

## Lesson 6: The Attributes of God

### The Nature of Attributes

Attribute – a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something.

When we speak about God's attributes, we are speaking about the essence of who he is, the very characteristics of his nature. We are not speaking about his acts (creating, healing, saving), nor his corresponding roles (Creator, Healer, Savior).

This is why studying the attributes of God is vitally important. We are called to worship God for who he is, not merely for what he does. His actions point us to his character and propel us to worship him.

Each member of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has the same attributes. The attributes are permanent and essential qualities, which cannot be gained or lost.

We know God only as he has revealed himself to us. God is incomprehensible, meaning that we do not know his nature completely and exhaustively. However, what he has revealed is consistent with his full nature and accurate.

### The Classifications of Attributes

#### **Natural Attributes – The Greatness of God**

*Infinite* – God is unlimited and unlimitable in his person and dominion. He is unlike anything else that we experience. (1 Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 145:3)

*Omnipresent* – God is not confined to space at all. He is present everywhere, in all the universe, at all times, in the totality of His character. (Ps. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23-24; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 17:24-25)

*Omnipotent* – God possesses all power. He has power over nature, history, and the human heart. His will is never frustrated and he is able to bring about anything that he has decided to do. (Gen. 18:14; Matt. 19:26; Mark 4:35-41)

*Sovereign* – God is totally, supremely, and preeminently over all His creation. There is not a person or thing that has escaped His control and foreknown plan. (Job 42:2; Prov. 19:21)

*Omniscient* – God knows all things. His understanding is immeasurable. He has perfect knowledge of everything that is past, present, or future. (Job 37:16; Psalm 139:1-6; Ps. 147:5; Prov. 15:3)

*Wise* – God acts in light of all the facts and of correct values. He knows what is best and chooses the best actions. (Ps. 104:24; Dan. 2:20; Rom. 11:33)

*Eternal* – God has no beginning and no end. He is timeless and does not grow or develop. However, he is conscious of the sequence of time. (Deut. 32:40; Ps. 90:1-2; Is. 57:15)

*Immutable* – God is always the same in his nature, his character, and his will. However, this does not mean he is inactive. He is stable, but not static. (Ps. 102:26-27; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8)

*Self-existent/Self-sufficient* – God depends upon nothing beyond himself for his existence or accomplishing his plans. He may choose to use assistance, but it is not out of necessity. (Ex. 3:14; Jn. 5:26)

### **Moral Attributes – The Goodness of God**

*Holy* – God is a morally excellent, perfect being. He is separate from all of creation and pure in every aspect. (Lev. 19:2; Is. 6:3; Is. 47:4)

*Righteous* – God’s holiness applied to his relationships. God is always good. His actions are always consistent with his character. (Ps. 119:142; Jer. 9:24)

*Just* – God is fair in all his actions. He deals with man, angels, and demons with total equity by rewarding righteousness and punishing sin. (Num. 14:18; Deut. 32:4; Ps. 89:14)

*Loving* – God’s love may be thought of as his eternal giving or sharing of himself. He unselfishly seeks our good, even though we do not deserve it. His acts of love are done for our good and for his glory. (Deut. 7:7-8; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:8)

*Merciful* – God is an actively compassionate being. He cares for the needy and shows compassion on those who have opposed his will. (Ps. 106:44-45; Mk. 1:41; Rom. 9:14-16)

*Gracious* – God gives unmerited favor. God gives to people not as they deserve, but according to his goodness and generosity. (Ex. 34:6; Eph. 1:5-8; Titus 2:11)

*Patient* – God withholds judgment and continues to offer salvation and grace over long periods of time. His eternal longing for the highest good for his creatures holds back his holy justice. (Num. 14:18; Rom 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9)

*Wrathful* – God has a hatred for all that is unrighteous. This is a holy indignation against sin. His wrath is not vindictive or malicious, but rather the manifestation of his holy character in judgment against sin. (Ex. 34:7; 2 Chron. 19:2; Rom. 1:18)

*Truthful* – God always speaks accurately. He cannot lie. Whether believed by man or not, whether seen as reality or not, what God has spoken is reality. (Num. 23:19; Jn. 14:6; Titus 1:2)

*Faithful* – God is always true to his promises. He never has to revise his word or renege on his promises. (Deut. 7:9; 2 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 6:13-20)

*Jealous* – God is unwilling to share what is rightfully and morally His with any other creature. (Ex. 20:4-5; 2 Cor. 11:2)