

# Bible Doctrines 1

## Session 3 - Theology Proper: the study of God Himself (*His Essence and Perfections*)



### WHAT COMES INTO OUR MINDS WHEN WE THINK ABOUT GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT US.

A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: HarperCollins), p.1.

#### I. The Essence of God (Ps. 113:4-7; Is. 57:15)

1. Transcendence - His utter “otherness” (size...\_\_\_\_\_)
2. Immanence - His presence with and involvement in the affairs of this world (\_\_\_\_\_)

#### II. The Perfections of God (*What is God like?*)

##### 1. Characteristics of the Perfections of God

- A. Not component parts...each describes His total being
- B. No quality is independent of or preeminent over any of the others
- C. God is more than the sum total of His perfections...\_\_\_\_\_
- D. *God’s perfections are known through revelation. Man does not attribute them to God; God reveals them to man.* (Ryrie, p. 35)
- E. His perfections equally describe each member of the Godhead

##### 2. Categories of the Perfections of God

- A. Natural and Moral Attributes; Absolute and Relative; Incommunicable and Communicable
- B. *Instead of a system of classification of the attributes, what Scripture actually reveals is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s attributes or perfections* (Zuber, p. 80).

##### 3. Catalog of the Perfections of God

###### A. Eternality

1. Meaning: God exists endlessly (\_\_\_\_\_)
2. Scripture:
  - a. Deut. 33:27a - the eternal God is a dwelling place
  - b. Ps. 90:2 - from everlasting to everlasting
  - c. Ps. 102:12 - But You, O LORD, abide forever
3. Question: What is God’s relation to the succession of events?
4. Ramification: God will never cease to exist; therefore, His sustaining, providential control of all things and events is assured.

###### B. Freedom

1. Meaning: He is \_\_\_\_\_ of His creatures and Creation.
2. Scripture: Is. 40:13-14 - who directed or instructed the Lord...no one
3. Question: Is God restricted in any way if He is free?

4. Application: God is not obligated to us in any way unless He chooses to initiate obligation. He does not have to do anything for us unless He chooses to do so. Consequently, we cannot put Him in our debt.

### C. Holiness

1. Meaning: He is \_\_\_\_\_ from all that is unclean and evil but also positively pure and thus distinct from all others. (*transcendence and purity*)
2. Scripture:
  - a. Ex. 15:11 - who is like You, majestic in holiness
  - b. Lev. 11:44 - be holy, for I am holy
  - c. Rev. 4:8 - Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty
3. Application:
  - a. Sinners have to be separated from Him unless a way can be found to constitute them holy.
  - b. God's holiness should make a sinner sensitive to his own sin (Is. 6; Luke 5:8)
  - c. God's holiness is the standard for the believer's life (1 John 1:7).

### D. Immutability

1. Meaning: God is \_\_\_\_\_ and thus unchanging.
2. Scripture:
  - a. Mal. 3:6 - For I, the LORD, do not change
  - b. Jam. 1:17 - no shadow of changing
3. Question: If immutable, how can He repent (Gen. 6:6; Jonah 3:10)
4. Ramifications in relation to God: Immutability assures us that none of God's perfections change.
5. Ramifications in relation to us:
  - a. Offers comfort and assurance that none of God's promises will fail (Mal. 3:6; 2 Tim. 2:13).
  - b. Reminds us that God's attitudes toward sin, for example, do not change. Therefore, God can never be coaxed or compromised into changing.

### E. Infinity

1. Meaning: God has no bounds or \_\_\_\_\_. He is in no way limited by the universe nor by time-space boundaries.
2. Scripture:
  - a. 1 Kings 8:27 - Solomon acknowledges God's infinity at the dedication of his temple
  - b. Acts 17:24-28 - Paul used it to argue against the false deities of the Athenians
3. Observation: Sometimes it is labeled as immensity. Differs from omnipresence (everywhere present) emphasizing His transcendence (not bound by space).

### F. Love

1. Meaning: Love in God is seeking the highest \_\_\_\_\_ and glory of His perfections.
2. Scripture: 1 John 4:8 - *the* God is love; John 3:16
3. Applications:

- a. Since all the attributes are possessed by each Person of the Trinity, there must be some loving interaction within it.
  - b. God who is love allows Himself to love sinful people. That is grace (Eph. 2:4-8).
  - c. The love of God has been poured out into the believer's heart (Rom. 5:5).
  - d. In trials, God shows His love toward His children (Heb. 12:6).
4. Some related words:
- a. Goodness - God's benevolent concern for His creatures (Acts 14:17).
  - b. Mercy - pity and compassion (Eph. 2:4; James 5:11)
  - c. Long-suffering - self-restraint in the face of provocation (1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15)
  - d. Grace - the unmerited favor of God shown to man primarily in the person of Jesus Christ

### G. Omnipotence

1. Meaning: God is \_\_\_\_\_ and able to do anything consistent with His own nature
2. Scripture:
  - a. Ps. 147:5 - Great is our Lord and abundant in strength
  - b. Jer. 32:17 - Ah Lord God!
  - c. Luke 1:37 - nothing is impossible for God
3. Question: Does omnipotence have limitations?
4. Ramifications: God's power has been demonstrated in the past through creation, preservation of all things, and in deliverance. But the greatest display of His power was the resurrection of Christ from the dead (2 Cor. 13:4). For the believer, God's power relates to the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), to his security (1 Pet. 1:5), to his hope of bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 6:14) and to daily living (Eph. 1:9).

### H. Omnipresence

1. Meaning: God is \_\_\_\_\_ present with His whole being at all times.
2. Scripture: Ps. 139:7-11; 1 Kings 8:27
3. Some Distinctions:
  - a. He is not diffused throughout the universe...part here or there.
  - b. The immediacy of His presence can vary.
  - c. Omnipresence is not pantheism.
4. Some Ramifications: No person can escape the presence of God. This warns unbelievers and comforts believers.

### I. Omniscience

1. Meaning: God knows \_\_\_\_\_...things actual and possible, effortlessly and equally well
2. Scripture:
  - a. Acts 15:18 - God knows all His works from the beginning
  - b. Ps. 147:4 - He numbers and names the stars
  - c. Ps. 139:1-4, 16 - He knows us before we are born
  - d. Heb. 4:13 - all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him
3. Applications:
  - a. Security - Nothing can surprise God and cause Him to cast us out.
  - b. Sensitivity - His warnings are not hunches. We should be very mindful.

- c. Solace - When faced with unexplainable circumstances in life, we can take refuge in Him. He knows not only what happened, but also what could have happened and what ultimate good and glory will come from said events.
- d. Sobriety - This should characterize all of us as we will stand before an all-knowing God (Heb. 4:13).

#### **J. Righteousness**

- 1. Meaning: God is lawful, moral, and \_\_\_\_\_ (towards Himself and towards creation)
- 2. Scripture:
  - a. Ps. 11:7 - For the Lord is righteous
  - b. Ps. 19:9 - The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether

#### **K. Sovereignty**

- 1. Meaning: God is principal, chief, \_\_\_\_\_. He is such in His position and in His power. He is in complete control of all things, though he may choose to let certain events happen according to natural laws which He has ordained.
- 2. Scripture:
  - a. Acts 15:18 - Known to God from eternity are all His works
  - b. Eph. 1:11 - Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will
  - c. Ps. 135:6 - Whatever the Lord pleases He does
  - d. Eph. 1:14 - to the praise of His glory

#### **L. Truth**

- 1. Meaning: God perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ (involves veracity, faithfulness, and consistency). He is true = He is consistent with Himself and that He is all that He should be, that He has revealed Himself as He really is, and that He and His revelation are completely reliable.
- 2. Scripture:
  - a. John 17:3 - the only true God
  - b. Titus 1:2 - God cannot lie
  - c. Rom. 3:4 - He is completely reliable
- 3. Ramifications: Since God is true, He can do nothing inconsistent with Himself. His promises can never be broken or unfulfilled (2 Tim. 2:13). Since the Bible is His Word, it must also be completely true.

#### **M. Unity**

- 1. Meaning: God is but one God who is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. Scripture:
  - a. Dt. 6:4 - The Lord is one!
  - b. 1 Cor. 8:5 - there is one God
  - c. 1 Tim. 2:5 - For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus
- 3. Ramifications: The persons of the Trinity are not separate essences within the one divine essence. God is One in number and uniqueness.