

Attributes of God – His Holy Characteristics

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Attributes of God – The Meaning

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” So says A.W. Tozer in his classic book on the attributes of God, *The Knowledge of the Holy*. Why would he make such an extreme pronouncement? Tozer goes on to say, “Man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshipper entertains high or low thoughts of God.”

In our hearts we know the above is true. It is not enough to follow “god.” That word has come to mean so many different things today that it actually means very little. If we just make up our own minds concerning what He is like, then we are just creating an idol in our heads.

Attributes of God – The Basis

Jesus came to reveal the God of the Bible. And God has revealed Himself in His book. Any deviation from that insight from Him is a made-up god. Tozer in *Knowledge of the Holy* finds 18 characteristics of God in the Bible. They are repeated here, although not in the same order. Tozer’s definitions, when used, will appear in quotes.

The Bible says to praise God for who He is, especially in prayer. Much of Psalms is a good example of this. Most people concentrate their praise in just a few areas, such as God’s love, and then spend the rest of their prayers asking Him for things. (So that you can remember all of the attributes of God they are presented in the order of this acronym: WISH TO FLOSS JIM EGGO.)

Attributes of God – The Characteristics

Wisdom: “Wisdom is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve these ends by the most perfect means.” In other words, God makes no mistakes. He is the Father who truly knows best, as Paul explains in Romans 11:33: “Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand His decisions and His ways!”

Infinitude: God knows no boundaries. He is without measure. This attribute by definition impacts all of the others. Since God is infinite, everything else about Him must also be infinite.

Sovereignty: This is “the attribute by which He rules His entire creation.” It is the application of His other attributes of being all-knowing and all-powerful. It makes Him absolutely free to do what He knows to be best. God is in control of everything that happens. Man still has a free will, and is responsible for his choices in life.

Holiness: This is the attribute that sets God apart from all other created beings. It refers to His majesty and His perfect moral purity. There is absolutely no sin or evil thought in God at all. His holiness is the definition of that which is pure and righteous in all the universe. Wherever God has appeared, such as to Moses at the burning bush, that place becomes holy just for God having been there.

Trinity: Though the actual word is not used in the Bible, the truth of God revealing Himself in three persons is included. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all called God, given worship as God, exist eternally, and are involved in doing things only God could do. Although, God reveals Himself in three persons, God is One and cannot be divided. All are involved completely whenever One of the Three is active.

Omniscience: “God possesses perfect knowledge and therefore has no need to learn. God has never learned and cannot learn.” Omniscience means all-knowing. God knows everything, and His knowledge is infinite. It is impossible to hide anything from God.

Faithfulness: Everything that God has promised will come to pass. His faithfulness guarantees this fact. He does not lie. What He has said in the Bible about Himself is true. Jesus even said that He is the Truth. This is extremely important for the followers of Jesus because it is on His faithfulness that our hope of eternal life rests. He will honor His promise that our sins will be forgiven and that we will live forever with Him.

Attributes of God – A Continuing Study

Love: Love is such an important part of God’s character that the apostle John wrote, “God is love.” This means that God holds the well-being of others as His primary concern. For a full definition of love, read 1 Corinthians 13. To see love in action, study the life of Jesus. His sacrifice on the cross for the sins of others is the ultimate act of love. God’s love is not a love of emotion but of action. His love gives freely to the object of its affection, those who choose to follow His son Jesus.

Omnipotence: Literally this word means all-powerful. Since God is infinite and since He possesses power, He possesses infinite power. He does allow His creatures to have some power, but this in no way diminishes His own. “He expends no energy that must be replenished.” When the Bible says God rested on the seventh day, it was to set an example for us and our need for rest, not because He was tired.

Self-existence: When Moses asked who he was talking to in the burning bush, God said, “I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS.” God has no beginning or end. He just exists. Nothing else in all the universe is self-caused. Only God. In fact, if anything else had created Him, that thing would be God. This is a difficult concept for our minds since everything else we will ever encounter comes from something other than itself. The Bible says, “In the beginning, God.” He was already there.

Self-sufficiency: The Bible says that God has life in Himself (see John 5:26). All other life in the universe is a gift from God. He has no needs and there is no way He can improve. To God, nothing else is necessary. He does not need our help with anything, but because of His grace and love, He allows us to be a part of advancing His plan on earth and being a blessing to others. We are the ones who change, but never God. He is self-sufficient.

Justice: The Bible says that God is just, but it is His character that defines what being just really is. He does not conform to some outside criteria. Being just brings moral equity to everyone. When there are evil acts, justice demands there be a penalty. Since God is perfect and has never done evil, no penalty would ever be necessary; however, because of His love, God paid the penalty for our evil deeds by going to the cross Himself. His justice needed to be satisfied, but He took care of it for all who will believe in Jesus.

Immutability: This simply means that God never changes. It is why the Bible says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

Mercy: “Mercy is the attribute of God which disposes Him to be actively compassionate.” Since God’s justice is satisfied in Jesus, He is free to show mercy to all those who have chosen to follow Him. It will never end since it is a part of God’s nature. Mercy is the way He desires to relate to mankind, and He does so unless the person chooses to despise or ignore God at which time His justice becomes the prominent attribute.

Eternal: In some ways, this fact about God is similar to His self-existence. God always has been and will forever be, because God dwells in eternity. Time is His creation. It is why God can see the end from the beginning, and why He is never surprised by anything. If He were not eternal, God’s promise of eternal life for those who follow Jesus would have little value.

Goodness: “The goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of good will toward men.” This attribute of God is why He bestows all the blessing He does on His followers. God’s actions define what goodness is, and we can easily see it in the way Jesus related to the people around Him.

Gracious: God enjoys giving great gifts to those who love Him, even when they do not deserve it. Grace is the way we describe that inclination. Jesus Christ is the channel through which His grace moves. The Bible says, “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Omnipresence: This theological term means “always present.” Since God is infinite, His being knows no boundaries. So, clearly He is everywhere. This truth is taught throughout the Bible as the phrase “I am with you always” is repeated 22 times in both the Old and New Testaments. These were even Jesus’ words of assurance just after giving the challenge to His disciples to take His message to the entire world. This is certainly a comforting truth for all who follow Jesus.

Attributes of God – The Conclusion

This is the description of the God of the Bible. All other ideas about God are, according to the Bible, false gods. They are from the imagination of mankind. By learning the attributes of God, you may praise God for who He really is and for how each of His attributes impacts your life in a positive way.

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