

Theology Proper

The Attributes of God's Personality – Lesson 5

- **What is God like? What are the characteristics that define “God”?**
- **Note:** There are many ways of grouping and categorizing the attributes of God which are revealed in Scripture. Different authors will suggest varying numbers of divine attributes. In reality, the qualities and glories of an infinite and absolute God are numberless.
- **We will outline God's Attributes in the following three groupings:**
 - **Attributes of God's Personality** - Spirituality, life, intelligence, purpose, activity, freedom, emotions, self-consciousness
 - **Attributes of God's Greatness** – Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omnisapience, Eternality, Immutability, Self-Existence, Infinity, Perfection, Incomprehensibility
 - **Attributes of God's Goodness** – Holiness, Truth, Love, Righteousness, Faithfulness, Mercy, Grace
- **The Attributes of God's Personality**
 - These are qualities of the divine essence which are true of God simply by virtue of the fact that He possesses personality; God is not just an impersonal force, the “uncaused cause,” but the personal Creator and Ruler of the universe. This is demonstrated by His possession of the following attributes.
- **Lesson overview: Attributes of God's Personality** - Spirituality, life, intelligence, purpose, activity, freedom, emotions, self-consciousness

I. Spirituality - God is a _____.

A. Scripture:

1. _____ — *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*
2. **Zechariah 4:6** — *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

B. Results:

1. God does not have flesh and bones, God does not have a physical body, but rather God is purely _____.
 - a. **Luke 24:39** – *“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”* (I Timothy 1:17)
2. God is not dependent upon matter. God exists apart from the material world. Nothing can “contain” God.
 - **1 Kings 8:27** — *“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?”*
3. Since God exists apart from the material world God cannot be perceived by the physical senses. It is not possible that man, on his own, could ever “_____” God (I Corinthians 2:14).

- If our eyes were “dead” or did not work we could not see, if our ears were “dead” we could not hear. The Bible says the unbeliever’s “spirit” is _____ and therefore he cannot see or hear the spiritual truths (Ephesians 2:1-5).

C. Difficulties

1. If God is an invisible spirit, how can we know He exists?

- a. God has revealed Himself in ways which men can perceive. It is not that man cannot know God exists, it is that man cannot discover God. The only way man would know God exists is if God in some way revealed Himself to man.
- b. _____ – “*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for _____ and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*”
- c. _____ **is the greatest physical manifestation of God to man.** God inhabited a physical body and came into our world so that we might _____ Him (John 14:7-9).

2. If God is an invisible spirit, how can we explain texts that speak of people seeing God?

- a. **Examples: Exodus 24:10-11** – Moses and the elders of Israel “saw the God of Israel”. Judges 13:22 – Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, “We have seen God.” Isaiah 6:1-5 – The prophet saw the Lord, “high and lifted up.”
- b. **Answer:** These are “_____” or temporary manifestations of God in some physical form. Though God is pure spirit, He has the power to manifest Himself in physical forms; be it a dove (John 1:32), a burning bush (Ex. 3:2-6), a cloud of glory (Ex. 40:34-38), etc., and God has chosen to permanently manifested Himself in the person of _____.

3. If God is a pure, invisible spirit dwelling in no body, why do the Scriptures refer to His hands, eyes, feet, ears, etc.?

- a. **Examples: Isaiah 65:2** – “*I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people,*” **2 Chronicles 16:9** – “*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro.*” **Psalms 34:15** – “*His ears hear their cry.*”
- b. **Answer:** These are simply “anthropomorphisms”, or expressions of God’s activity in a manner which will be comprehensible to men.
 - 1) The word *anthropomorphism* comes from two Greek words, *anthropos*, meaning “_____,” and *morphe*, meaning “form.” In theological terms, anthropomorphism is making God in some way into the form of man.
 - 2) *Anthropomorphisms are aids to finite minds in understanding the infinite God. They are symbolic representations to bring the infinite within the apprehension of the finite. They serve to make God real and to express His various interests, powers, and activities.* (Thiessen, 120)

II. Life – God is _____

A. Meaning:

1. Theologically, “life” may be defined as “potential energy or activity, directed by mind or intelligence.”

2. God is living in that He possesses within Himself the source of all being and activity, for Himself and for others.
3. **God is “self-existent”**; God is in Himself the source of His own existence. We exist dependent upon things outside of ourselves such as air, water, food, etc. God needs _____ outside Himself to exist.

B. Scripture:

1. **John 5:26** - *"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;"*
2. **Exodus 3:14** - "And God said unto Moses, I _____ THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."
3. **Exodus 6:3** – And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (El Shaddai – Almighty God, Most powerful God), but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.
4. Jehovah = "the _____ One"

C. Results:

1. God is not only Living, but He is the source of all living things!
 - **Genesis 2:7** - *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of _____; and man became a living soul."*
2. Since God is the source of all things living, all living things are also _____ upon God for life.
 - a. **Acts 17:25** – *"Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, **seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;**"*
 - b. **Psalm 36:9** – *"For with thee is the fountain of _____:"*
 - c. **Job 12:10** – *"In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind."*
 - d. Example of Belshazzar (Daniel 5:23)
 - **Daniel 5:23** — *But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:*
3. **Just as God breathed life into man, so God has breathed life into the _____.** **Scripture is "God-_____."**
 - a. _____ - *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
 - b. _____ - *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*
4. Because God is living, He is able to _____ the yearnings of man's soul, because He is a living God.
 - **Psalm 84:2** — *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. (Isaiah 44:9-15)*
5. **God's life was manifested in Jesus Christ who came as the life-giver.**

- a. **John 1:4** - "In Him was _____, and the life was the light of men."
- b. **John 10:10** — *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have _____, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

c. Jesus Gives Eternal Life

1) To the religious lost – Nicodemus

- **John 3:16** - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have _____ life."

2) To the Women at the Well

- **John 4:14** - "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into _____ life."

3) To the Jewish crowds

- i. **John 5:21** - "For as the Father raised up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."
- ii. **John 5:26** - "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life _____ himself;"

4) John 6:58 (bread of life); John 7:37-38 (water of life)

5) Jesus speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd who cares for His sheep in John 10

- **John 10:28** - "*And I give unto them _____; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*"

6) When Lazarus died – Jesus said to Mary/Martha

- **John 11:25** - "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the _____: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:"

7) When asked by Thomas how you get to heaven, Jesus said:

- **John 14:6** - "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the _____: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"

8) In His closing prayer the night before His death:

- **John 17:2** - "*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal _____ to as many as thou hast given him.*"

9) Our sin brings death; but Jesus brings life.

- i. **Romans 6:23** - "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"
- ii. **1 Corinthians 15:45** - "*And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*"

III. _____ – God is intelligent.

A. Meaning:

1. Intelligence consists of three factors:

- a. _____ - perception of facts as they are.
- b. _____ - insight into facts.

- c. _____ - place facts in proper relationships and apply them for good ends.
2. God's intelligence in perfection is seen everywhere in His works. But perhaps most of all His intelligence (knowledge, understanding, and wisdom) is manifested in the plan of redemption through Jesus Christ.

B. Scripture:

1. **Proverbs 3:19-20** - *"The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew."* (1 Samuel 2:3, Isaiah 11:2)
2. _____ - *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and _____ of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"*

IV. _____ - God is a God of purpose.

A. Meaning:

1. God is able to establish a purpose and work that purpose out.
2. Purpose is defined as "something one intends to get or do; a resolution or determination." (Webster)
3. Animals do not have purpose; they simply react to present situations and stimuli. An animal cannot contradict his instincts in the interest of a future goal.

B. Scripture:

1. **Isaiah 14:24** - "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:"
2. **Romans 8:27-28** - "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* _____."
3. **Isaiah 14:26-27** - "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"
4. **Ephesians 3:11** - "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"
5. The most blessed illustration of God's purpose is His treatment of believers. The work of redemption has not yet been fully accomplished in us and yet, because He has "purposed it", He calls us "saints" as if the goal were already achieved. (Romans 8:29-31)
 - a. **Romans 8:29-31** - "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?"
 - b. **Ephesians 1:4** - "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"

C. Implications:

1. **Since God is a God of purpose – God has purpose for us.**

- a. How is purpose in our lives effected by believing in God as our Creator instead of the theories of evolution?
 - b. How would you summarize the purpose of man? why did God create man? _____
 - c. Man's purpose was summarized as good as it could be by the Westminster shorter Catechism who asked, "*What is the chief End of Man? Answer: Man's chief End is to _____ God and _____ Him forever.*"
 - d. The Glory of God is the central theme of the Scriptures.
 - 1) The word "glory" in the Bible comes from the Greek word "Doxa" where we get Doxology. In reference to God, it means the splendor, majesty, and excellency that only belongs to God.
 - 2) _____ — *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*
 - 3) _____ *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*
 - 4) **Psalm 29:2** - *Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*
- 2. Practical ways to give glory to God:**
- a. _____ **God**
 - **Matthew 22:36–37** — *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37; Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*
 - b. _____ **our sins**
 - **Joshua 7:19** — *And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.*
 - c. _____ **God**
 - **Romans 4:20** — *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in _____, giving glory to God;*
 - d. _____
 - **John 15:8** — *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much _____; so shall ye be my disciples.*
 - e. **Giving _____ to God**
 - **Psalm 50:23** — *Whoso offereth praise _____ glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*
 - f. **Being faithful through _____ for Christ**
 - **1 Peter 4:14–16 — 14;** *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15; But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16; Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*
 - g. _____

- **John 14:13** — *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

h. Spreading the _____

- **2 Thessalonians 3:1** — *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:*

V. _____ - God is active.

A. Meaning:

1. The idea is that God is able to carry out what He has purposed. Because God has purpose, He is able to establish designs or goals. But that is not enough; God is not just mind. Because He is a God of activity, He is able to do all that is necessary to accomplish those purposes.
2. This opposes Deism which believes God _____ from the universe after He created it; we don't believe He withdrew, we believe He has always been active in His creation.

B. Scripture:

1. **Genesis 1:1** - "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
2. **Psalms 92:4-5** - "For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O LORD, how great are thy works! *and thy thoughts are very deep.*"

C. Examples of God's activity and Work.

1. **God's Work in the person of _____ . Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh and did the work of God.**

- a. **John 4:34** - "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
- b. **John 17:4** - "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 6:38, John 18:11)

2. **God's Work in the _____**

- a. The primary activity and work that God is doing on earth is being carried out through the vehicle of His Church.
 - **Matthew 16:18** - "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

b. Jesus gave His life for the Church.

- 1) **Acts 20:28** - "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own _____." (Eph. 5:25)

- 2) Holy Spirit launched the Church in Acts 2

c. God's care for the Church is seen in the N.T.

- 1) The Gospels record Jesus' life and death for the Church. Acts 2 gives the beginning of the Church; Romans is like the "Constitution of Christianity"; outlining many of the doctrines of the faith. Then you immediately come to the book of I Corinthians.

- **I Corinthians 1:1-2** – *"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, **Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,**"*

- 2) You have letters to individual Churches in the NT - Galatians/Ephesians/Philippians/Colossians; 1-2 Thess.

3) You have letters to pastors of Churches (1-2 Timothy, Titus).

4) Then you come to the last book of the Bible, Revelation and what do you find?

• **Revelation 1:4** - *"John to the seven churches which are in Asia."*

d. The Church is God's primary vehicle for carrying out the Great commission, to make disciples of all people, to see them saved, baptized, and discipled. To be a part of the activity of God, you need to be a part of the activity of His _____.

3. **God's Work in the lives of** _____.

• _____ - *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 1:21)*

VI. _____ - God is Free

A. Meaning:

1. This means God is independent of His creatures and His Creation.
2. God is free and His actions are determined by His own will.
3. A synonym often used for this attribute: _____.

B. Scripture

1. **Isaiah 40:13-14** - *"Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?"*
2. **Psalms 135:6** - *"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."*
3. **Daniel 4:35** - *"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his _____ in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"*
4. **Ephesians 1:11** - *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him **who worketh all things after the counsel of his own** _____:"*

C. Question:

1. Is God restricted in any way if He is free?

- Some may say God is restricted by His own nature – His holiness restricts Him from ever sinning. But how can we even use the word "restriction" in connection with perfection? There cannot be restrictions in perfection – you are not held back – you are set free! You are not "restricted" from sin, you are "_____" when you can live without sin! God is not restricted from sin, He is free from sin.

D. Results:

1. Man can be set free by the only One who truly is free.

a. Before we were saved were we free?

1) **John 8:34** - *"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the _____ of sin."*

2) **John 8:36** - *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."*

- 3) _____ - "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of _____, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. **18** - "Being then made _____ from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
- 4) Freedom isn't being able to do what you want, it is being able to do what God wants you to do.
2. The only way God can ever be obligated to us in any way is if He chooses to obligate Himself to us.

VII. _____ - God has emotional capacity.

A. Meaning: The idea is that as a person, God is able to feel genuine emotion.

Emotion must not be regarded as physical; they arise from the spirit and are a genuine and necessary aspect of personality. God cannot be wholly identified with man in this, but in fact God does in a real sense feel emotions.

B. Scripture:

1. _____
 - a. **Psalm 7:11** — *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*
 - b. **Mark 3:5** — *And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*
2. _____
 - **Psalm 145:8** - *The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*
3. _____
 - **Psalm 103:13** — *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.*
4. _____
 - **John 11:35** — *Jesus wept.*
5. _____
 - **Romans 1:18** - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;"
6. _____
 - **Jeremiah 31:3** - "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (John 3:16; I John 4:10-11)
7. _____
 - a. **Deuteronomy 5:9** - "Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me,"
 - b. Jealousy when rooted in covetousness is sinful.
8. _____
 - a. **Isaiah 62:5** — **5**; *For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*

b. Luke 15:10 - "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

9. _____

- **Ephesians 4:30** - "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Judges 10:16)

C. Note: There is no reason to regard these as anthropomorphisms. God in every sense feels these emotions, as well as many others. God is a person, and He knows all things real and possible.

D. Note: as God's children we should begin to feel emotionally as God feels about things.

- **Ephesians 5:1-2** - "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; **2** And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

VIII. Self-_____

A. Meaning - God is aware of His own existence. Man is a person, and thus he possesses self-consciousness. But that self-consciousness is _____. Only God knows Himself perfectly and fully.

B. Scripture:

- 1. Exodus 3:14** - "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."
- 2. Isaiah 45:5** - "*I am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:"
- 3. Isaiah 46:9** - "Remember the former things of old: for *I am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me," (I Cor. 2:10-11)

• **Weekly Assignments**

- Study for test over lesson 5
- Read "Biblical Doctrine" (MacArthur/Mayhue) pages 168-179
- Read: Basic Theology (Charles Ryrie) chapter 6