

The Perfections of God

Part 2

By Phil Johnson

Last week, we began a study of the attributes of God, and I want to take up where we left off last week. In Jeremiah 9:23-24, we read, **"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."** In that verse, God himself expresses His will for us to know Him—to understand His character, perceive what we can of His holiness and virtue, and know what He is like. That's why we study the attributes of God. These are things about God that are true of Him, and therefore they are essential to a true knowledge of God.

However, we shouldn't think of God's attributes as separate *parts* of His character. God is a spirit, without body or parts or composition. One of the attributes of God we listed our first session is His *simplicity*. This refers to the fact that God is not complex. He is not made of parts. He is indivisible; He is not "composed" of anything—and that also means that He is not even composed of distinct attributes.

But rather, when we speak of His attributes, we are merely speaking of different ways to look at His absolute perfection. It's helpful, therefore to think of God's attributes not as separate, composite characteristics, but as different facets of His utter perfection, like the many facets of a

single, utterly perfect diamond. Although the attributes of God are distinguishable, they are not distinct and separate. They are merely different perspectives of the absolute moral and constitutional perfection of an utterly flawless, complete, and impeccable Being. For that reason, the attributes of God are sometimes called "the *perfections* of God." That's a good way of thinking of them.

God's attributes are sometimes divided into two categories—communicable and incommunicable attributes. His incommunicable attributes are those characteristics that are true of God alone. These are not qualities that can be communicated to—or shared with—His creatures. Incommunicable attributes. The incommunicable attributes of God include His omnipotence, His omniscience, His omnipresence, His eternity, His immutability (or absolute unchangeableness), and His *aseity* (which is the quality of independent being). When we speak of God's aseity, we are saying that He has life and existence in and of Himself. Unlike us, He does not derive His being from a higher source. He is eternally self-existent). Those attributes are all incommunicable. They are unique to God alone.

When we speak of the communicable attributes of God, we are speaking of those attributes that He shares in some degree with His creatures. Genesis 1:27 says, "**God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.**" So we bear the image of God. We have character qualities that reflect the nature of *God*, too. Those are the communicable attributes. They include God's love, his holiness, His goodness, His justice, His hatred, his wrath, and so on.

These communicable attributes (of course) were marred by the fall of man so that sinful man in His fallen state is incapable of any pure expression of God's character. But

the attributes themselves are nonetheless communicable. Salvation ultimately restores the image of God to its rightful state in redeemed and regenerate people. In fact, the process of sanctification is the means by which God is systematically restoring and refining those attributes to what they should be. And when our sanctification is finally complete and we are fully glorified, Scripture says we will bear the image of Christ. Man as God intended him to be. And all God's communicable attributes will therefore finally be reflected in us to the highest level of human perfection when we are glorified. That is what 1 John 3:2 means when it says, "**we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.**"

So we could categorize all God's attributes under those two headings—communicable and incommunicable attributes. But rather than following the conventional ways of dividing God's attributes, we have listed four statements about God drawn from 1 John, and we are grouping the major perfections of God under these four categories:

God is Light

God is Lord

God is Love

God is Life

So let's review what we discussed in the last hour and take it up where we left off. First, under the category,

1. GOD IS LIGHT

In our first session, we looked at the meaning of this statement in 1 John 1:5 ("**God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all**"). And we saw how implied in that statement are at least six of the attributes of God:

1. Holiness, the primary moral attribute of God, God's holiness is His supreme perfection. We saw that it refers

to God's utter purity, His utter separateness from sin. *Holiness*, we said, encompasses everything that is true about God. If you had to make one statement about the character of our God, you could do no better than to echo what the angels around His throne constantly affirm: "**He is holy, holy, holy.**" This is the most vital and comprehensive of God's attributes, so in a later session, we'll take a look at the personal and practical ramifications of God's holiness. But for now, we will simply put it at the head of our list and move on. This is the very essence of what Scripture means when it says "**God is light.**"

2. Then we looked at God's incomprehensibility. According to 1 Timothy 6:16, God "**dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see.**" Our poor minds cannot possibly *comprehend* Him, though we may know Him personally, and know true things *about* him. To put it another way, we can apprehend truth about God, or lay hold of it, gain true knowledge about Him. But we cannot comprehend all that is true about God. We can't wrap our minds completely around Him.
3. We listed simplicity as one of God's perfections. *Simplicity* means He is not a composite Being. He is not made up of anything. He is indivisible into parts. He has no "dark side"; He is light without darkness.
4. We spoke of God's immutability, or changelessness. According to James 1:17, He is "**the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.**" He radiates the purest light—no variableness, no shadow cast by turning. He does not change. His attributes, His character, His principles, His will, His mind, His mood, and His purposes are eternal and remain the same from eternity to eternity. In a future session, we will look a little

more closely at this attribute, because the immutability of God is under attack by several modern theologians who want to portray God as changeable and variable. We'll especially look at an aspect of His immutability known as His impassibility. This is the quality that teaches us God's mood doesn't change. God doesn't lose His temper. He doesn't stop loving. He can't get His feelings hurt or be injured by His creatures. This is one of the aspects of God's immutability, and the technical name is *impassibility*. Again it's so important that we'll devote a whole hour to it, but for now, we'll just include it in what we mean when we say God is immutable, or unchanging.

5. We also listed wisdom as one of God's perfections that might be categorized under the heading "God is light." Louis Berkhof defines divine wisdom as "that perfection of God whereby He applies His knowledge to the attainment of His ends in a way which glorifies Him most." In other words, God's wisdom is seen in how He ultimately makes everything—including every evil thing—turn out for our good and His glory. If you want a scripture verse for this, Romans 16:27 is a good one. It refers to Him as "**the only wise God.**"
6. Finally, under this heading, "God is light," we listed the attribute of glory, or majesty. When John says God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all, he suggests this concept of the divine glory. As Paul wrote, our God "**dwells in unapproachable light**" (1 Tim. 6:16), then adds this doxology: "**To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.**"

Then (still reviewing) in our first session together, we looked at a second category drawn from 1 John and the principle that—

2. GOD IS LORD

Those words I just quoted from 1 Timothy 6:16, with their emphatic assertion of God's eternal dominion, suggest this second category: God is Lord. **"To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen."**

Under this heading, we mentioned God's *omniscience*, His *omnipotence*, His *omnipresence*, His *justice*, His *wrath*, and His *sovereignty*. We ended with a look at divine sovereignty.

Now, admittedly, God's sovereignty is a difficult concept for many people to grasp. They struggle it because they imagine that God's sovereignty is somehow in conflict with His holiness or His love. And, in fact, there are some people who take the truth of God's sovereignty so far that they end up denying or downplaying His love. Some people even teach such a strong view of God's sovereignty that they destroy God's holiness by portraying Him as the author or creator of evil.

That's why it is so important to maintain a balance of understanding *all* God's attributes. His sovereignty does not diminish His love, nor does it alter the fact of His holiness.

And this is a very important point: God is not the author of evil. According to James 1:13, **"God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone."** He **"is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all"** (1 Jn. 1:5). But He nonetheless permitted it. He planned for it. He orchestrated the events that made it possible for evil to enter the perfect universe He created. It was part of His eternal plan and decree, or it would not have happened at all. God is certainly powerful enough that He could have kept anything evil from entering His creation, but He didn't. He permitted it, and Scripture says He intends to defeat evil and destroy

it forever, resulting in greater glory for Himself than if evil had never been known in the universe.

On the one hand, God is sovereign, and He maintains control of everything that happens. No evil could ever happen unless God permitted it. Yet on the other hand, God does not *cause* sin, *instigate* it, *sanction* it, *condone* it, *authorize* it, *approve* it, or otherwise *consent* to it. He is not the *agent* of evil or the *efficient cause* of sin. But He is nevertheless fully sovereign over every act of evil that is ever committed. He permits *evil agents* to act, but then He ultimately overrules all their evil motives and fulfills His own purposes, which are always wise and holy.

You see this, for example, in Genesis, where Joseph's brothers sold Him into slavery. It was an act of pure, unmitigated evil. And yet God used it for good. And Joseph Himself saw the sovereign hand of God in all the evil that happened to him. In Genesis 50:20, he tells his brothers, "**as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.**" That's the end of *all* the evil that happens, and that's why we have the great promise of Romans 8:28: "**we know that all things [good and evil things alike] work together for good to them that love God.**"

And so far from making God evil, His sovereignty is the ultimate *proof* of His love and goodness. And that brings us to the third category of divine attributes:

3. GOD IS LOVE

First John 4:8 says, "**He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.**"

The *love of God* is a term that encompasses several attributes: goodness, longsuffering, compassion (or pity), mercy, grace, and love, or more specifically, *lovingkindness*.

Those words all describe various aspects of God's love. They are not so much separate attributes as different features of the one quality John has in mind when he states **"God is love."**

The love of God is a much-abused concept. The prevailing concept of God in modern religion is that He is pure love, unbalanced by any sense of wrath or hatred. But that is not the God of Scripture. As we saw in our first session, **"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day"** (Ps. 7:11). He is described in Scripture as a God of fierce wrath and burning indignation. If your concept of God is that He is pure love, incapable of anger, then you do not worship the God of Scripture.

I'll go even further than that: If your concept of God is all love, no holy hatred of sin, then you cannot begin to grasp the significance of God's love. That is why I made this point the third on my list. If we do not first grasp the holiness and wrath of God, the love of God will be meaningless. If we do not first see that God is *light*, and God is *Lord*, it means nothing to say that God is love.

The love of God is bandied about today by many people who have no right to speak of it. They want to use the love of God to absolve their sin, even while they continue in that sin. They are often religious people, but they don't really know God. In fact, they are enemies of God, vessels of wrath who have no right to presume on the goodness and mercy of a righteous God. Yet they are convinced that God's disposition toward sinners is only love and benevolence. **"There is no fear of God before their eyes,"** Romans 3:18 says. That fearless presumption on the mercy of God is the very reason they are condemned.

They desperately need to be told that God is a holy God who hates sin and will punish all evildoers. Yet even Bible-

believing Christians often avoid telling people about God's wrath. The very first line of the typical gospel presentation is, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."

I don't like that approach because it is the wrong place to start. It gets the gospel out of order and therefore confuses the issues. It divorces the love of God from His righteousness and holiness. When Paul outlined the gospel in the book of Romans, the place he started was the *righteousness* of God, followed by the *wrath* of God and His hatred of sin. In Romans 1:16-17 he said, "**I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes . . . for in it the *righteousness* of God is revealed. . . .**"

If the gospel you proclaim aims at highlighting the *love* of God at the expense of His righteousness, then you are preaching a convoluted gospel.

As Paul began a logical presentation of the gospel that would take him from Romans 1 through chapter 8, he led off with these words: "**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness . . .**" and went into a discussion of human lostness that was designed to leave unsaved people feeling hopeless, lost, and in despair. Working his way point-by-point through the gospel, he did not even mention God's love until Romans 5:8.

God's love cannot be appreciated by those who despise His righteousness. It means nothing to sinners who are already presuming on the grace of God anyway. Tell the average person today that God loves him, and you only reinforce that person's boldness in sin. Most people already believe God is kindly disposed toward them, and that is the very reason they sin so flagrantly and do it without any sense of fear.

This is because the love of God has been twisted and mistreated and handled in a sentimental and man-centered way by our generation. Very few *Christians* have a healthy understanding of the love of God. It's no wonder the world is confused on this issue. The result is that too many people think God's love means he is tolerant, always benign, lenient, easygoing, indulgent, and not really angry over about sin. That is not the way the Bible portrays God's love.

So what *does* Scripture mean when it says God is love? Who are the objects of His love, and how is His love manifest? Let's see what Scripture says.

First, the principal object of God's love is Himself. Notice: his ultimate concern is for His own glory. Isaiah 42:8: "**I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another.**" God Has made all things for His own pleasure and glory. Proverbs 16:4: "**The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.**" Romans 11:36: "**For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.**" Revelation 4:11: "**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.**" Ultimately, everything God does is for His own glory.

God's love for Himself is a holy, righteous love, because God Himself is the highest, holiest, most worthy object of love.

And this love is expressed as eternal love between the persons of the Godhead. The Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Father, Father and Son love the Spirit, and the Spirit loves Father and Son. John 3:35: "**The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.**" John 5:20: "**For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth.**" Christ's obedience was His proof of His love for the Father. John 14:31: "**that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so**

I do." Proof that both Father and Son love the Holy Spirit is seen in Jesus' words about the Holy Spirit in John 14. According to John 14:26, the Father sent the Spirit in the Son's name. And proof that the Spirit loves God is seen in the fact that He searches the deep things of God, according to 1 Corinthians 2:10. This love among the Persons of the Trinity permeates everything Scripture teaches us about the Persons of the Godhead.

God also loves all that He created—everything and everyone whom He made. Psalm 104:31: "**the LORD shall rejoice in his works.**" Psalm 145:9: "**The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.**" All His creatures are the objects of His care and delight, and His love is seen in His mercy and goodness, which is evident in the outworking of His providence. The reason Jesus gave for commanding us to love even our enemies is that this is the way to be like God. Matthew 5:45: "**He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**" Those good things are expressions of His love. We'll look more closely at that passage in just a moment.

Let me point out first of all that God has a special love for His own children, and our salvation is the greatest proof of that love. Ephesians 2:4-8:

**God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love
wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath
quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye
are saved;)
6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit
together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
7 That in the ages to come he might show the
exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness
toward us through Christ Jesus.**

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

God's love for His own people is eternal, unconditional, and unwavering. The greatest proof of that love is seen in the cross. Romans 5:8: "**God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**" The most familiar verse in all of Scripture (John 3:16) says the same thing: "**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**" John 3:17 says, "**For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.**"

We don't have time in this session to go into a detailed study of the doctrine of election and what it says about the love of God, but perhaps in a future session we can deal with that. In this context, however, it is sufficient to say that the doctrine of election is the outworking of God's particular love to those He draws to Christ. Scripture says He set His eternal love on them, and nothing can ultimately separate them from that love, Romans 8:29-39. Properly understood, the doctrine of election is all about the love of God.

But at the same time, properly understood, the gospel message is an expression of God's sincere love and compassion to all. Yes, He loves His own with a special love, but that doesn't mean that He is lacking in any kind of love for all others. We insist on this point, because there are some, such as Arthur Pink, who have taught that God has no love at all for any but His elect. Scripture clearly teaches otherwise.

The gospel itself is an earnest plea to all who hear to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20). The gospel appeal is an offer of mercy and a sincere expression of God's readiness to forgive all who call on Him.

Psalm 86:5: **"Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."** And verse 15: **"But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth."** And Psalm 103:8: **"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."** And Psalm 130:7: **"With the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption."** God is literally full of compassion, mercy, and redemption. Jesus freely invited all who labor and are heavy-laden to come to Him for rest. The invitation is open to all. No one can claim God has utterly withheld His mercy; he offers it freely to all.

This divine mercy toward the lost is expressed by God himself in Ezekiel 33:11: **"As I live!" declares the Lord God, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?"**

That is precisely the same love that prompted Jesus to weep when He stood and looked out over the entire city of Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41). It is what prompted Him to say, **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling"** (Matt. 23:37).

Don't you hear a plea of love in that appeal? I do. It is the same love He showed to the rich young ruler, a man who turned His back on Jesus in favor of worldly wealth. But Mark expressly tells us that **"looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him"** (Mk. 10:21).

God is a God of love. That love is expressed even toward unbelievers as goodness, longsuffering, and compassion (or pity). It is expressed universally in a sincere offer of mercy to all who will repent and believe. And it is expressed in the universal benefit that we call common

grace—the goodness of God that everyone enjoys to some degree. Common grace is proof of God's love to all His creatures.

Now let's look again at Matthew 5:43-48. This is part of the Sermon on the Mount, Notice that Jesus Himself is explicitly teaching that God is loving to all. He said, **You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

The perfection Jesus was calling for is a love that extends even to one's enemies. Why would God call us to love our enemies if He did not do the same? In fact, the very point Jesus was making is that we ought to be like God. Thus in some sense God loves all sinners, even those who remain His enemies.

Jesus told a parable in Matthew 22:2-14 that makes a similar point. Look at that passage. It's about a king invited guests to his son's wedding feast. Incredibly, the invited guests spurned the gracious invitation. Matthew 22:5 says, **"They paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business." Others, even more wicked, "seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them."**

Verse 7 says, **"the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire."** He judged them with the utmost severity for their wickedness,

even though his initial overture to them had been a benevolent one.

Then he sent his slaves to the highways and byways to compel others to come. It was an open invitation. One guy showed up without a wedding garment—a deliberate insult to his host—and he was thrown out. The final verse of this parable teaches this important truth: "**Many are called, but few are chosen**" (v. 14).

That's a crucial verse. "**Many are called.**" That is a genuine expression of God's sincere love. "**But a few are chosen.**" That is the highest of all God's expressions of love to humanity. It is a love that stops at nothing to save and preserve its object. All Christians are the beneficiaries of that saving love.

Christ came into the world to save sinners. He did not come into the world to judge the world (Jn. 3:17). Judgment was not the primary design of His mission. To those who reject Him, the result will be judgment, but His primary objective in coming was to manifest to the entire race the goodness and longsuffering and compassion and mercy of God.

We cannot leave this subject of God's love without underscoring that God's love has a particular application to the elect. They are uniquely called *beloved* of God. On them he set His love from eternity past. His love for them is a special love.

In a similar way, my love for my neighbor is a real and benevolent love. But my love for my wife and children is a higher kind of love. In a similar way, Scripture teaches that God has a special, profound, eternal love for His children.

His goodness, longsuffering, and benevolence to sinners means that everyone is invited to the wedding. An open call goes out. Because the hearts of sinners are so set against

God, because they are so determined to oppose Him and insult Him deliberately, no one responds rightly to the general call. It has no saving efficacy. But it is a real and genuine expression of God's love to all.

But the love that effectually calls and draws believers to Christ is that greater love. It's the love described in Romans 8:29-39. It is a love that pursues and guarantees the salvation of its objects. This is the love Paul is describing when he writes,

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? . . .

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That is the love of God for His elect. It is qualitatively and quantitatively different from His love for the rest of mankind. It is the love of a Father for His children, an altogether different quality of love from the love of God for mankind in general. This is electing love. It is redemptive love. It is a special love that guarantees that they will be irresistibly drawn to God by His love. We love Him because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19).

This kind of love is God's love for His elect. Scripture portrays it as an eternal lovingkindness. Jeremiah 31:3. God says to Jeremiah, "**Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn**

thee." This is the love Scripture speaks of when it says, **"Those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives"** (Heb. 12:6). It is the love Jesus had in mind when He said, **"he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him"** (Jn. 14:21). It is a special love that is reserved uniquely and exclusively for God's people.

I hope that is helpful as you seek to understand what Scripture means when it says **"God is love."** We have dwelt a little longer on that one attribute, but since it is the cause of so much misunderstanding, perhaps it was worth a longer look.

Here's point number four on our list:

4. GOD IS LIFE

We close our look at the divine perfections with a category I have titled, God is life. Under this heading let's deal briefly with three attributes: Self-existence, Eternity, and Infinitude.

In John 5:26, Jesus said, **"Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself."** That speaks of God as wholly independent, not reliant on anyone or anything for His existence. He exists in and of Himself. That is self-existence. It is the attribute I mentioned earlier, known as the *aseity* of God.

Eternity means He exists from infinity past to infinity future. That is implied in the name by which He revealed Himself to the Jewish nation: **"I AM WHO I AM"** (Exod. 3:14). Psalm 90:2 says, **"Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."** And Psalm 102:12 says, **"Thou, O Lord, dost abide forever; And Thy name to all generations."**

And infinitude means God is free from any limitations. Scripture calls Him **"The Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end"** (Rev. 22:13).

God is both life and life-giver. Speaking of Jesus, Colossians 1:17 says, **"He is before all things, and by him all things consist."**

Now, there are many more attributes of God we could name if time permitted. The *veracity* of God is His perfect truthfulness. According to Titus 1:2, **"God . . . cannot lie."**

There is the *spirituality* of God. **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:24).

There is the *unity* of God. Deuteronomy 6:4: **"The LORD our God is one LORD."** Though God exists in three Persons, He is perfect in His unity.

But those that we have listed are the main attributes of God revealed and explained throughout Scripture. And there's a practical application of all this, summed up for us in the first and great commandment (Deuteronomy 6:5): **"thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."**

That is the first and highest duty Scripture calls us to. Love God—love the *true* God—in all His perfection. And that's why an understanding of the divine attributes is so foundational in our theology.

It's not just a theoretical study. It's a practical study. God is light. God is Lord. God is Love. And God is life. And a proper, biblical understanding of His attributes fleshes out the full meaning of His character for us. This is the God we are to love with ever fibre of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. It's not an academic point. It is our spiritual duty to

know God as He has revealed Himself and to love Him above all else.

A lesser devotion is not even true Christianity. That's why Jesus said in Luke 9:62, "**No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**"

How does your faith measure up? If you are like me, you will have to admit that you fall far short more often than you measure up. But let's embrace the duty of the first and great commandment and ask God himself to give us hearts that are full of true, deep, and passionate love for Him.