

Attributes of God

Week 1 - Introduction

“What comes into our minds when we think of God is the most important thing about us.” – A.W. Tozer

“The proper study of God’s elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.” – Charles Spurgeon

Working definition of “attributes of God”: **The features, qualities, and characteristics that inherently exist in God as revealed in Scripture.**

“God’s glory lies chiefly in His attributes, which are the several beams by which the divine nature shines forth.” – Thomas Watson

“Knowing God is a matter of personal dealing, as is all direct acquaintance with personal beings. Knowing God is more than knowing about him; it is a matter of dealing with him as he opens up to you, and being dealt with by him as he takes knowledge of you. Knowing about him is a necessary precondition of trusting in him.” – J.I. Packer

Why study the attributes of God?

1. It **pleases** God. (Jeremiah 9:23-24, Colossians 1:9-10)
2. It develops our **trust** in God. (Psalm 9:10)
3. It guards us against having a **wrong view** of God.

“A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well...there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.” – A.W. Tozer

4. It provides a **right view** of ourselves.
5. It teaches us how to **live** for God. (Psalm 24:4-5a)

“Knowing God is crucial to living our lives, and it would be cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it.” – J.I. Packer

6. It enriches our **study** of the Bible. (Psalm 119:18)
7. It enhances our **worship** and **prayer** life. (Revelation 4:8, Psalm 100:5)
8. It gives us **comfort**, **hope**, and **assurance** in this world. (Isaiah 26:3)

“Plunge yourself in the Godhead’s deepest sea; be lost in His immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead.” – Charles Spurgeon

The nature of God’s attributes

All of God’s attributes are:

1. Equally **present** in the Godhead.
2. Incorruptibly **perfect**.
3. Identically His **essence (being)**.
4. Eternally **permanent**.
5. Inseparably **interconnected**.

“God’s essence is not composed of three persons. Rather, the uncompounded, undivided divine essence exists in each of the three persons.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

Categories of attributes:

- **Incommunicable** – those attributes that are unique to God and not shared with humans.
- **Communicable** – those attributes that are shared with humans in part.

Cautions:

1. Our understanding of God’s attributes, while drawn from Scripture, will never fully encompass the infinite perfections of God.
2. We must be careful not to artificially separate His attributes from each other or emphasize one attribute over another. They all exist perfectly at all times.
3. Learning about God’s attributes cannot stop with head knowledge. This knowledge should be a springboard to more holiness and joy in the Lord.

Non-comprehensive list of God’s attributes

Incommunicable Attributes:

- Aseity
- Immutability
- Omniscience
- Omnipresence
- Omnipotence
- Sovereignty

Communicable Attributes:

- Holiness
- Justice/Righteousness
- Wisdom
- Truthfulness
- Jealousy
- Wrath
- Love
- Grace
- Mercy
- Goodness
- Patience

Take aways

- Be thankful that the God of the universe has made Himself known. (Deuteronomy 4:35)
- Our theology must start with God and our understanding of Him as revealed in Scripture and move down to us. Never the other way. (Jeremiah 10:6)
- As a believer, use your understanding of God’s attributes to fuel your worship, inform your study of Scripture, and guide your thoughts and actions. (John 4:24)

Additional resources

- *None Else*, Joel Beeke and Brian Cosby
- *Show Me Your Glory*, Steven Lawson
- *Enjoying God*, R.C. Sproul
- *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer
- *Gleanings in the Godhead*, A.W. Pink
- *Attributes of God, Volumes 1 and 2*, A.W. Tozer
- *None Greater*, Matthew Barrett
- *Biblical Doctrine*, John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue
- *A Body of Divinity*, Thomas Watson
- *The Existence and Attributes of God*, Stephen Charnock

“As theology is ultimately the knowledge of God, the more theology I know, the more it should drive me to seek to know God.” – Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind than thoughts of God. But while the subject humbles the mind, it also expands it. He who often thinks of God will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this narrow globe. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the science of Christ, and Him crucified, and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity.” – Charles Spurgeon