

Attributes of God's Goodness

- Concerning these attributes, we can divide them into three subcategories:
 - God's Moral Goodness = holiness, righteousness, and justice.
 - God's Integrity = genuineness, veracity, and faithfulness.
 - God's Love = benevolence, grace, mercy, and persistence.



Holiness

- We can break holiness down to two types: majestic and purity.
- Majestic holiness refers to God's separation from creation and uniqueness.
 - Isa 6:1-4 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.
- God's glory filled the whole earth and angels shout the trisagion.
- In Exodus, God would not allow anyone other than Moses to set foot on the mountain.
- God is so majestic and so beyond us that His presence would consume us and kill us.

Holiness

- Purity holiness speaks towards God's separation from evil and the inability for God to be tempted.
 - James 1:13 – Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.
 - Job 34:12 – Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice.
- God is absolutely pure. He will not allow human impurity to come before Him.
 - This contradicts most people's opinion. They think they are good.
- If people understood God's holiness, they would respond like Isaiah and Peter.
 - Isaiah 6:5 – And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"
 - Luke 5:8 – But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Righteousness

- God is perfectly righteous (without sin, and complete in goodness and moral perfection).
- The law is a reflection of the Law Giver:
 - Psalms 19:7-9 – The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.
- So if God is perfect in "rightness" and thus His law demonstrates this, then who originally determined what is right? We with the Bible would answer that God determines this.
 - On what basis was this determined?
 - This becomes the basis of meta-ethics.

On What Basis does God Determine Right?

- Realism – God declares something right because it is right.
 - This would mean there is an objective reality of what is right and wrong and God being righteous agrees with it.
 - Problem. Good and evil exist independently of God and His own righteousness depends on His conformity to this standard. It would make the standard greater than He.
- Nominalism – Right is right because God says it is.
 - This would mean murder is wrong because God said so, but if He said it was good instead, then it would be.
 - Problem. Good and evil are based on God's arbitrary opinion.
- Biblical Position – Something is right because it belongs to the character and nature of God. God is the ground of everything, including good and evil.
 - Good is what conforms to God's nature; evil is what rebels against it. It is not arbitrary, but it necessary. Yet, is not independent of God either.

Is God Selfish?

- Unbelieving philosophers say God is a megalomaniac.
 - He demands that everything be for His glory. We are to put him before us. If any regular human demanded this, we would say they are the biggest megalomaniac imaginable (idolatrous).
- Humans and God are not ontologically the same.
 - The Creator has a right to demand this. It is a proper function for who He is. This is why it seems so offensive if a man demanded it, because we intrinsically know it is wrong to give a mere man that kind of devotion.
- Furthermore, when we love God above ourselves, it is also for our benefit. John Piper likens it to the solar system.
 - Luke 10:25-28 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

Justice

- Justice = official righteousness.
 - It is righteousness in action. Gen 2:17 God said if Adam ate of the tree, he would die. Adam ate; Adam died. That is justice.
 - Likewise, we all participated in that original sin, and thus Romans 6:23 declares that we get the same wage.
- God's justice is fair, but it is not always observed.
 - It looks like the wicked prosper (Psalm 73 is about this), but their destruction eventually does come upon them.
- All sin will face justice. God's attributes of holiness and justice demand it.



Attributes of Integrity

- Genuineness = God is real.
 - Jeremiah 10:10 – But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation.
 - John 17:3 – And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
- Christianity is not idealism, but realism. The real world was created by the real God.



Veracity

- Veracity means that God represents things as they really are.
- What He says is accurate.
 - 1Samuel 15:29 – And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”
 - Titus 1:2 – In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.
 - John 17:17 – Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
- Combine this with God's infinite attributes, and we have a guarantee that everything God tells us is absolutely truth and cannot fail.
 - God's veracity is why we should trust the Bible. This is a communicable attribute.

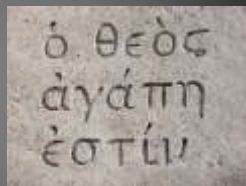


Faithfulness

- Faithfulness = God is a promise keeper.
- If God did not keep promises, then by His own standard He would be a liar. Thus, God must keep promises.
 - Numbers 23:19 – God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?
 - Hebrews 6:17-18 – So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.
- This particular attribute has a number of implications when we get to Covenantalism and Dispensationalism many months from now.

God's Love

- God's love speaks of His general concern for those who are the object of His affection.
- This is broken down into four subcategories:
 - Benevolence.
 - Grace.
 - Mercy.
 - Persistence.



Benevolence

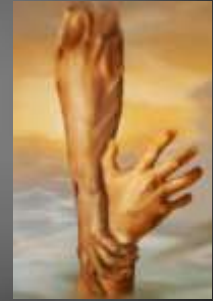
- Benevolence = God demonstrates concern for the welfare of those whom He loves.
 - John 3:16 is an example. He loved us in such a way that He sent Christ for us.
 - Another example is seen in the deliverance of Israel.
 - Deuteronomy 7:7-8 – It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
- It is an unselfish interest for our sake. It is agape love.
- Why does God love us?
 - Mystery.
 - Not because of anything great in us.
 - Roman 9:13 – As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Grace

- Grace = God does not deal with His people on the basis of their merit or worthiness, but instead according to their need.
 - It is on the basis of His goodness and generosity.
 - It is beyond benevolence since it is unmerited.
 - Grace is love in action.
 - Exodus 34:6-7 – The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and **gracious**, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."
 - Ephesians 2:8-10 – For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Mercy

- Mercy = God takes pity on those who are miserable and needy.
 - It is when God does not give us what we deserve (condemnation).
- God's mercy is like a father's to a son.
 - Psalm 103:13 – As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.
- God's mercy is selective (not given to all humans).
 - It is only given to the elect.



Persistence

- Persistence refers to God's patience.
 - He is slow to anger and gives plenty of mercy before He brings judgment.
 - Psalm 86:15 – But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
 - Romans 2:3-4 – Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?
 - 2Peter 3:9 – The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
- God gives His people much time to repent.
 - We need to be patient and long suffering to each other.

Are God's Justice & Love in Conflict?

- Most Christians never wrestle with this, but it is important.
 - Does God forego justice by loving us? If justice demands all sin be condemned, how can any human (since all have sinned) not be damned.
 - If God lets sinners go, then isn't He unjust?
- Some wrongly pit the love against the justice and claim the love somehow wins. This is silly. God cannot be against Himself.
- Both attributes are equally part of God's nature.
- Thus God does not show love without justice, and His justice comes forth from His love.
 - This is best exemplified on the Cross at Calvary. Isaiah 53:10 says God was pleased to crush His Servant for us.
 - It satisfied His justice for us (this is the only reason it pleased Him). So that justice against our sin was poured out because of His love.
 - It was necessary because of holiness and righteousness. So the sin problem was only taken care of because God has both attributes.

Conclusion

- Now we have a good idea of what God is like.
 - Attributes of spirituality, personality, life, infinity, constancy, holiness, righteousness, justice, genuineness, veracity, faithfulness, benevolence, grace, mercy, and persistence.
- Next, we learn a little more of what He is like by looking at the Trinity.
- After we know what God is like, then we can focus on what God does.