- [Rom. 5:8](#)
- [John 3:16](#)
- [Gal. 2:20](#)
- [Matt. 22:37-39](#)
- [1 John 5:3](#)
- [1 John 2:15](#)
- [1 John 4:19](#)
- [Zeph. 3:17](#)
- [John 13:35](#)
- [John 15:13](#)
- [Rom. 13:10](#)
- [1 Cor. 13:4-7](#)
- [Heb. 10:24](#)
- [Matt. 5:43-48](#)

**God's *love* means that God eternally gives of Himself to others.**

- It is part of God's nature to give of Himself to bring about blessing or good for others.
- God's love is expressed in His relationship to sinful human beings.
- It is God's nature to give of Himself to those upon whom He has set His love, and He will continue to act this way toward them for all eternity.
- Christians imitate this attribute by loving God in return and by loving others in the way God loves them. By giving of ourselves, we bring joy to God's heart.

# Moral Attributes (2)

## Mercy, Grace, Patience

### References

- [Ex. 34:6](#)
  - [Ps. 103:8](#)
  - [2 Sam. 24:14](#)
  - [Ex. 33:19; Rom. 9:15](#)
  - [Ps. 119:132](#)
  - [1 Peter 5:10](#)
  - [Rom. 3:23-24](#)
  - [Num. 14:18](#)
  - [Ps. 86:15](#)
  - [Ps. 103:8](#)
  - [Jonah 4:2](#)
  - [Nah. 1:3](#)
  - [Rom. 2:4](#)
  - [1 Tim. 1:16](#)
  - [Rom. 11:6](#)
- Review these scriptures.
- To whom could you show special care during the next week to reflect God's mercy more fully?

**God's *mercy* is His goodness toward those in misery and distress.**

**God's *grace* is His goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.**

**God's *patience* is His goodness in withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.**

- Christians should imitate God's patience, be "slow to anger" and be patient in suffering like Christ. Doing so requires a moment-by-moment trust in God to fulfill His promises and purposes in our lives.

## Holiness

### References

- [Ps. 71:22; 78:41; 89:18](#)
  - [Ex. 26:33](#)
  - [Ps. 24:3](#)
  - [Ex. 20:11](#)
  - [Isa. 1:4; 5:19, 24; 6:3](#)
  - [Ps. 99:9; 22:3](#)
  - [Lev. 19:2; 11:44-45; 20:26](#)
  - [1 Peter 1:16](#)
  - [Ex. 19:6](#)
- Review these scriptures.
  - Are there activities or relationships in your life that are hindering your growth in holiness?
  - What will you do next to separate yourself from sin and devote yourself to seeking God's honor?

**God's *holiness* means that He is separated from sin and devoted to seeking His own honor.**

- God Himself is the Most Holy One, and He is often referred to as the "Holy One of Israel" in scripture.
- God's discipline is given to His people so that we may share His holiness ([Heb 12:10](#)).
- Without holiness we cannot see/interact/share space with God ([Heb 12:14](#))
- At the individual level and as a whole church we must grow in holiness.



# Moral Attributes (3)

## Peace (Order)

### References

- [1 Cor. 14:33](#)
- [Rom. 15:33](#); [16:20](#)
- [Phil. 4:9](#)
- [1 Thess. 5:23](#)
- [Heb. 13:20](#)
- [Eph. 2:14](#)
- [2 Thess. 3:16](#)
- [Ps. 29:11](#)
- [Isa. 48:22](#); [57:21](#); [55:12](#)
- [Gal. 5:22-23](#)

- Is your inner life (within your head and heart) separate from confusion and disorder? What about your external life (relationships with family, neighbors, work colleagues, church members)?
- What will you do next to reflect God's peace more fully?

**God's *peace* means that in God's being and in His actions He is separate from all confusion and disorder, yet He is continually active in innumerable well-ordered, fully controlled, simultaneous actions.**

- In the Old Testament, the peace that God gives is described with the rich and full concept of the Hebrew term *shalôm*, meaning "peace" with an overall sense of well-being in all situations and relationships.
- Peace does not imply lack of activity, but rather, ordered and controlled activity.
- To imitate God in this way Christians must draw on His wisdom, knowledge and power.

## Righteousness, Justice

### References

- [Deut. 32:4](#)
- [Gen. 18:25](#)
- [Ps. 19:8](#)
- [Isa. 45:19](#)
- [Rom. 3:25-26](#)

- Do you ever wish that some of God's laws were different than they are?
- What Scripture references might convince you that God's character and His laws are right in those areas?

**God's *righteousness* means that God always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right.**

- Although *righteousness* and *justice* are 2 different words in English, there is only one word group for these concepts in OT Hebrew and NT Greek.
- As a result of God's righteousness (or justice), it is necessary that He treat people according to what they deserve. God punishes sin, for it does not deserve reward; it is wrong and deserves punishment.
- God does not need to explain to humans why His actions are right.

# Moral Attributes (4)

## Jealousy

### References

- [Ex. 20:5](#)
  - [Ex. 34:14](#)
  - [Deut. 4:24](#); [5:9](#)
  - [Rev. 4:11](#)
  - [Isa. 48:11](#)
- Do you reflect God's jealousy for His honor when you hear Him dishonored in conversation or in the media?
  - What can you do to deepen your jealousy for God's honor?

**God's *jealousy* means that God continually seeks to protect His own honor.**

- God desires that worship be given to Himself and not to false gods/idols.
- Humans (and nothing else in creation) deserves the honor that belongs to God alone.
- It is right for God to seek His honor, since He alone is infinitely worthy of praise.

## Wrath

### References

- [Ex. 32:9-10](#)
  - [Deut. 9:7-8](#)
  - [Deut. 29:23](#)
  - [2 Kings 22:13](#)
  - [John 3:36](#)
  - [Rom. 1:18](#); [2:5](#), [8](#)
  - [Col. 3:6](#)
  - [1 Thess. 1:10](#); [2:16](#); [5:9](#)
  - [Heb. 3:11](#)
  - [Rev. 6:16-17](#)
- Should we love the fact that God is a God of wrath who hates sin?
  - In what ways is it right for us to imitate this wrath?
  - In what ways is it wrong for us to do so?

**God's *wrath* means that He intensely hates all sin.**

- God's wrath directed against sin is closely related to God's holiness and justice.
- The delay of the execution of God's wrath upon evil is for the purpose of leading people to repentance.
- Jesus delivers those who trust in Him from the wrath to come.

# Attributes of Purpose (1)

## Will

### References

- [Eph. 1:11](#)
- [Rev. 4:11](#)
- [Dan. 4:32](#)
- [Rom. 13:1](#)
- [Acts 4:27-28](#)
- [1 Peter 3:17; 4:19](#)
- [James 4:13-15](#)
- [Matt. 7:21](#)
- [1 John 5:14](#)

- As children grow up, what are proper and improper ways for them to exhibit greater exercise of individual will and freedom from their parents' control?
- Are these to be expected as evidence of our creation in the image of God?

**God's *will* is that attribute of God whereby He approves and determines to bring about every action necessary for the existence and activity of Himself and all creation.**

- God's will is the ultimate reason for everything that happens. Including the suffering of Christians.
- God exhibits His will differently: He necessarily wills to be who He is (e.g. "I am who I am"); He freely chose to create the universe; He keeps some aspects of His will hidden ([Deut. 29:29](#)); He reveals some aspects of His will as commands for mankind to obey, which are declarations of what is pleasing in His sight.

## Freedom

### References

- [Ps. 115:3](#)
- [Prov. 21:1](#)
- [Dan. 4:35](#)

**God's *freedom* is that attribute of God whereby He does whatever He pleases.**

- Nothing in creation can hinder God from doing His will. God is not constrained by anything external to Himself and He is free to do whatever He wishes to do.
- It was God's totally free will that was the final reason why He chose to create the world and to save sinners.

# Attributes of Purpose (2)

## Omnipotence (Power, Sovereignty)

### References

- [Ps. 24:8](#)
- [Gen. 18:14](#)
- [Jer. 32:17,27](#)
- [Eph. 3:20](#)
- [2 Cor. 6:18](#)
- [Matt. 3:9](#)
- [Rev. 1:8](#)
- [Luke 1:37](#)
- [Matt. 19:26](#)

- If God's power is His ability to do what He wills to do, then is power for us the ability to obey God's will and bring about results in the world that are pleasing to Him?
- What are specific ways in which we can increase such power in our lives?

### **God's *omnipotence* means that God is able to do all His holy will.**

- Whereas God's freedom referred to the fact that there are no external constraints on God's decisions, God's omnipotence refers to His own power to do what He decides to do.
- God possesses infinite power and authority.
- God's use of His power is only limited by His own character, e.g. He never lies ([Titus 1:2](#); [Heb. 6:18](#)), & He cannot be tempted with evil ([James 1:13](#)).
- God's exercise of power over His creation is also called God's sovereignty.

# "Summary" Attributes (1)

## Perfection

### References

- [Matt. 5:48](#)
- [Ps. 18:30](#)
- [Deut. 32:4](#)

**God's *perfection* means that God completely possesses all excellent qualities and lacks no part of any qualities that would be desirable for Him.**

- God lacks nothing in His excellence. He is "complete" or "perfect" in every way.
- This attribute (and the next 3) are referred to as "summary" attributes because they do not fit well into the other categories. In a sense, they apply to all the attributes

## Blessedness

### References

- [1 Tim. 6:15](#)
- [1 Tim. 1:11](#)
- [Gen. 1:31](#)
- [Isa. 62:5](#)
- [Prov. 8:30-31](#)
- [Zeph. 3:17](#)

- Think about the qualities that you admire in other people.
- Which of these are right to admire and which are not?
- How can you decide?
- How can we come to delight more frequently and more fully in God Himself?

**God's *blessedness* means that God delights fully in Himself and in all that reflects His character.**

- God is perfectly happy & has fullness of joy in Himself. God takes pleasure in everything in creation that mirrors His excellence.
- Christians can imitate God's blessedness when we find delight and happiness in all that is pleasing to God.

# "Summary" Attributes (2)

## Beauty

### References

- [Ps. 27:4](#)
- [Ps. 73:25](#)
- In Ps. 27:4 David's utmost desire was "that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple". Do you understand why?
- Do you share this desire?

**God's *beauty* is that attribute of God whereby He is the sum of all desirable qualities.**

- Whereas "perfection" means that God doesn't lack anything desirable, "beauty" means that God *has* everything desirable. These are 2 different ways of affirming the same truth
- We reflect God's beauty in our own lives when we exhibit conduct that is pleasing to him.
- Individually and corporately, we reflect God's beauty in every way in which we exhibit His character. When we reflect His character, He delights in us and finds us beautiful in His sight.

## Glory

### References

- [Ps. 24:10](#)
- [Ps. 104:1-2](#)
- [Luke 2:9](#)
- [Matt. 17:2](#)
- [Rev. 21:23](#)
- [2 Cor. 3:18](#)
- [Matt. 5:16](#)
- [Phil. 2:15](#)

**God's *glory* is the created brightness that surrounds God's revelation of Himself.**

- In one sense, glory refers to the "honor" or "excellent reputation" of God (see Is. 43:7; Rom. 3:23; John 17:5; Heb 1:3). In that case, the glory of God describes the superlative honor that should be given to God by everything in the universe, rather than one of God's attributes.
- In another sense, God's glory refers to the bright light that surrounds His presence. It belongs to Him alone and is the visible manifestation of the excellence of God's character.
- The greatness of God's being, the perfection of all His attributes, is something that we can never fully comprehend, but before which we can only stand in awe and worship.

# References

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