

33 Attributes of



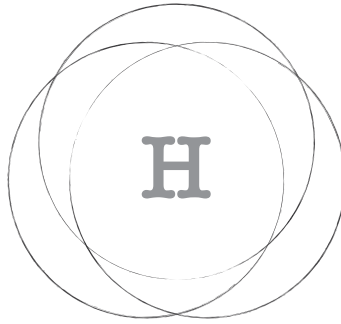
God

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Healer



Day 1

Healer

(Great Physician, Deliverer, Rescuer, Savior)

Testimony 1: Stan was born to a drug addicted mother. He never knew his father and figured he was better off not knowing because of all the negative things he'd heard about him. His mother didn't respect anyone in the place of authority, neither did she command respect from her son. He never respected her, his teachers, and definitely not the police. Stan, in fact, never saw a reason for going to school at all. He would skip school with his friends from a very early age. They would smoke weed and steal from the local convenience store. When Stan's school would call home and ask about him, his mother would curse out the school administrator. Stan's mom died from drug overdose when he was 10 and he was sent to live with an abusive foster family. After a couple years, Stan ran away. He raised himself in the streets until he was 17 when he was picked up by the authorities on a murder charge. While in prison, Stan earned his GED, and better still, found genuine faith in Jesus. Stan was released from prison at the age of 30. He got a job as a welding apprentice and met a nice young waitress whom he married after a year of courting. They both became active in their local church and lived long lives together, honoring God in their marriage and lifestyles. Through much prayer, spiritual guidance, and counseling Stan was able to be healed from his past experiences.

Testimony 2: Craig was born to a local Christian couple. He was raised in church, did great in school, played peewee football, and stayed out of trouble. When Craig was 8, he accepted the call of the Lord and became a Christian. Craig's family had been praying for him since he was born and was thrilled by his new faith. Craig remembered all the Bible studies his family would do in their home and would tell his friends about Jesus. Craig stayed out of trouble for the most part except when he got in a fight in highschool, defending himself from a bully. He married his highschool sweetheart after they attended bible college together. He went on to become a youth pastor and his wife served on the worship team. They have four children who love spending time with their grandfather, Stan.

Here we have two testimonies. The first testimony we see God save Stan in the middle of a very troubled life. You could argue God saved him from a hellish existence. The second testimony, some would argue, is a bit more boring. Craig lived a somewhat comfortable life before and after his conversion. However, we must remember that both testimonies are equally important.

Craig experienced salvation from potential hell, while Stan experienced salvation while going through "hell" on earth. Stan was drowning in an ocean of hurt and bad decisions when the Lord rescued him. Craig was saved before he could even get a foot in the water. Ultimately both Craig and Stan will be saved from an eternal Hell after God calls them home.

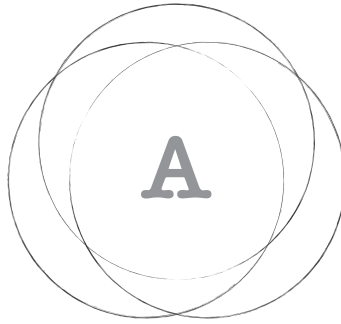
You might be thinking, "Isn't it unfair that Stan had to go through so much pain in the first place?" This may be true, but we must not place this "unfairness" on God. God has given us free will to choose Him or to reject Him. Hell is what happens when we say, "My will be done" instead of "God, Thy will be done." Too often, since our lives impact others, our hellish actions create hellish environments or consequences for others. Adhering to biblical wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit greatly reduces emotional pain in this life. They can even reduce physical pain because we know certain actions hurt our bodies (and others) and don't glorify God.

Conclusion: God works as more than just a healer from current ailments (emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical). He also heals us from future ailments. When we give ourselves over to Him, He can heal us where we are now and rescue us from some of the hell this world has to offer and all of the hell in the life to come that awaits those who have rejected Him.

"Heal me, Oh Lord, and I shall be healed; Save me and I shall be saved, for you are my praise." Jeremiah 17:14

Read: Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 11:28-30, Revelation 21:4

Aseity



Day 2

Aseity

(Pure Existence, Pure Being)

In the book of Exodus, Moses had been living as a shepherd for 40 years and was a fugitive from Egypt. His attention was captured by a burning bush. This probably wouldn't have been a big deal but what he saw made him investigate even further. He said in Exodus 3:3, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." The flame spoke to Moses and identified Himself, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." God told Moses He would send him to Pharaoh to deliver His people. Moses then asked, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

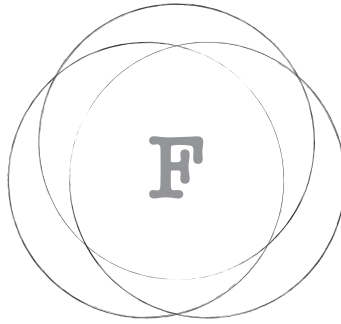
The name God gave Moses encompasses His attribute of self-sufficiency, pure existence and pure being. "I Am Who I Am." As Matthew Henry puts it, the representation of I Am Who I Am states "that he is self-existent; he has his being of himself, and has no dependence upon any other...Being self-existent, he cannot but be self-sufficient, and therefore all-sufficient, and the inexhaustible fountain of being and bliss."

When a bush is on fire, the fire must consume the bush as fuel. This fuel is eventually expended and the flame ceases to exist. However, God was showing Moses several things in this display. He was showing Moses that He didn't need the bush to fuel flame. God doesn't need fuel. God is the self-existent and self-sufficient I Am. God was also displaying that He didn't need the bush or Moses to display His power. But by His providence and sovereign will, God chooses the lowly things to be His vessels of special purpose. God knew Moses was an 80-year-old fugitive who was "slow of speech and of tongue." And that in spite of his failings and shortcomings, Moses would still be the man to approach the most powerful man in the land and lead God's people to freedom. Moses knew that accomplishing what God desired of him would not, and could not, be of his own power and influence. He had to rely on the One who needs no outside source.

Conclusion: The self-sufficiency, or aseity, of God should give us comfort. When God has called us to do something we can rest in the fact that He has all the power, knowledge and influence needed to equip us to do the task at hand. Our human bodies require rest and sustenance. According to the laws of nature, set into place by God, we must rely on something outside of ourselves to even exist. God, however, requires nothing and created the universe from nothing. As John Piper states, "God exists 'from Himself'. God owes His existence and completeness as God to nothing outside Himself."

Read: Exodus 3:13-14, Psalm 102:25-27

Faithful



Day 3

Faithful

(Reliable, Loyal)

Scenario: God makes you a promise of something you've longed for. Actually, He promises something you've longed for plus better! God's promise is beginning to be fulfilled and you have tangible evidence. God then asks you to destroy that very thing. What do you do? Do you follow through? Do you question God? Do you question if any of it was God in the first place?

This happened to Abraham in the book of Genesis. God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of a nation. However, he and his wife Sarah could not have children. When they were old and well beyond the age of childbirth, Sarah gave birth to a baby boy whom they named Isaac. Isaac was the promise.

But then God asks Abraham to do something unthinkable. God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Why would God do that? How could Isaac grow to become a nation if he's dead? Did God lie?

Abraham knew something that would benefit us all. God is faithful. He will do what He said He will do. Abraham knew that somehow, someday, God would provide a way out. So he obeyed. He told Isaac that they had to go up to Mt. Moriah and make a sacrifice to the Lord. As they're climbing up, Isaac, with the bundle of wood on his back, asks his father, "Where is the lamb?" Isaac saw they had everything they needed but that one main component. His father's words are, "God will provide..."

What made Abraham so confident? Well, he knew that God stayed faithful to his word when he and Sarah were blessed in their old age. And if God was faithful in providing a son then, then God would be faithful providing now. It wasn't a blind faith. It was evidence based. He just didn't know exactly how God would come through this time.

Well, of course God did come through. Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God stopped him and showed him a ram that was caught in a bush. That ram was God's provision. That ram was God's faithfulness. As a result, Abraham named the place "Jahovah Jireh" which means God will provide. Testing God: there are two ways that we test God. One is prohibited in scripture and the other is commanded. The prohibited way of testing is by disobedience. Deuteronomy 6:16, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you did in Massah." They tested God by disobeying Him when Moses led the Israelites in the wilderness.

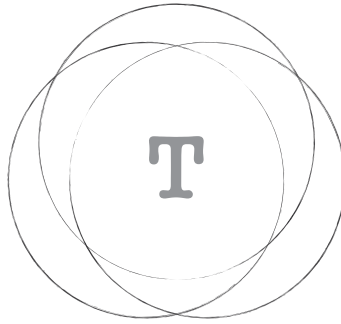
However, Malachi 3:10 says to "test God" by bringing the tithes to the storehouse and seeing if God will pour out blessings. This is testing God, but through obedience. Abraham, likewise, tested God, not through paying tithes but by obeying God in another way. And because of it he became the "father of many nations".

Conclusion: God is faithful to do what He said He would do. Abraham knew this and knew that somehow Isaac would live, whether he was delivered or whether he was raised up from the dead (Hebrew 11:19). We must also lean on the faithfulness of God. He has given us promises in His word that He will never leave us or forsake us. That if we obey Him we will be blessed. That a home with Him awaits those who love him.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember that you are faithful in all circumstances. You are the rock upon which I can build my faith and I thank you. Also, help me to be faithful in everything that I do. In Jesus name, amen.

Read: Genesis 22:1-18, Hebrews 11:8-19

Transcendent



Day 4

Transcendent

(unique, indescribable, incomprehensible)

If you dig up a worm from the ground and hold it in your hand, the worm (from what we know of worms) will not understand it is being picked up by a being with greater intellect than it. It just knows something has removed it from its cold dark damp place in the dirt. It has no eyes to see or ears to hear. Even if it did, it would not know if the person who picked it up has good or bad intentions. It would not know if the person who picked it up is married, owns a house, has a high-school education, or anything other than what it is capable of knowing.

The same is true for us and God. The Bible tells us that God's ways are higher than our ways; that His thoughts are so much higher than ours. The difference in His thoughts and our thoughts are as vast as the distance between heaven and earth.

One of the attributes of God is His indescribable-ness. Yet, this is a devotional of attributes that describe God. Well, if we can't describe Him then how can we describe Him? How can an indescribable Being be describable? It sounds illogical. God is what we would call "transcendent". He transcends our human knowledge and experience. However, God has revealed Himself so that we may know what we can of Him. What the worm I described above may know about its human handler is that it was powerful enough to remove the worm from the dirt. It may feel the warmth of the hand. It may sense the odor of the human. It may feel the vibration of its voice. Likewise, the nature of God transcends us. God is eternal. He exists everywhere at all time. He is the uncreated Creator of all creation. He knows all. We can only know what we have experienced in the past and what we experience in the present. Even then, our memories can be flawed. Our understanding of current experiences are even still limited. We don't know the full spectrum of whatever outside stimuli we are facing. We don't know the heart of the person we're talking to at any given moment. At least not fully. We can't. God knows it all. He even knows ourselves better than we do. Like the worm doesn't know it's own color or whether it's 3 inches long or 8 centimeters long. The worm has no idea what worms are!

A.W. Tozer said, when speaking about the transcendence of God, "Forever God stands apart, in light unapproachable. He is as high above an archangel as above a caterpillar, for the gulf that separates the archangel from the caterpillar is but finite, while the gulf between God and the archangel is infinite."

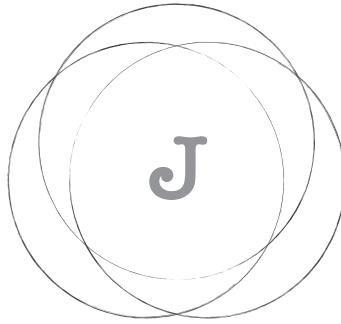
What we can know about God is what He has revealed in nature, conscience, morality and reason. These are what we call general revelation. There is also the special, or direct, way that God reveals Himself. This is done through scripture. In the days when people wrote scripture it was God speaking to them. Even when we think we hear God speak today it must be in line with God's revelation in Scripture or what we hear is not a revelation of God.

Conclusion: God is so beyond our understanding, however He still desires a relationship with us. He welcomes us to His table and to drink of His living water that we may never hunger or thirst again. While we may not be able to fully comprehend the ways of God, His love for us compels His revelation to us. We cannot, in this life, experience the true fullness of God. Our physical hearts and minds would not be able to take it. And since we are finite creatures with finite knowledge (often faulty knowledge) it is imperative to place our faith in Him and to "lean not on our own understanding."

Prayer: Lord, help me to understand that what I understand about the world and even about myself is based on an extremely limited viewpoint. Help me to do as scripture says by trusting in you with all of my heart and leaning not on my own understanding. In all my ways I acknowledge you and I know you will set my paths straight. Amen

Read: Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 55:8-9, Romans 11:33-34

Joy



Day 5

Joy

(Cause of Jubilee, Emotivity)

I remember watching a movie some years ago about a dystopian society where emotions were not allowed. Every day, at a certain time, everyone had to give themselves shots that suppressed their emotions. All emotions were forbidden and anyone caught showing them was punished by death. Everyone walked around in plain clothes, mostly shades of gray. There was no music, art, or books.

The head of this society ensured that no emotions were displayed and that all criminals were rounded up and punished. He reminded everyone on large screens during the day how important it was to routinely take your shots. The purpose of sustaining such a stoic disposition was to quell strife. If there were no emotional people, there would be no fighting, no wars. The world could finally obtain peace. The leader was called "Father" and his organization, The Tetragrammaton.

For those who don't know, the tetragrammaton is the four-letter name for God in Hebrew. YHWH. We might pronounce it as "Yahweh." As far as I can tell, nowhere else in the world does tetragrammaton denote anything other than God. Which would lead me to believe whoever wrote the story for this movie sees Yahweh as the Supreme Killjoy. That God wants to suppress our emotions and stifle anything that could possibly bring us joy. I'm sure there are many people in the world who see the God of the Bible in that exact way. Always saying "thou shalt not do this, or eat that, or behave in such-and-such a way." Just taking the joy out of everything.

The truth of the matter is God is the exact opposite of killjoy. God is Joy. God desires that we experience the ultimate joy in communion with Him. He wants us to experience His joy here on earth. He withholds certain things from us that would prevent us from experiencing such joy. He knows what may feel good for a moment will only cause greater pain in the future for us and/or those around us. Unlike the movie, God doesn't just take something and give only a bleak existence in return. No, He takes what doesn't give true joy and gives authentic delight and satisfaction in return.

Some things in this world give a false sense of satisfaction, especially if they are gained outside the will of God. But even those good things God has for us on earth pale in comparison to the joy we will experience in God's kingdom. God's joy is bountiful, ever present, never lacking, always giving, and is totally unobtainable without Him. We know we can weather any storm because "the joy of the Lord is our strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). And if we are filled with His Spirit, then joy is one of the fruits we will display.

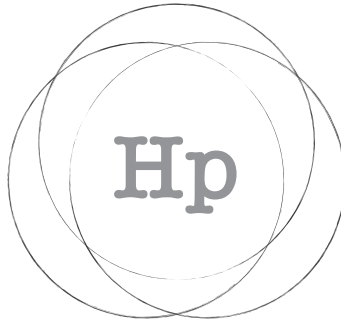
One thing we must remember is that happiness and joy are not the same thing. Happiness is usually temporary because it is based on circumstances. We're happy when we have a little extra money, or when we get a new car, or get married. But joy is the deeper state of wellbeing we can have even when we don't have the money, or the car breaks down, or divorce happens. The joy of the Lord sustains us.

Conclusion: We must never let the world dictate what brings us joy. As lyrics of the song goes, "the world didn't give it, the world can't take it away." Only God can give true joy, because God is Joy.

Prayer: Lord, I ask for your joy in any and all circumstances I face. I also pray for joy over all whom I encounter. And let your joy be present in me as a witness to the world. Amen.

Read: 1 Chronicles 16:23-36, Psalm 4:6-8, Psalm 16:11, Ps. 30:5, Galatians 5:22, 1 John 1:4

Helper



Day 6

Helper

(Convicter, Comforter, Sanctifier, Teacher)

Have you ever had a friend or family member say, “please pray for me?” You want to be inquisitive but you also don’t want to intrude. You tell yourself that if they want you to know the details, they would tell you. So you just pray. You tell God that He knows the details (indeed He does) and ask that He work it out for your friend.

Have you ever knelt to pray for yourself and upon doing so, you just don’t have the words? Life may be in such a tail-spin that you just don’t know where to start. The hail is coming down. The wind and rain sweep in from the sides. The flood waters rise from underneath you. It feels as though the very words you need to pray have been drowned from your mouth. So all you do is cry and yell, “HELP” to God.

Scripture tells us that when we pray, we really don’t need the details. Actually, we never really know the details in our own circumstances. We think we do but there are usually aspects that we just aren’t aware of. God knows the details, though. Romans 8:26 says that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. “For we do not know what to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” We don’t even have to know the words to pray for ourselves. Sure we are told we can come to God with boldness and ask for anything (Hebrews 4:16). However, sometimes we don’t feel bold and we have no idea what to ask. The Holy Spirit is our Helper.

Often enough, the Holy Spirit will give us the words we need. He will open our mouths in prayer or when speaking to others. He moves pens to write. As I write this devotional, I keep a list of the attributes that I’m going to write about but never really know which one I’m going to write on next. Often one “random” thought leads to another which leads to another which ultimately leads me to the next attribute to write about. But, as a friend reminded me, those thoughts aren’t random. Those thoughts are being led by The Helper, the Holy Spirit.

Another way the Holy Spirit helps us is through correction. Sometimes He will show us in the midst of our prayers, and in our everyday lives what we need to fix within ourselves. He tells us we are in such-and-such predicament because we put ourselves there. People love to say “everything happens for a reason.” Yeah, sometimes we’re the reason. This points to the convicter, sanctifier, and teacher aspects of “helper.” The help we need is oftentimes a good moment of self reflection and rebuke. But this is love. God loves us enough to show us when we are wrong. He does this through His written word, which men wrote by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He also does this through His church, faithful believers, led by the Holy Spirit, who hold each other accountable.

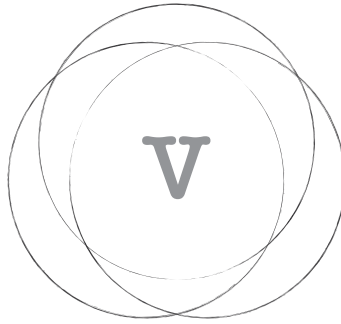
God loves us enough to correct us, whether that be in word, in deed, and even in theology. Have you ever held a different view of God or of Scripture than you do now and the reason for the change was that your eyes were opened to the error of your old belief? That was the Holy Spirit working in you to unveil the truth. He does that. He points us in the way of sound doctrine.

Conclusion: God has sent us His Holy Spirit to guide us. It corrects us, intercedes for us and teaches us. The Holy Spirit is shaping us, if we allow it, to be more like Jesus. That’s really the ultimate goal. As R.C. Sproul points out, “Among the persons of the Trinity, the Spirit is the principal actor who works for our sanctification, enabling the process by which we are conformed to the image of Christ and made holy.” God didn’t leave us to “figure it out” on our own. The Holy Spirit is Jesus’ promised “Helper.” In this we can be confident that God will never leave us nor forsake us. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

Prayer: Oh Lord, help me to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit working in my life. Open my eyes to my own errors and help me to love you and my fellow man better. Order my steps according to your word and teach me your way that I may walk in truth. In Jesus name, Amen.

Read: Psalm 23:4, John 14: 15-18, Romans 8:26, 2 Peter 1:19-21

Veracity



Day 7

Veracity

(Truthful, Truth)

When I was a kid I used to love to fly my kite. It was in the shape of a B-2 Bomber. It would soar high in the wind and it could do stunts. But it didn't fly recklessly. It had something grounding it. And by grounding it, I don't mean when it comes crashing to the ground. I mean it had something that prevented it from going too high. It had something that let it do its stunts in a controlled manner. This something was the string. The string connected to the kite is what prevented it from flying away from its owner, never to be seen again. And if it did come crashing down, which they all do at some point, it was the string that let me reel it back in.

The string on a kite is a picture of truth. If the kite were a person it may enjoy the freedom it gets when the wind catches it and it goes soaring over rooftops and trees. But as we people get, it may get tired of that pesky string that's "holding it down." "I want to really be free and fly up over the clouds," the kite says. What it doesn't realize is that if all of a sudden the string were cut, it would lose control and end up somewhere it wouldn't want to be, like in the middle of a busy highway or lost in the middle of the forest with nothing to guide it back to its owner.

This is how truth works; it keeps us "grounded." God is this truth. Today's attribute is God's veracity. Veracity comes from the Latin word *veritas* meaning "truth." When you have truth guiding you, you aren't blown "to and fro" and "carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). Yesterday we talked about how the Holy Spirit helps us. Another way it helps us is by leading us "into all truth". The only way He can do that is because God is truth. When different doctrines and worldviews are presented to us that aren't of God, if we're grounded in His truth then we won't be misled.

God has said in Scripture that He is not a man that he should lie. That means whatever he has said will come to pass. If He has decreed it then it will happen. In this we can rest assured in His promises. When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" He was stating, objectively, that what He says is bona-fide (Latin for with good faith). In other words, what he says, you can take to the bank. He then goes on to tell the disciples that no one can come to the Father unless it's by Jesus. And that if they have seen Jesus then they have seen the Father.

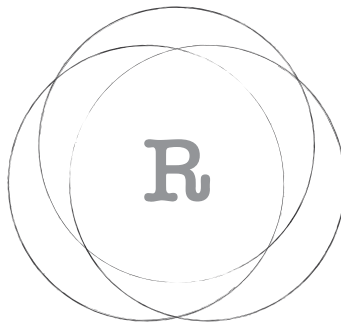
This is truth that should keep us grounded. There is a popular idiom that says to "live out your truth". Well the thing is if my truth and your truth don't equal objective truth then someone's "truth" is not true. Likewise, not all roads lead to Truth. Not all roads lead to God. Jesus has told us so. Some roads lead away from Truth. As a matter of fact, any road without Jesus is a road away from God. Any kite without the string is not grounded and is headed for destruction. As C.S. Lewis said, "If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth, only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair."

Conclusion: Anytime we read the words "truly, truly" or "verily, verily" in the Bible, it translates from the word *amen*. Jesus uses this exact word (*Amen*) for Himself in the letter to the Laodicians in Revelation 3:14. Jesus, being God in the flesh, points out again and again that He is the Truth that we should hold dear. Once we recognize this truth, then the Truth will "truly set you free."

Prayer: Lord God, be ever present in me and keep me grounded in you. There are many voices in the world vying for my attention, but Lord I know only you are absolute truth. Only you have the words of eternal life. Because of you and your truth I can soar in peace. Thank you. Amen.

Read: Numbers 23:19, John 6:65-69, John 14:6, John 16:13, John 8:31-32, 1 John 5:20

Relatability



Day 8

Relatability

(Relational, Jealous)

Why did God create man? One may wonder, especially since man can be so cruel. Why would God make us knowing we would cause pain and even have the capacity to reject Him? Well, if you've ever desired to have children, this question might be asked of you as well. We know that children will eventually grow up and, at some level, fall short of what you may have dreamed they would be. I'm not calling children disappointments, I have three awesome teens of my own. But we know that they are imperfect people who will at some point cause someone some type of hurt, whether intentional or not. That's just the nature of human beings.

We may not be angels, but we're also not demons (except maybe during that "terrible 2's" stage). So we also know that there is much potential to do good in the world. Potential to bring us and others joy. Potential to show love. Potential to defend others. Potential to just be a light in a dark world. Maybe even be a living, breathing legacy after we have passed on.

God has created us to be in relationship with Him. In the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the chief end of man is, "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." To enjoy Him forever. The only way to truly enjoy God is in the context of a relationship with him. And that is what He wants with us.

When reading the Bible you can't come away without seeing God describe His people in relational terms. There is "the children of God", those who believe in Him (John 1:12). God often describes Himself as the Husband to the nation of Israel, Isaiah 54:5 for example. And in the New Testament, the Church is the "Bride of Christ." In John 15:15, we see the term "friend" being applied. All these terms are anthropomorphic to how God chooses to relate to us. How he wants to relate to us. He created us for Him. He doesn't need us, He wants us.

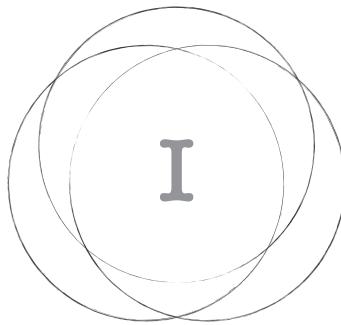
One aspect of relationship is jealousy. Once a popular television talk show host asked how God can be jealous of her. Jealousy seems a bit petty of an attribute for an all-powerful God, don't you think? However, to be jealous is not always a bad thing. At times it is a very good thing. It can be very healthy, especially in a romantic relationship. What the talk show host didn't understand is that God is not jealous of them, He is jealous for them in the same way a loving husband should be jealous for his wife. He doesn't want her flirting with or pursuing other guys. He doesn't want other guys flirting with or pursuing her. She is rightfully his and he is rightfully hers. This is a healthy jealousy. This jealousy wants the integrity of the bond upheld, letting nothing come between what God has put together. Likewise, God doesn't want distractions (whether people or things) driving a wedge between us and Him. Ezekiel 16 is perhaps one of the most sobering reminders of how jealous God is for His people.

Conclusion: The beautiful thing about the Christian faith is knowing that God has pursued us and that He wants us to enjoy Him forever. At the risk of sounding all mushy, He doesn't just want us to have things, He wants us to have Him. He desires a relationship with the beings that He made in His image. He desires it so much that He made a way for it to happen. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Because greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends.

Prayer: Lord I thank you for loving me in spite of all my imperfections. I know that you seek true relationship with me and I ask that you work in my heart daily so that I may desire you more. Amen.

Read: Ezekiel 16, John 17

Immutability



Day 9

Immutability

(Unchangeability, Consistent)

As I write this in an undisclosed location in southwest Asia, it is 108° F outside. The wind is blowing the desert's hot morning breath all over the city. There's so much dust flying around you can barely see past 100 yards. There's a pretty big city nearby and it makes me wonder, "Why? Why would anyone choose to build a city in such a place?" There's not much vegetation and what greenery there is, is always covered by varying layers of dust. I mean, did someone really think this was a good place to live? And not just live, build an entire city? I'm not from here so maybe there's just something I don't understand. But even in my hometown in the state of Georgia, sometimes I wonder the same thing. In the summer, the humidity makes 90° feel like 100° and you sweat just walking from your front door to your car. Who thought it was a good idea to start a settlement here?

Then I think, well it's not always like this. Sometimes the weather is quite pleasant. In most locations where people have built communities, there is pleasant weather and extreme weather. Maybe, in the earliest days people settled in these locations during the pleasant seasons not knowing what the harsh seasons can have in store. Maybe they weren't expecting such a drastic change.

This reminded me that God is not like that. He doesn't change with the seasons. He doesn't change with the political or cultural climates. God is consistent no matter the latest paradigm shift. He is the same yesterday today and forever more. The same God that delivered the Israelites out of bondage then is delivering people out of addictions now. The same God who healed Simon the Leper is healing sicknesses now. The same God who multiplied the loaves and fishes for 15,000 people is still doing miracles now. The same God who was with the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace is with you now. God does not change. God's word does not change. God's love for us does not change.

We may have "found God" when things were going well for us. When it was our metaphorical springtime. Maybe things were going good for us physically, financially, emotionally. Then the hot desert winds began to blow and we wonder if God is still who He says He is.

He is.

Then why does it say in parts of Scripture that God "changed His mind" or "regretted" that He did something? Well, one way to explain that is like saying the sun sets and the sun rises. Sure, now we know that the sun is fixed in relation to our position but we still use the terms. When we have winter the sun is in a different part of the sky from when we have summer. But it is not the sun that has changed it is us. Saying God changed His mind would be an idiom. It is not God who changed, it is the person/people in relation to God. Apologist Frank Turek used the analogy of the wind. If I'm riding my bike into a strong headwind, I may say the wind is against me. But if I turn around to have the wind at my back, I say the wind is for me. It is not the wind that changed, it is I that did the changing. Such is the case in the Bible where it says God repented of something. God would say He is going to bring judgement upon a person or people. The people would change direction and God would not bring said judgement. God also "relents" when someone intercedes for others, which is what Jesus does for us.

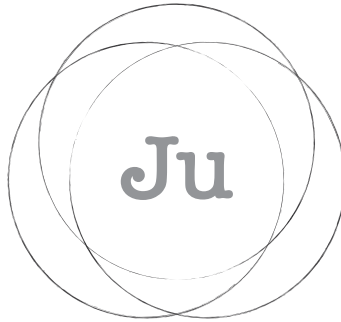
There are also times where we read that God regretted doing something. Well, again God didn't change because man surprised Him by his actions. God knows all along what someone is going to do. In 1 Samuel 15:11 God tells Samuel that He regretted making Saul the king of Israel. But, if we go back to chapter 8, God tells Israel just how bad the king that they are demanding will be. Lo and behold, he is! So God isn't surprised at what happened. He warned the people what would happen. But He is grieved that this is how the people had to learn that they only needed God as their king.

Conclusion: You could say all the other attributes of God hang on this one; that God does not change. We can talk about God's love, and God's joy and peace and everything else. But if God changed then we wouldn't have any idea when His love, joy, peace, etc. would run out. We would wonder if God still loves us. Or we would wonder, "Can I still go to God in my time of need? Is He still in the healing business?" We can say, unequivocally, YES! Just as the truth does not change, neither does God.

Prayer: I thank you Lord that you are always an ever present help. You are the rock on which I can build because all other ground is sinking sand. Show me where I need to turn around in my own life. Amen.

Read: Psalm 102:24-27, Isaiah 40:6-8, Malachi 3:6, James 1:17

Just



Day 10

Just

(Impartial, Fair)

While scrolling through social media, I see a quote from a famous internet atheist who basically said that God either sends people to abuse others or he just watches it happen and says "I'll punish you later." She then says that if she could, she would try to stop the culprit and that's the difference between her and God. Of course this appeals to our most basic sense of right and wrong. If you've ever experienced pain from the hands of a stranger, a friend, a close relative, then you may wonder why God allowed it to happen. This can be a sensitive subject and should not be taken lightly.

I'll preface by saying that, we can never know the full extent of the mind of God. Why He allows some things to happen and not others. Anytime pain is inflicted, the answer usually isn't some high and lofty philosophical treatise. The answer usually lies in comfort. Helping the person through their grief or abuse or neglect or whatever the case may be. The answer is just being there for them and not leaving their side. And in some instances the answer is justice. Justice brought on at the local, state, or federal levels. And of course, before it even gets there, if we see evil being done we should do our best to stop it. As Edmond Burke said, "The only way for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Well, that brings us back to the question "if God is good, why doesn't He stop evil?" One answer is that God does in fact stop evil. He works in the hearts of His people and prevents them from doing some of the things we would otherwise do. He also allows us our free will. If God intervened every time evil was done we would not have free will. And that may be fine for some of us if we only consider God stopping really horrible things like mass shootings, rape, etc. However, in the grand scheme of things those are hardly ever isolated events. By not isolated, I mean they are often the fruits of seemingly meaningless "smaller" sins that progressed to the end result. A butterfly effect. Example: someone is bullied at school, he goes home and feels no one listens or cares, he dates a girl that breaks his heart, he then brings a gun to school and we see the tragedy on the national news. What should God have stopped? The shooting? Or everything else that fueled it? We never know how our negative actions may affect others, even if they weren't intended to cause harm. What I'm saying is that if we want God to stop evil, then we want God to stop every evil thought, speech, and action. But not just what could be considered evil, but even those words and actions that weren't meant as evil but still led to someone being hurt. We would be nothing but robots. Going back to the social media post, I responded that yes, we should try to stop evil when we see it happen. But none of us can see evil in action all the time. Some crimes are done behind closed doors and no one will ever know that it happened. A perpetrator will take an evil deed to the grave if justice isn't served in this lifetime. Sadly, for the atheist, there is no hope of justices if it's not in the here-and-now. Wrongdoing, if it goes unpunished in this life, and there is no God, will go unpunished forever.

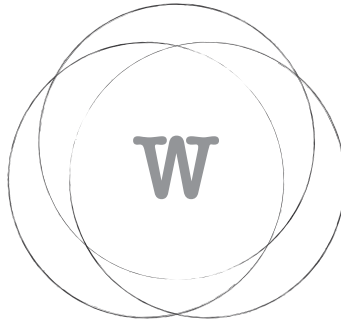
However, we serve a just God. God is a God who requires justice for transgression. He says of Himself that He will "by no means clear the guilty." That is the hope we have. The skeptic says that it's a hard truth that we must learn to accept that sometimes there is just no justice. How sad. How hopeless. How meaningless must life be if some of our greatest pain was for absolutely nothing, and the perpetrator gets off scot-free. The skeptic may say it's wishful thinking to believe otherwise. I say it's a universal law engrained in all of us to seek justice. God demands justice, and we who are made in His image do so also.

Conclusion: Justice will take place. Either in this life or in the next. Nothing is hidden from His sight and His nature requires that justice prevails. There is another aspect to God's justice and it lies at the heart of the Gospel. We'll discuss his wrath tomorrow.

Prayer: Father God help me to understand that you are the ultimate judge. You carry out the ultimate justice. Help me not be vengeful. And give me courage to protect and to step in when I see injustice around me. Amen

Read: Isaiah 1:17, Isaiah 30:18, Micah 6:8, Romans 12:19, Romans 14:9-13

Wrath



Day 11

Wrath

(Recompensable, Judge, Judgement)

God's wrath is something that we don't really like to talk about. We like to talk about God's love and His mercy. You know, the "feel-good" aspects. But His wrath? Nah, that doesn't appease our theological pallet. We spit the notion of God's wrath out like it is sour milk. We don't like the smell of it or taste of it and would rather throw it in the garbage. We want people to be attracted to God, not run from Him, right? The truth of the matter is, the wrath of God may be one of the most important attributes we will discuss.

Yesterday was about God's justice. Well His justice only makes sense if His goodness equates to Him being angry at evil. Maybe "angry" is too soft a word. I'm not sure there is really a word in the English language that describes how God feels about sin. I believe "wrath" works. To me it shows not only the feeling against something or someone, but, even more so, it says something is or will be done about it. Merriam-Webster defines wrath as "1. Strong vengeful anger, 2. Retributory punishment for a crime." Therefore, wrath is two-fold. The punishment and the anger that leads to punishment.

As I said yesterday, if we want God to get rid of all evil, He would honestly have to get rid of all of us. We have all sinned and angered God. And because God is infinitely good, all wrongdoing infinitely goes contrary to His goodness, and therefore infinitely contrary to God Himself.

Do you remember that one thing that was done to you that you felt was the worst thing anyone could have done? Do you remember that feeling of extreme anger? (Before we continue, I hope you have forgiven that person or are continually asking for God's help in forgiveness. Praying for their wellbeing is one way to help heal our hearts of unforgiveness.) Well, imagine that feeling intensified by 10. Imagine it intensified by 100, by 1000, by infinity. Infinity times infinity. You get the point. That's the wrath of God.

Remember how I said wrath is not just the feeling? It is a display of that feeling against the perpetrator. Divine retribution. This is a sobering thought. But, it is necessary in light of God's goodness. This divine retribution is what the Bible calls "hell." There is somewhat of a Paradox here. You can reject God, thereby rejecting His more positive attributes. But by rejecting God, you automatically assume His wrath. So in fact, no one can fully reject God. We will all experience at least one of His attributes.

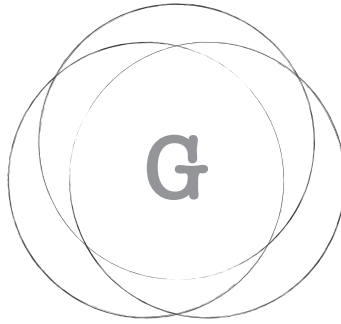
But one may ask, why is God angry if I reject Him? If I want a person and they reject me, what would I look like punishing them? What kind of narcissistic despot is this? The answer is multifaceted. Imagine everyone on earth is poor and destitute. All of their clothes are filthy rags. The best food offered is infested with mold and maggots. However, there is a king in a mansion made of the finest and rarest metals and gems. He alone has the best meals prepared by the best chefs. There is never any sadness in this house. Every day is a party. This man constantly sends invitations to his mansion. It's free for whoever wants to come and they will live there forever. There's room for any and everyone. However, accepting the invitation is the only way to enjoy the delights he offers. By rejecting His offer you reject everything that he has in store. There is no healthy food other than what he offers. There are no parties if he isn't throwing them.

This is the passive result of rejecting God. The active result is, simply put, punishment. When God has said not to do something and we do it anyway, then as a good parent punishes a disobedient child, God punishes us. One good thing is that, for the children of God, punishment is correction to get us back on the right path. But the Bible says that those who reject God are His enemies, not His children. Yet, there is still time for even them to accept the invitation to the mansion.

Conclusion: The divine anger of God must exist if God is good. He can't be good and not be angry when we go against Him. However, God's wrath is also accompanied by His grace. That, we will discuss next.

Read: Nahum 1:2-8, Proverbs 24:12, 2 Peter 3:7

Grace



Day 12

Grace

(Saving Grace, Clemency)

The cross of Christ is where we see the culmination of multiple characteristics of God. We see His justice, wrath, grace, and His mercy all on display when His son chose to die on Calvary.

Grace can be defined as giving someone something they did not deserve. A child has chosen not to eat his vegetables at dinner, but the parent lets them have some dessert they'd made. A boss pays her employee for the full day even though they overslept and were an hour late. A person who was wronged forgave the one who wronged them even though they did not ask forgiveness. This is grace.

Romans 5, verse 8 says "God demonstrated his love for us in this, while we were still sinners Christ died for us." This means we did nothing for Jesus to say "You know what? They've been good recently. I'm going to reward them for staying out of trouble." No, we haven't been good. And even if we had, His death wouldn't have been a reward for that. No His sacrifice on the cross was just that, a sacrifice. It was a death meant for us that Jesus took upon Himself.

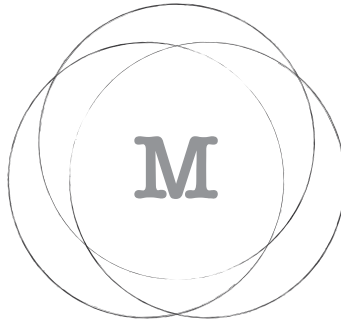
This death, though, was not a regular death. Jesus' death was the full wrath of God placed upon His son for our sake. Before His death, people had to bring sacrifices to the altar to atone for their sins. Jesus made a way so that the blood of innocent animals no longer had to be spilled for our wickedness. Our minds no longer had to be bound by past evil deeds. Jesus' death was the last and ultimate sacrifice. It sets men and women free from bondage. It showed the way of forgiveness and of true love. All when we did not deserve it. For those long hours Jesus felt the weight of every sin committed under the sun and made it so that we don't have to suffer the wrath of God, because He did.

God's grace is evident not only at the cross, but all throughout scripture. The first example is in the first book of the Bible. God told Adam and Eve not to eat of a certain tree. They disobeyed, were ashamed and tried to hide their shame from God. Their shame here was not only their disobedience, it was their nakedness. They sewed leaves together in an attempt to cover themselves. But God, being the gracious God He is, covered them with something more lasting, an animal skin. It's important to note that they felt no shame in their nakedness before each other or before God, prior to their disobedience. They knew every inch of each other and so did God. But that's what shame does, isn't it? We try to hide from God what He already knows. "No creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him..." Hebrews 4:13.

Conclusion: God's riches at Christ's expense: Grace. This is the gift bestowed upon us that we do not deserve, nor can we earn it. It would not be grace then. Jesus shielded us from God's wrath when we deserved it. Instead of God's righteous indignation, we who believe, have reason for celebration. We are accepted into the Kingdom not because of what we do, but because of what Jesus has done. Let us forever be thankful and let our actions be a reflection of the gift of grace.

Read: Genesis 3:21, Psalm 145:17, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:5-10

Merciful



Day 13

Merciful

(Compassionate, Benevolent)

When I was young we used to play a game where we would cause a friend some type of physical pain, until the victim would yell “MERCY!” Tapping-out may be what we could call it now. Basically we are asking for the punishment to stop. In a courtroom setting, a defendant might plead for the “mercy of the court.” In other words, they are asking that the judge not give them the punishment they deserve.

If you could make an image of all of God’s attributes, it may look like a bowl of spaghetti. Each one intertwined and entangled with the others. No one attribute stands on its own. When mentioning one its almost futile not to mention the others. Mercy and grace may be two of the most interwoven characteristics of God. It was possible to discuss mercy and grace on same day for this devotional. However, I feel that it deserves its own day. Besides 33 days had a better ring than 32 days!

While God’s grace gives us what we don’t deserve, His mercy doesn’t give us what we do deserve: the wrath of God. Again, the cross of Christ displays multiple attributes.

When I can, I try to give word pictures that describe what I’m trying to teach. I think this parable that Jesus tells is perhaps one of the best word pictures there is for the mercy of God.

In Matthew 18 we read of the unforgiving servant. A man brings one of his servants before him for a huge unpaid debt. The man threatens to have the servant’s family imprisoned until he can repay the debt. The servant begs for mercy and his master relents and lets the servant go, debt free.

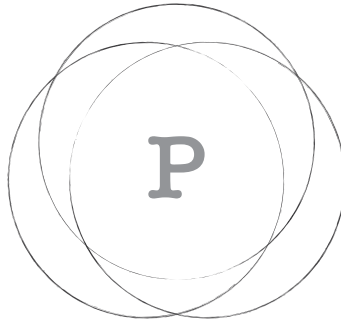
Later, the servant sees another servant who owed him a much smaller debt. He seized him and choked him and demanded payment. Remember, the first servant had just been forgiven a much larger debt by his master. But the forgiven servant was not merciful towards his peer. He had him thrown in prison until he could pay the debt. When the master heard about this, he told the servant “I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant as I have had mercy on you?” He then had the unforgiving servant thrown in prison as well.

God’s mercy is available to all who ask. As I’ve already stated, we have the forgiveness of our sin debts, when Jesus died on the cross (if we accept this free gift). But we must remember that when we are wronged it is imperative that we extend that same mercy.

Conclusion: This is why forgiveness is so important for the Christian. We who have been granted clemency have forfeited the right to be unforgiving. Also, as someone has said “unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies.” Remember, only God is infinitely good. Any wrong against Him is infinitely bad. We are flawed and finite. Any wrong done against us, no matter how immense it feels, is still not as big a debt as God could require of us.

Read: Matthew 18:21-35, 1 Peter 1:3

Peace



Day 14

Peace

(Harmony, Salvation)

Cosmology is the study of the physical universe. What must be noted, however, is the etymology of the word “cosmology.” It is literally the study of the ordered world. Did you catch that? “Ordered.” For millennia the design of the known universe has been evident to mankind. In the book of Genesis, God turned chaos into order. When scripture says “the earth was without form” it means it was in a state of chaos. God took it and made it orderly. Even the word cosmetics denotes adding order and improving a person’s appearance.

The Bible tells us, “God is not a God of confusion but of peace.” As I write this, I am reminded how much the human body needs rest and order. God, in His infinite wisdom, told us that we should work six days and have a day of rest, the Sabbath (God gave us this example when He himself “rested” after he set the world in order. Of course God did not need to rest, he just stopped creating). In fact to keep working without any rest can bring upon a state of turmoil and confusion. You can forget what day it is. You can forget what you’re supposed to be doing and where you’re supposed to be. And for these reasons, our bodies need rest every day. According to the CDC, staying awake for 24 hours has the same effects as having a blood alcohol content of .10. For contrast, it is illegal to drive with an actual blood alcohol content of .08. Not getting sleep not only affects our wellbeing, it can be dangerous to others.

However, there is more to us than the physical body. We also need emotional, mental, and spiritual rest. Those same side effects of confusion can manifest if we don’t have rest in these other aspects. God has told us that He is our rest. I have heard testimonies from people who stopped having sleep paralysis after they gave their lives over to God. Peace improves sleep. I have heard of people who were cured of hypertension after they placed their worries in God’s hands. Peace brings health.

It is no mystery that when believers display the fruit of the spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23, we display some of God’s attributes, peace being one. Running to God, who is peace, brings the peace of God. Often-times it becomes a total mystery to the world when we can experience very real pain yet be at peace. The Bible says His peace “surpasses all understanding.”

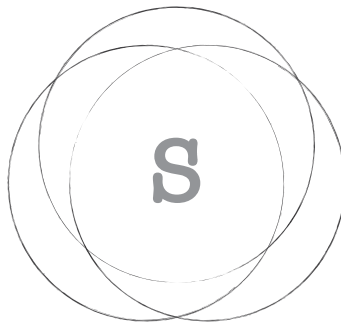
God is real like that. He gives us His spirit and His spirit changes who we are and we become His children. Being God’s children means we become the picture of God to the world. Of course, at times, we need to be reminded of who we are and Whose we are.

God’s peace is not only for us in this world. Those who believe have an eternal rest from the moment we believe. Ephesians 2:6 says we “have been saved...raised...and seated with Him in heavenly places.” You get that? These are past participles. Heaven isn’t just something that comes in the future; it is here and now AND there and then. True salvation is the ultimate rest. Hebrews chapter 4, verses 2 and 3 tells us that promise of God’s peace is only for those who have faith in Him.

Conclusion: God took the formless and chaotic elements and made the orderly world. He does the same thing in the lives of men. He can give you beauty for your ashes. He wants to take the disarray and give harmony, organization, and calmness. It’s who He has always been and that’s who He always will be.

Read: Matthew 5:9, Matthew 6:25-34, Romans 16:20, 1 Corinthians 14:33, Philippians 4:6-7

Spirit



Day 15

Spirit

(Immaterial, Bodiless, Spiritual, Glorious)

In the book of Genesis we read that the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. Here we have one of the first attributes of Yahweh given in Scripture. His "spirit"ness allows for His omnipresence, which we will discuss later. The spiritual realm is all around us. When we pray we don't have to go to a temple or pray to a physical representation of God. We can just pray to God wherever we are and He hears. This is why Jesus told the woman at the well that "God is spirit and those who worship Him worship in spirit and in truth," when she spoke about where one should worship God. Sure, before Christ there was the tabernacle in Moses' day and later the first and second temples. But even then, you didn't have to physically be there. You just prayed in its general direction.

But isn't that praying to a physical representation of God? No, that would be a violation of the 2nd commandment. God said not to make any idols of anything in heaven, on earth, or underneath the earth. Since God is spirit any physical representation of Him falls short and therefore to worship any physical representation of God or anything else is idolatry.

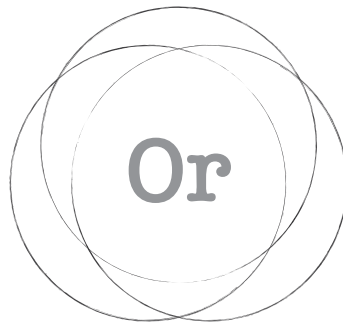
In the Old Testament Hebrew the same word for "spirit" is used for "wind". Just as you can see the effects of the wind but cannot see it, so is it with God. Unless He makes Himself manifest in a physical body, we cannot see Him. Even if we could, as the Bible says, we would die at the sight (Exodus 33:20). Often, He gave glimpses of His glory or appeared as a man to give a message. These physical manifestations are called theophanies. It's God coming in a more relatable form to speak with His creation.

An important thing to note is that God shares some of His attributes with some of His creation. These are called "communicable attributes." Love, joy, and helping are examples because, like God, we also can be full of love and joy and help others. Spirit is another communicable attribute. We have a spirit. The other heavenly beings are also spirits. But when Jesus tells the woman at the well that God "is spirit" He didn't say "a spirit", thus placing God in a category all His own.

Conclusion: The Spirit of God is invisible and yet very much alive. God is not some force that just moves like impersonal wind. There is intelligence and purpose. The Spirit of God moves so that we may be moved towards Him. He is the gentle breeze that kisses us and reminds us of His love. Wherever we go we know we can be in the presence of God. "Those who seek me will find me when you search for me with all your heart."

Read: Genesis 1:2, Exodus 33:20, John 4:1-26

Omnipresent



Day 16

Omnipresent

(Multidimensional, Uncontainable, Non-spaciality)

Space. The final frontier. Space encompasses the three dimensions: height, width, and length. And for humans we can only inhabit these three dimensions at one singular point. Whatever space we take up cannot be inhabited by another at the same time. Time is the fourth dimension. We, being finite beings can only be in a certain space at a certain time. God, however, is spirit. He does not have size or dimension. People say you can't put God in a box and they're right in multiple ways. He can't be placed in a container of any size. He is spirit. He has no form or shape.

As already stated, God is not a spirit like other ethereal entities. The Spirit of God encompasses all of space and time at the same time. He is both here and there, near and far. He is here now and there then all the time. The Psalmist said of God that no matter if he ascends to heaven or makes his bed in hell, God is there. The "omni" in omnipresent means all. That God is present everywhere, in all space.

Yahweh has no equal here (or anywhere for that matter). There is no equal but opposite opposing force that can also be in all places at once. The devil is often mistaken as God's opposite. However, He is a spirit who must actually go where he wants to be. God, on the other hand, is at all times where God wants to be. We are told over and over in Scripture that the devil roams. In the book of Job he tells God that He has been "going all over the earth" and "roaming the earth." In 1 Peter 5:8, we are told that he "prowls around looking for someone to devour."

Since God is everywhere, of course that means God sees everything. We talked about God being a God of justice, no sin goes unseen. Likewise, no good deed goes undetected. God tells us "Do I not fill heaven and earth..." (Jeremiah 23:24).

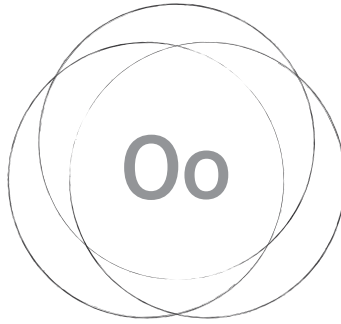
This brings something to mind. Some think the American military is weakened because its troops are spread thin all over the world. These people think that strength is not just in numbers and presence but that strength comes in concentrated numbers. I bring this up because some may inadvertently think the same thing about God. That His power is diminished because He is spread thin. "Don't bother God with that right now. He's busy with fill-in-the-blank." But take heart. God is sustaining our solar system, keeping the earth rotating, looking after persecuted churches in China, healing disease in Africa, delivering addicts in the cities and suburbs. He hears prayers in the sanctuaries and on the streets, all at the same time.

Now do not take this to mean that since God is everywhere that He, Himself is everything. No, God is separate from His creation. He can enter His creation. He controls His creation. But creation itself is not God. Just like a painting is not the person who made the painting, creation is God's handiwork but not God. There is a verse that says that God is "in all" (Ephesians 4:6). This verse is specifically talking about His church, when taken in its proper context. Since every believer has the Holy Spirit in them, then God is in all of His people. No other aspect of creation has this divine benefit. It's truly a humbling and sobering thought.

Conclusion: Since God is present everywhere at all times, let us not cower in fear. Let this be a comforting thought. We know that He will always hear us when we pray no matter our location. God's spirit doesn't have to travel between the millions of people praying to Him. He is hearing our prayers, is working behind the scenes, and is present at the victorious ending. All at the same time. Space for God is no frontier that needs to be discovered or conquered. His presence is in all of space and proves that He has already conquered all.

Read: Psalm 139:7-10, 1 Kings 8:28, Jeremiah 23:23-24, Amos 9:1-4

Omnipotent



Day 17

Omnipotent

(Powerful, Sovereign, Free)

Have you heard about the rock that God created? It was so big!

“How big was it?”

It was so big that God, Himself, couldn't lift it!

“Whaaaat? Noooo!”

You're right in saying “No.” God is all powerful but God cannot go against Himself. He therefore would not be God. Skeptics sometimes use the above example as an objection that if God is all powerful then He can create a rock so big that even He can't lift it. And if He can't lift it then He is not all powerful, or omnipotent. They call it the Omnipotence Paradox. This ends up being a useless argument because while it seems logical on the surface it goes against the very laws of logic. God cannot be both omnipotent and not omnipotent at the same time. And as I said before this argument states an impossibility since God, being maximally great and necessary, cannot go against His very nature. He even says that He cannot lie because He is the epitome of truthfulness, therefore to lie would make Him cease to be God. Remember, none of God's characteristics stands on its own. Every attribute leans, so to speak, against all other attributes.

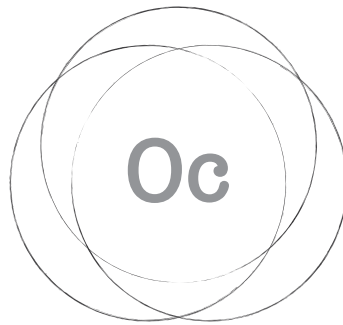
So to say that God is omnipotent is to require a disclaimer. The omnipotence of God is dependent on the character of God. You can say that God's power is limited to God's nature. And to say so isn't sacrilegious or blasphemous to God. Nothing that exists, even God, can act against its nature. If it did, it would no longer be the thing that it is.

“Well, if God can't do any and everything, then He is not omnipotent. Right?” The simple answer is that “all-powerful” means God is more powerful than any other thing in existence. God who created everything, is more powerful than His creation. More powerful than you and I, more powerful than all the angels and the devil, more powerful than all the hurricanes and earthquakes, more powerful than the entire universe. Just because we use the prefix “omni” doesn't mean it always includes everything that can be done. An example would be when we say that an animal is an omnivore. Sure the “omni” means all, but that doesn't mean it will eat rocks. Or it may not eat something that smells rotten. It just means it eats meat and vegetation, whatever it finds edible.

Conclusion: God can do all that He pleases. His will is never frustrated by evil. He is not bound by time or space. Jeremiah 32:17 says, “Nothing is too hard for you.” Jesus tells us that with God, all things are possible. Since believers have the Holy Spirit of God in them, we can do more than we could before we believed. We have more power. We now act according to a new nature. Not that we can now fly or turn into a cheetah, but we can now love and forgive in a way that our old self (1 Corinthians 5:17) would have found impossible. We can have peace that we once thought was unattainable. We have spiritual gifts that the unregenerate man can't grasp. We can overcome by the power of El Shaddai, God Almighty.

Read: Genesis 18:14, Isaiah 46:9-10, Matthew 19:26, Romans 11:36, 2 Timothy 2:13

Omniscient



Day 18

Omniscient

(Knowledge, Wisdom, All-knowing)

You have a friend that you've known most of your life. You two have been through everything together. He knows you probably better than you know yourself and vice versa. One day his girlfriend breaks up with him. He has had his heart broken by girls before and you have always been there to see him through.

As he goes through his stages of grief, you know exactly how he will handle it all. Nothing he does right now is new to you. He asks "why?" as he looks at the pictures they took. He binges on 2 large stuffed crust pizzas while watching her favorite movie. He texts her friends and asks how she is doing. He does all the usual stuff that he does in these situations. You knew that he would fall into the same exact pattern given the situation. You knew it. It's almost as if he didn't have the choice to act otherwise. But he did have the choice. He had the free will to grieve in different ways, but since you know him so well, you can predict how he will react 99 percent of the time.

Omniscience is the attribute of God that says He is all-knowing. Omni meaning all and science meaning knowing. Like the example above God knows us so well that He knows all that we are going to do. Unlike the example above, God knows our actions not based on previous actions but based on His knowledge. And His knowledge isn't only right 99 percent of the time. He is right all of the time.

He also knows possible outcomes of events. In 1 Samuel, chapter 23 King Saul is in pursuit of David who is hiding in a town called Keilah. David asks God if Saul will pursue him. God says yes. David then asks if the people of Keilah will surrender him to King Saul. God says they will. David then adjusts his plans and flees the city and Saul did not pursue him there.

Here we see that God knew the possible outcome if David would have stayed in Keilah. God wasn't wrong in saying that these things would happen. He basically told David what would happen if he didn't flee. When we talked about the attribute of God's immutability, we learned that God does not change. Here, God's knowledge did not change. He just knows what could happen given any possibility. If there are a thousand outcomes God knows them all. Therefore, nothing nor anyone can surprise Him. He knows all things probable and actual.

Some would say that God's knowledge depends on future events. This is called open theism and says that God will adjust His plans according to how we act or react. This doesn't seem to be the God of scripture. Again that would require a God who changes based on new knowledge. This would be a lesser "god" than the God of Abraham.

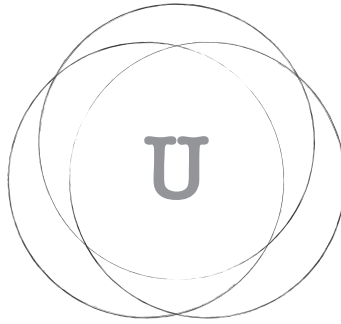
God has infinite knowledge of us and the world around us. He knows what we are going to do and why we are going to do it better than we do. We often unwittingly make excuses for our actions. Or think we're doing something for one reason, not realizing that there's another subconscious reason guiding our behavior. God knows our hearts better than we do. He knows our explicit and implicit biases. He has known us since before the creation of the world.

Conclusion: A note in the ESV Study Bible says "All God's thoughts and actions are perfectly informed by perfect knowledge, so He is perfectly trustworthy." While it is wise to go to trustworthy people for wisdom and counsel, their expertise still pales in comparison to the perfect wisdom of God. This is why prayer and scripture reading is absolutely vital to the believer. While the best meaning person may give incorrect information simply out of ignorance, there is no ignorance in God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank you for your perfect wisdom and knowledge. I acknowledge that only you declare the end from the beginning. I also thank you for treating my sins as if they are forgotten. You stated in your word you will remember them no more.

Read: Job 28:24, 1 Samuel 23:11-13, Psalm 147:5, Isaiah 42:8-9, Isaiah 44:7, Isaiah 46:9-10, Hebrews 8:12

Unity



Day 19

Unity

(One, Oneness)

“Hear, oh Israel: the Lord our God, the LORD is one!” This proclamation is known as the Shema. It is one of the main prayers in the Jewish faith. Here we see our next attribute, God’s unity, or His oneness. God’s oneness can be somewhat of a complex issue. As Trinitarians, we believe God is one, yet three distinct persons. We’ll discuss the Trinity later.

The oneness of God, means that God is one in nature, one in being, and one in substance. God is not polytheistic, or multiple Gods. There is only one being whom we call God. He is the maker and sustainer of the world. His unity also means that all the attributes we describe join harmoniously in the nature of God. You can say they are unified in His UNITY.

We can also say that for God to be one, we would be speaking of His consistency. God isn’t a different God in different settings. Some of us may have different personas when we get around certain people perhaps so we can fit in, or out of fear of being judged. But God has no reason to change who He is based on any circumstances. Remember when we talked about God’s immutability? It is therefore, not only God’s being that is one but His personality is one and consistent. The word integrity comes from the Latin word integer meaning whole or complete. God’s unity implies His integrity, or His consistency of character.

It often appears (and is wrongfully said) that before Jesus, God was often wrathful and vengeful and angry and that in the New Testament, we see a kinder and gentler God. This line of thinking overlooks or flat out rejects when God is kind and merciful time after time in the Old Testament. And not just with Israel. Even those who aren’t God’s “chosen” people receive the grace of God bestowed upon them. Think of Ruth the Moabite and Jonah warning the people of Ninevah. On the flipside, we see God’s anger and swift judgement with Ananias and Sapphira for lying in the New Testament in Acts 5 and Christ overturning the moneychanger’s tables in Matthew 21.

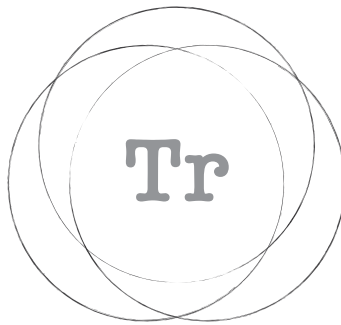
As we have said many times, not one of God’s attributes takes precedence over. They are all equally important and equally reflective of who God is. Again, I’ll refer to a note in the ESV Study Bible, “Considering God’s attributes independently of each other leads to unbalanced idolatrous conceptions of God.” God’s unity means we hold God’s holiness and God’s love at the same level. To do otherwise could mean either living by rules and neglecting a relationship with God or living in forgiveness forgetting that God still requires us to live sanctified lives.

When we speak of the oneness of God, we must also understand that there is a numerical oneness and a unified oneness. The numerical oneness is, as we’ve stated, there is only one supreme God. A unified oneness is the multitude of attributes that make up the being who is God. In the Shema, the Hebrew word for “one” is echad. Echad can mean both numerical and compound, depending on context. In Genesis 2:24, we read that husband and wife will join together to become “one flesh.” Likewise, God is unified in oneness as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Holy Trinity) as we’ll discuss in more detail tomorrow.

Conclusion: God is one and undivided. In Jesus’ conversation with the Father in John 17, He asks that His people be one just as the Father and Son are one (John 17:20-21). Let us therefore strive to be like God in that we are unified with other believers. Let us also strive to be unified in our attitudes and actions no matter the cultural climate or who we are around. Let us be consistent and word and in deed when we are alone and when we are with each other.

Read: Deuteronomy 6:4-5, John 17, Romans 3:30

Triune



Day 20

Triune

(Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

Co-eternal and co-equal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all make up the Triune God. One God made up of three distinct persons. Not three different beings nor three different God's. Each has always existed and each existed in equality as God. This attribute of God has confounded many believers for centuries. It doesn't seem logical that God can be one deity yet consist of three distinct persons. While it may not make sense to us at first, Scripture shows us over and over that God is Triune, a unified Oneness.

In the book of Isaiah, the prophet has a vision of the heavenly throne of God. The angels declare to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! The whole earth is full of His glory!" In the Gospel of John, we are told that Isaiah was speaking of Jesus (John 12:41)! But Isaiah 42:8 says that God does not share His glory, so how can that be about Jesus?

Jesus told the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, to glorify Him in His presence "with the glory I had with You before the world existed." Do you get that? Jesus said He shared with God's glory BEFORE the world existed. So if God does not share His glory with anyone, then Jesus the Son, was co-owner of the glory of the God. This is one of the reasons the religious leaders of His day sought to destroy Him. When Jesus said "before Abraham was, 'I am'" He basically told them He was God and used the name God gave himself when He revealed Himself to Moses.

God also says He is the "first and last" in Isaiah 44:6. Jesus, likewise, uses the same descriptor for Himself in Revelation 1:17 and Revelation 22:13.

Yesterday, I mentioned the story of Ananias and Sapphira. In Acts chapter 5, we are told about the fledgling church and how members would sell their possessions so that the church may grow. They weren't told to, it's just what many who could, did. It seems this husband and wife teamed to try to receive some notoriety by lying and said they had only received a small amount for some property they sold, when in fact they had received more. Notice what Peter told them, "...why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?...You have not lied to man but to God." (Verses 3 and 4). So we have clear evidence that the Holy Spirit is God.

Since the Holy Spirit can be lied to, this also shows that He isn't an impersonal force. Ephesians 4:30 tells us that He can be grieved. He is also described as having one of God's incommunicable attributes, eternal, in Hebrews 9:14. He even reveals the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-11).

There is a lot more than I can write about in today's devotional for proof that God is Triune. Entire books are written on the subject. From the book of Genesis to the Revelation to John, we are given hints and snippets of who God is by way of His Trinity. Recall the phrase "unified oneness" when the Shema uses the word echad. Yes, God is one. He is also triune. In the way a husband and wife are one and in the same way the assembly of 42,360 people were echad in Ezra 2:64. It is important to remember, however, that no human or earthly example can fully and adequately explain the Trinity.

Conclusion: God exists in three persons. Each person is eternal, equal, and existing of the same substance. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. Each Person is not a part of God. They are each individually fully God. While this concept can seem confusing, we must remember that God is inexhaustible. We will never understand everything about Him. Our finite minds can only grasp a portion of what God has revealed about Himself. I don't know about you, but instead of confusion, that gives me comfort to know my God is bigger than my understanding. Yet, He chooses to give us a glimpse into His awesome majesty.

Read: Matthew 1:23, John 1:1-18, 1 Peter 1:2

Humanity



Day 21

Humanity

(Human, Physical, Matter)

On the show Undercover Boss, a CEO from a well known company gets disguised as a new worker. He (or she) will go to one of their business locations like a restaurant and act as though he knows nothing about how to work there and let the employees there train him. From this ground level he can see what he can't from his office far away. He can witness how the supervisors treat their subordinates. He can witness how clean or unclean the establishment is kept. He can witness, firsthand, if rules and regulations are being broken. At the end he will reveal himself to a deserving (or undeserving) employee who may be rewarded for their work ethic or terminated, depending on their performance.

This show reminds me of the incarnation of Jesus. When Jesus was born as a human baby, it was God who had come in "disguise" to the world He created. However, I somewhat hesitate to use the analogy of Undercover Boss because while the CEO on the show only pretends to not know how the company works, the Son of God actually limited His knowledge while on earth. The Bible says that He "grew in wisdom" in Luke 2:52. So when Jesus said "concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son..." He is truly speaking as a man with limited knowledge. He is humanly speaking.

But, Jesus didn't empty Himself of all of His godly attributes. He could do things no other person could do like heal the sick, forgive sins, and raise Himself from the dead. It's noteworthy to mention that anyone can forgive sins, if they're done against them personally. We have no authority to forgive sins committed against someone else, unless we are acting as a representative of that person. But Jesus has the authority to forgive any sin, because every sin is a crime against God. This is why the religious leaders were angered so much when he told people he forgave their sins.

Jesus was born from a woman. He would get hungry. He would get sleepy. He would get tempted (but never sinned). In every way Jesus was a man. However, He proved that although He was a man, He held power that no other man had. That's because He didn't come to earth to learn why is silly humans were messing everything up. Unlike the CEO mentioned above, He knew the full well what was in men's hearts and minds. He had witnessed it from the beginning. In this aspect His knowledge was unlimited.

Instead, Jesus came do undo what the first man, Adam, had done. He came to show us what true humanity was supposed to look like. He came to show break down the barrier to communion with God. At His death, the veil (which was about 60 feet high) of the temple was torn from top to bottom. No man could have torn this veil. Excuse me, only one man could have caused it. The man Christ Jesus. (Another interesting note is the colors of the veil: blue, the colors of God's heavenly throne; red, the color of blood representing man; and purple, the color of royalty who sits between God and man. Jesus being our King, is the reason He says that He is the ONLY mediator between man and the Father in 1 Timothy 2:5.)

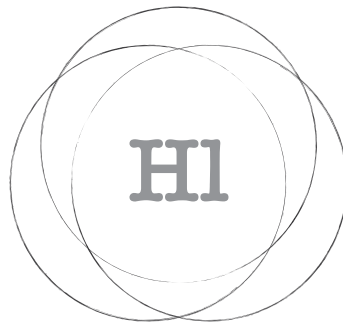
Jesus, not only became man so that he could show us the way of life. He became human so that He could die in our place. Our sins against God require death and Jesus paid the punishment so that we wouldn't have to. Of course, we still die physically but the anguish of separation of God is what Christ endured on the throne. Now, we have a new hope of eternity with God that starts when we are born again. John the Baptist knew this which is why he said "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Conclusion: While Jesus was still God on earth, He chose to limit certain aspects His divine nature to live in the flesh. However, as R.C. Sproul said, "We have to be very careful not to confuse the divine and the human nature of Jesus, because if we do that we end up with a defied human or a humanized deity which...is really neither human nor divine." Jesus came to live among us, to suffer, and to die. It was all in His plan.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank you for sending your Son into the world. Everything you do is for your glory first and your great love for us. Jesus went to the cross so that when you see me, you see His righteousness. I don't deserve such grace and I pray that you strengthen my walk so that I may reflect the love you have shown me. In Jesus name, Amen.

Read: Isaiah 53, Romans 5:18-19, Hebrews 2:17

Humility



Day 22

Humility

(Lowliness, Meekness, Selflessness)

Altruism is the absolute concern for another's wellbeing while disregarding how it affects one's own wellbeing. A man running into a burning building to save a child is putting his life on the line for the sake of another. Putting oneself on a backburner, so to speak, for the interest of another is the epitome of humility. Humility steps down off His throne, sets aside its glory, and enters among the poverty of men.

The humanity of Jesus and the humility of Jesus are two attributes of God that are only applicable to Him. In eternity past, the Triune God enjoyed boundless glory. In the Old Testament we see different instances where God walked among man as a man, but it was only for short periods of time. During the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity spent 33 years living among His creation in a created body.

The very beginning of His earthly life is in a very humble setting. The King of the Universe decided to be born to a poor couple. He decided that He wouldn't even be born in a typical home like other children would be. He wasn't even born as a guest in any room that a person might stay in while traveling. No, Jesus was born to a low and meager unmarried couple in a place where animals slept. He didn't even have a bed on which to lay His head. He was kept in a feeding trough for these animals. Truly humble "beginnings."

Later during His earthly ministry, Jesus said that a prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown among his own people (Mark 6:4). The consensus among theologians is the reason Jesus said this is because the people who know how you grew up and know your family history are the ones less likely to show honor to you along your path to your destiny. Jesus probably heard all types of things growing up about how He was conceived. He probably heard snide remarks about His mother. He might have been made fun of by kids His age for being born among animals. One can imagine the jokes people probably made about Him and His family.

As He grows older Jesus learns His earthly father's trade of carpentry. Maybe this earns Him a little more respect among the townsfolk, maybe not. But then He starts preaching. I can imagine some of the locals saying, "Oh, no He didn't! First His crazy locust-eating cousin telling us to repent! And now this son-of-a-carpenter?" We know that He was even looked down on because of the city He was raised in. "Can any good thing come from Nazareth?" they say in John 1:46.

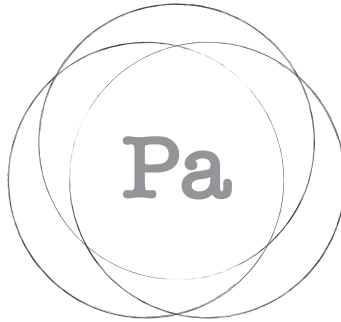
Yet, Jesus knew He had a mission. When God does things we expect Him to do things a certain way, the way we would do it. But, His mission wasn't to be accomplished in a way that we would expect Him to do it. The believers of His day expected Him to overthrow the government and restore them to their former Jewish kingdom. We would have expected the King of the Jews to come born to human aristocracy. But, no. Jesus came born lower than many of us reading this devotional. He learned from and obeyed His parents. The Creator of anatomy was born through a woman's womb. The maker and inventor of wheat became hungry for bread. The Authority whose voice the oceans obey, used water to wash Himself. The God who breathed the very breath of life in man was yelled insults and condemned to death by that very breath.

Conclusion: Jesus laid aside His crown and chose to be born in the most humbling of places for us. It wasn't the animals that's made it humbling. It was us, we filthy wretched creatures. It was for us who denied Him, who betrayed Him, who slapped Him, who praised Him one day and yelled "CRUCIFY HIM" the next. It was for us, His enemies, so that we may become His friends. What was that He said? Oh yeah, "Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you." He did just that, because even while we hated Him in word or in deed, by commission or omission; He loved us as friends. And greater love has no one than this, that He lay down his life for his friends.

Prayer: Lord, allow your word to penetrate heart so that I may become more humble. Teach me to put others before myself. I am thankful for every breath I take because you have given it to me. So let my words be pleasing to you and let them speak life to those around me. In Jesus name, Amen.

Read: Matthew 13:55, Luke 2:51, 2 Corinthians 8:9, Philippians 2:1-11

Patient



Day 23

Patient

(Enduring, Persistent)

“Patient people are powerful people.”

I often speak these words to myself and others when I sense that we are acting impatiently in given situations. Maybe traffic is backed up for no apparent reason. Or the end of the work day can't come soon enough. Or someone who is slower in learning is having a difficult time grasping a concept. Patience is a virtue that we can all benefit from. It produces a calm spirit and quiets anger.

Today's characteristic is God's patience. I did a quick search in the Blue Letter Bible app of the words “slow to anger”. The phrase came up 14 times. I found nine instances where God is described as being such and the first two is God describing Himself. He talks about His anger and wrath in those passages as well, but He starts off with what we may call His more comforting descriptions like merciful, gracious, and slow to anger.

We may often ask why God doesn't immediately punish when He sees wrong doing. But usually we don't ask for judgement on ourselves, just on other people. We always seek mercy for ourselves. Well, by God being patient, He is showing a level of His mercy. Let us, however, not confuse mercy with patience. While they may seem interchangeable, they are not. A.W. Pink, when speaking on the differences, quotes a famous Puritan of his time, “mercy respects the creature as miserable, patience respects the creature as criminal; mercy pities him in his misery, and patience bears with the sin which engendered the misery, and is giving birth to more.” When people say “God is a God of second chances,” it's because He is patient.

God has great patience because He has great power. He often holds back His anger and His wrath because His self-restraint is based on His patience. In Numbers 14:17, Moses pleads with God in saying, “I beseech you, let the power of my Lord be great, according as you have spoken saying, ‘the LORD is long-suffering’ ”. Long-suffering is another word for patience (As I once heard someone say, “Without His long-suffering, our suffering is long”). But, here we see that Moses appeals to God's power by appealing to His patience.

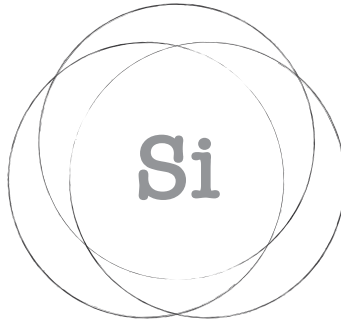
I mentioned how the phrase “slow to anger” speaks of God nine times out of 14. Well the other five times it was used, it was for people. There are several warnings given in Scripture to be slow to anger, particularly in two of the best books on wisdom, Proverbs and James. For us humans, patience doesn't only mean not becoming angry quickly. Since we have limited understanding of the world around us and why things happen the way they happen, it is incumbent on us to exercise patience whenever we feel angry, anxious, and annoyed. Usually when you see Patience, you see her friend Peace.

Conclusion: God is patient with His creation, namely us. He gives us time to turn from ways that displease Him. But don't get it twisted. The Bible says God is patient, not a blind patient. He gives us chances to get things right. He warns us before we do wrong, when He sees us doing wrong, and will most often keep warning us. He told Noah before the flood that His patience was running out. He warned Israel over and over again with prophet after prophet, until they kept on in their ways and was eventually carried off in exile. So let us not test God's power in patience. Let us, likewise, not let others drain our power when they try our patience.

Prayer: Father, I thank you for being patient with me but direct my path so that my ways are a reflection of who I am I you. Also, Lord, help me when I don't feel patient with others who are equally as flawed as I am. Let me see them as you see them. That you would die for them. Let me see situations through your eyes and not be anxious when I can't control things. In Jesus name, Amen.

Read: Exodus 34:6, Numbers 14:18, Proverbs 16:32, Colossians 3:12, Ephesians 5:1, 2 Peter 3:9, James 1:19

Simplicity



Day 24

Simplicity

(Indivisibility, Pure Actuality)

I have stated before that all of God's attributes "lean" on each other. For example, His wrath exists because His goodness exists. There is another way to put it. God's wrath is His goodness. He can't be good if He isn't angry at sin. Each attribute is God and God is each attribute and each attribute is what it is because they consist in each other.

Basically, God has no parts. This may seem contradictory because we read in Scripture God describing Himself in different ways. The very fact that I have written a devotional based on 33 attributes of God may make the simplicity of God seem contrary. But we must remember that we are not God. We don't think like He does. So He reveals Himself to us in a way we can understand Him. This is what God does through the Scripture.

Divine simplicity states that God cannot be broken down into different parts. Maybe you began this devotional thinking that each characteristic is like a different pole in a teepee. They all start at their respective points at the bottom and at the top they are tied together to form a unit. However, this would be an incorrect view of the attributes of God. If you take one or more poles away you would have a weakness in the teepee. Or, if I were to have a hand or foot cut off, I would still be me only now I would have a handicap or limits that I didn't have before. God cannot be described in such a manner.

Imagine you have 33 pennies and you place them all in a stack on a table. Each penny represents an attribute. Now, for the purpose of this exercise we say these 33 pennies are the totality of God. And if you remove one penny it is no longer God. This sounds logical. It makes perfect sense honestly. Nonetheless, divine simplicity isn't how this works. The simplicity of God says that there aren't 33 pennies. Divine simplicity takes that stack of coins and makes it one solid piece of metal. This is simplicity. You literally can't separate any "part" of God from God because God has no parts.

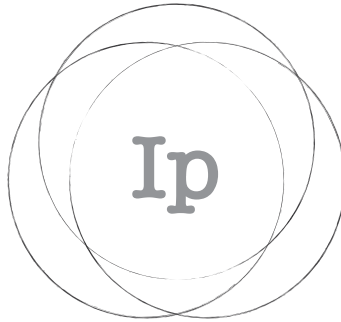
In creationism we talk about how the human eye is irreducibly complex, how different parts of the eye could not have evolved apart from other parts of the eye already existing. And those parts would have needed the unevolved parts to exist before they could have evolved. But to speak of God, we would say that He doesn't have irreducible complexity, He has irreducible simplicity. Therefore, there is always perfect harmony.

"What about the Holy Trinity? Aren't they parts?" you might ask. No. God is truly one, coexisting and coeternal as three persons. Not three Gods. Not three different manifestations. Not three parts. This is why almost any example we use to describe the Trinity falls short. One may say that God is like a man who is a father, husband, and mechanic. Different roles like in the Trinity right? No, this fails because at one point in this man's life he wasn't either one. Even if we substitute one of these three role with being a son, the other two roles are temporal. With God, He has always been as He is.

Conclusion: I heard a song today in which the singer said, "You ain't nobody till you got somebody." It made me reflect on the fact that God needs no one or nothing to exist. God's existence is based on God's existence, therefore He doesn't just exist; He is existence. There is no God but God. He is not a type of god or spirit. Do not mistake divine simplicity with God being a simple thing. As Aquinas said, "whatever is simple in material things is imperfect and a part of something else."

Read: Exodus 3:13-14

Impassibility



Day 25

Impassibility

(Without passions, lacking nothing, needing nothing)

During Easter time, different churches and Christian organizations put on productions that we often call Passion plays. These plays are based on the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry leading up to the cross and the Resurrection. Mel Gibson directed a movie based on passion plays called *The Passion of the Christ*. The word passion comes from the Greek word *passio* which means "to suffer." So the passion of the Christ is about how He suffered during His betrayal, torture, and subsequent execution.

Usually, when we say "passion" we mean strong feelings of any kind. A person may be passionate about their family or their job because of their love and devotion to those things. Some people are passionate about social issues. Anytime the subject is brought up they can't remain silent and will argue for hours, given the opportunity. Some legal jurisdictions have what are called "crimes of passion" where a suspect may have committed a usually violent crime because they were blinded by their emotions at the time.

Today's attribute is the impassibility of God. This means that God is without passions. However, this does not mean that God does not have strong feelings. It means that what God feels neither comes as a surprise to Him, nor is He controlled by them. God doesn't all of a sudden get angry because I said an R-rated word when I stubbed my toe. No, God is always angry at sin. The moment I sin, I have brought His eternal anger upon myself. Therefore, my profanity didn't all of a sudden cause His divine temperature to boil. He knew I was going to stub my toe and He knew I was going to use that certain word.

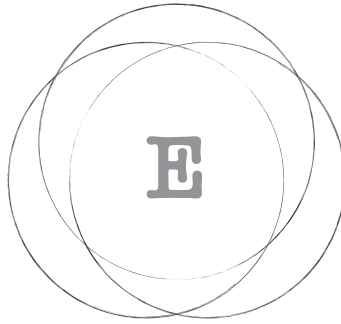
When the Son came to earth in the form of a human being, He took on the abilities of human beings; one of those abilities was to suffer harm by the hands of His creation. Yet, this suffering was not a surprise. This suffering was known from time immemorial. Jesus' "suffering" was planned and caused by Himself, not as some sort of self hate or even asceticism, but for His glory and for our benefit. Judas' betrayal was foreseen before silver had a composition. Each lash of the whip was felt before flesh existed. The cross of Christ existed in the mind of God before He planted the first tree.

Therefore, since God cannot truly suffer, God cannot be in need of anything. Need without fulfillment produces suffering. God has no need because God's fulfillment is found within Himself as mentioned when we learned about His aseity.

Conclusion: All that being said, Jesus (being God) came and experienced something He wouldn't have on His heavenly throne because of a great emotion He feels for us, His love. So when we say that God is without passions we don't mean without emotion. We mean that His love for us is never wavering. We mean that His anger towards sin is changeless. We mean that nothing done in the history of the universe surprises God or changes His emotions.

Read: Acts 17:24-25, Hebrews 4:15

Eternality



Day 26

Eternality

(Nontemporality, Infinitude, Timelessness, Living)

13.8 billion years old. This is the current approximate age of the universe according to most modern scientists while various Bible scholars place the age of the earth much younger based on a straightforward, literal 6 day reading of the Genesis creation account and genealogies in the Bible. Yet, time dilation is another possibility which applies the effects of the stretching of space-time, based on Albert Einstein's general relativity allowing for a literal 6 day creation that now, because of how we believe time to function appears to be in the distant past.

Still, there are others saying that the universe is eternal. An article written at Space.com titled "What if the Big Bang Wasn't the Beginning?" postulates that the single point from which the "Big Bang" occurred is only speculation. It is agreed that the universe is expanding. However, did it have a beginning? Is it in an eternal state of fluctuation, expanding then imploding? No one knows.

That which has a beginning, has a cause. God has no beginning therefore, God has no cause. God is the first cause. Let's say, for argument sake, that the universe is in a state of constant imploding and exploding. Something would have had to cause it to begin that cycle. Reality tells us that anything in motion was set to motion. An effect cannot be its cause. Now let's say that the universe isn't in a state of fluctuation, that the "Big Bang" was the beginning of the universe. There still had to be a cause that set the effect in motion.

It is the Christian belief that God is the first cause of all of creation, including the universe. We say that He is the "Uncaused Cause." Well, if the universe had to have a cause, why not God? The funny thing about this question, especially coming from a skeptic, is that they usually seem more willing to accept an eternal universe than they do an eternal creator of the universe. That any explanation outside of a material universe is devoid of reason. But to answer that question, I'll start with what God has said about Himself in scripture.

In Psalm 90:2, we are told that God existed before the mountains were "brought forth" and before He formed the world. Isaiah 57:15 says that God "inhabits eternity". We read in Hebrews that "every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God." It would make sense that God, not being a part of the physical universe, would be the builder of the universe. To deny that God could be such, would be to place the universe in His place.

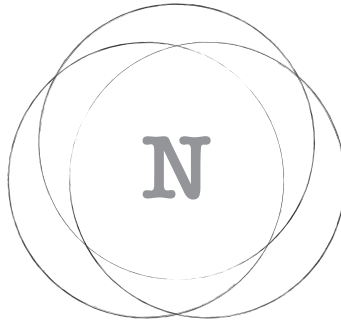
Either something outside of the universe created it, or the universe has always existed, or the universe created itself. Like I said earlier, I believe the only reason someone would think an eternal universe is possible is because they absolutely cannot allow for a supernatural cause. No other reason. Richard C. Lewontin actually stated, "It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Next, I'll further discuss why God has no cause outside of himself.

Conclusion: God, the creator of the universe has existed before the universe began. He is eternal. We may struggle with the idea of an eternal God because we have no other tangible example of eternality. Perhaps, we can imagine something going ahead in time and never ending. But for something to have existed in eternity past is inconceivable. Well, I have no problem being reminded that God is so great that some of His attributes are beyond human comprehension. Finally, if you believe the universe is eternal then maybe you are worshipping the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

Read: Psalm 90:2, Isaiah 57:15, Revelation 22:13

Necessity



Day 27

Necessity

(Noncontingency, Logically Necessary)

God has revealed Himself to be eternal in the Bible. However, God has revealed Himself outside of Scripture also.

Some skeptics argue that we try to fit in God to explain the unexplained or the unexplainable. They call this the “God of the gaps”. Well, the problem is since they can’t allow for a “divine foot in the door”, they swing the pendulum to the opposite side. Instead of a God of the gaps, they produce a materialism of the gaps. They posit things like an eternal universe, multiverse, even aliens. One may argue that a materialistic answer is better than a supernatural answer since the natural is all we can empirically know.

That sounds good on the surface. One problem with believing that all answers must have a natural answer is that this makes one pretty closed minded. Like me, it may not bother some being closed minded on some things. A popular saying is “don’t be so open minded that your brain falls out.” But another problem with everything having a natural answer is that nature itself needs a cause.

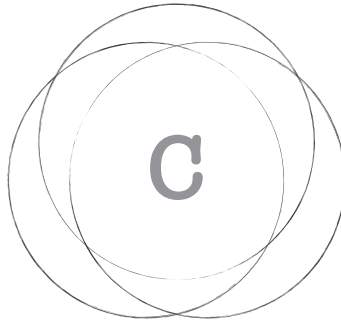
Nothing can be the cause of its own existence because it would have to exist to cause itself to be. If the universe and the natural world caused itself to exist then the law of cause and effect, which is proven to be true, would be nullified because the universe would have broken this law by its very existence. Since the universe encompasses everything in it, then the law of cause and effect would have to apply to it also. Therefore, I believe that something outside of nature, something that isn’t contingent on nature, is necessary to have caused everything else to exist.

This is called the necessity of God. We know that nature is not self-existent and self-sufficient because it is in a constant state of change. Therefore, it is in a constant state of actuality and potentiality (anything that exists and changes exists in these two states). But God does not change. God is only in an eternal state of actuality. As Aquinas said, “Now whatever is in motion (or change) is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality.”

So maybe you’re not against the possibility of God existing, but maybe you’re not convinced that God must exist. Well, to me the fact that all of “creation” could not have existed on its own, is reason enough to believe that God, who can exist on His own, is necessary to have existed. It is also said that God must also exist because He is the greatest possible being one can think of. Since one can think of such a being then one must come to next deduce that the existence of this being is either probable or improbable. I believe that the only reason this being can be impossible is if the essence of such a being is a logical impossibility, like a square circle or a yellow sound. God, however, is not a logical impossibility. Therefore, since the universe is contingent and depends on something outside of itself to have begun to exist and since God, who is non-contingent, is the greatest possible Being to possibly exist; I believe it makes the most sense that God is necessary and necessarily exists.

Read: Genesis 1:1, John 1

Creativity



Day 28

Creativity

(Creator, Brilliance)

From the time I was a kid I loved listening to classical music. I think some of the old Looney Tunes cartoons put me on. Bugs Bunny introduced me to the Blue Danube, Ride of the Valkyries, and the Barber of Seville. Disney's Fantasia furthered my interest in classical music. I've just always loved the creativity of the music and I could get lost in it for hours. That's the thing about music, no matter what your favorite genre, you can get lost in it. It is like a language that speaks to all of us even if there are no words sung with it. To quote Henry H. Longfellow, "Music is the universal language of mankind." I heard it once said that we will never run out of music. Basically, there are an infinite amount of sounds and variations of those sounds, an infinite amount of patterns to put the sounds to, and an infinite amount of combinations of sounds and patterns to create infinite rhythms and melodies. Even given the boundless amount of new music that could ever be made, there are still endless possibilities of extant and forgotten music yet to discover.

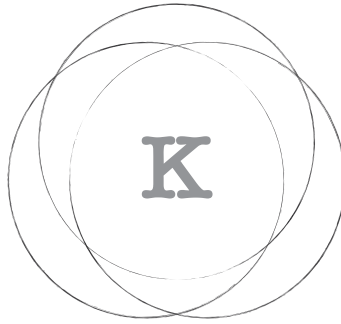
I believe music is a good example of the creativity of God. The word "create" comes from the Latin word *creatus* which means "to make, to bring forth, produce, cause." This is why we call everything not made by human hands "creation." Everything that exists was brought forth by the Uncreated Creator of all Creation. I like saying that phrase. Anyhow, I can't help but look at the wonders of the world around us and be in awe of the things God has made, how they change with the seasons in both function and aesthetics. How the sun-rise and sun-set give off their own respective light shows. How a nice downpour of rain at bedtime can be the perfect lullaby. How members of the animal kingdom can act as God's messengers of love and loyalty. How the harmony created by a husband and wife on their honeymoon is its own sort of music. I often wonder how one can look around and not be in awe at the brilliance God has bestowed to us through His creation.

Aside from what we can see and experience with our five senses, there is that which we need special instruments to witness. For example, we can see the colors of the rainbow, but there are hues of red that we cannot see with our naked eye. We call it infrared. There is violet that we can't see except for with special tools. We call it ultraviolet. I could only imagine what we could see if we weren't limited to these physical bodies. We would be able to see the magnetic fields surrounding us, all manner of radiation. We could hear the slightest and highest vibrations that our ears don't pick up, and create even more music.

Conclusion: In the book of Psalms 19, we read that the heavens declare the work of His hands. There is so much we have yet to discover on earth, how much more is there in the "heavens?" When we read that God rested on the seventh day, I don't believe that He truly "rested" because He needs no rest. However, after displaying so much creativity, I would definitely need some rest. But I'm glad we have a God who doesn't need rest. He created and sustains His creation. He is the Incomparable Inventor. The Cardinal Composer. His creation, the Supreme Symphony. As the Master Mason, God is the Authority on architecture. Take some time today and relish in some of His handiwork. And maybe let it inspire you to do some creating of your own.

Read: Psalm 19:1-6, Colossians 1:16

Kind



Day 29

Kind

(Sympathetic, Generous, Benevolent)

“For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, by my steadfast love shall not depart from you and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.” (ESV) This God’s word to His children Israel through His prophet Isaiah. Look at the last four words of the verse, “shall not be removed.” This is an eternal promise. This promise that God’s steadfast love, or kindness according to some translations, will never depart from His children. Although the book of Isaiah is written to the Israelites, God’s promises extend to those who have been engrafted into the tree of Israel, namely all who believe whether Jew or Gentile.

I like the contrast of the two things listed in the verse above, mountains and kindness. One can imagine the towering majesty of a large mountain. If you’ve ever seen a snow-capped mountain off in the distance and witnessed its imposing presence as you get nearer to it, or have felt nearly defeated as you attempted to climb one, maybe you can see why I find the contrast interesting. Kindness on the other hand seems so meek. However, God has said that even if the towering mountains be removed, His kindness will not. As permanent as the mountains may seem, God’s loving kindness will outlast them all.

What does it mean for God to be kind? Well, it means that God is sympathetic to His creation, including us. Hebrews 4:15 says that we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness. He knows how we feel when we are hungry, sad, and feeling abandoned. He has said that He will not break a bruised reed (Isaiah 42:3).

Kindness also means generous. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells us how a man was robbed, beaten and left for dead. As others who should have helped the man walked by, a kind Samaritan stops to help. But he doesn’t just ask if he needs help and says “good luck.” He places the helpless man on his own donkey, takes him to town, puts him in a room and tells the innkeeper to look after him and whatever resources are used, the Samaritan would refund. This is a picture of kindness. What we often overlook, though, is that Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies when this story was told. The people who walked by the victim in the story were both strict religious adherents of the day. It was the Samaritan who was generous.

This is how God describes Himself. He is kind and His kindness never wears out. But God has also required kindness of His people to our fellow man. One of the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 is kindness. Remember the fruit of the Spirit is proof that the Holy Spirit indwells a believer. So kindness should be evident in the life of every believer. Colossians 3:12 says, “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience...”

Conclusion: God’s kindness should be comforting to all His children. We know that He cares for us and that the kindness He feels, He shows. The kindness of God is everlasting. There is, however, one more thing; perhaps the most important. God’s kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. Notice it doesn’t say it is God’s anger that is meant to lead us to repentance. God isn’t trying to scare us into repentance. It’s the complete opposite for the believer. Therefore, the life of the believer should be one of constant repentance and rich in kindness.

Read: Exodus 34:6, Isaiah 54:8-10, Isaiah 63:7, Ephesians 5:1-2

Gentle



Day 30

Gentle

(Tenderness, Calm)

One of my favorite movies, and arguably one of the best movies ever, is *The Green Mile*. This portrayal of an early 20th century death-row prison has imagery that I find hard to forget. One of the main characters is an inmate named John Coffey, waiting to be executed for the crime of murder. If you have ever seen the movie you will remember how intimidating his stature was to all the guards and anyone else he came in contact with. Yet, he is what you would call a gentle giant. He never sought to hurt anyone. He even often cried when others were hurting. In the movie John Coffey healed numerous people and even brought back to life the pet mouse of a fellow prisoner. Instead of being this big angry killer like everyone thought he was, Coffey was a gentle soul.

There is a famous painting of Jesus embracing a small lamb in His arms, close to His chest. I believe this depiction is a good reminder of who God is. He is gentle. Jesus being the physical representative of the Heavenly Father, He holds us close to His heart. However, I believe this picture is a little too soft. Maybe it works with some but I believe it's a picture of too much gentleness. I don't mean to sound at all sacrilegious. However, I believe that true gentleness comes out of strength. The contrast of strength and power with tenderness is a better depiction, in my opinion.

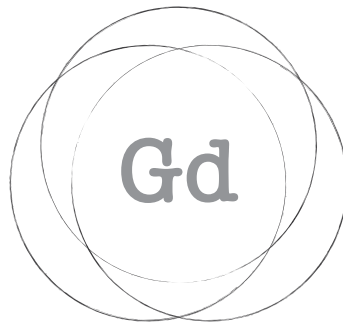
When it comes to God we mentioned His omnipotence. God has all power and yet is so gentle. Imagine the power of the sun from which a simple solar flare could disable all of our electronics. Yet this same sun brings life to this small planet. The gentle warmth of the sun's rays can be a truly comforting thing. Even better, imagine a father, burly and brawny, holding his newborn child for the first time. He doesn't want to mishandle his baby. He's careful to hold her head the right way as he speaks softly to her. As she cries he holds her close to his chest and the warmth and subtle sound of his heartbeat lulls her back to sleep.

This is how our God is with us. When the prophet Elijah was running for his life from the evil queen Jezebel in 1 Kings 19, we read that he became depressed and ran into the wilderness. He was so downtrodden that he asked God to let him die. After supernaturally providing food and water, God told him to "Go and stand on the mount of the LORD." Here, Elijah would wait for a word from God. While he waited, a strong wind tore through the mountain, but the Lord was not in the wind. Then came an earthquake and after that, a fire. But, the Lord was not in the earthquake or the fire. What came after, was a still small voice. That was the voice of God. In Elijah's delicate state God cared for him and spoke to Him gently. The same God who builds up and destroys kingdoms is the same God who shows tenderness.

Conclusion: Throughout scripture, we are reminded of God's gentleness. God in His sovereignty knew we would need these reminders since we often see God as angry. We often see this big powerful God who only speaks and works in big powerful ways. God is so powerful that, by His power, He speaks and acts gently. God is gentle, not because He is weak but because He is strong.

Read: 2 Samuel 22:36, 1 Kings 19:1-12, Isaiah 40:11, Matthew 11:28-30

Good



Day 31

Good

(Moral, Worthy, Righteous)

I'm sure we've all heard the call-and-response, "God is good..." to which is responded "All the time!" Then it continues "All the time...God is good!" I love this reminder that God is always good. Not only is He always good to us, He is simply always good.

Now what does it mean to be good? Rather what does it mean for God to be good? We can be "good" by obeying rules, eating our vegetables, and showing manners in public. But, God doesn't follow rules. He doesn't have to. He's God. That is not to say that God can break any rules He wants because He has some sort of divine diplomatic immunity. No, there is no standard higher than God, including moral standards. Remember, when God made a promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:16, He swore by Himself. When other people swear by God's name or by something else, they are usually saying that they promise by something greater or by a truth bigger than themselves.

God is the standard of goodness. Therefore, what God says is good and what God approves is good. Even everything good we have in this world is a gift of God and it reflects God's goodness. James 1:17 tells us that "every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights." We can also be assured that "no good thing will God withhold from those who walk uprightly," Psalm 84:11. Take note, that some things we see as good aren't good. They may actually be perversions of good. Scripture and the witness of the Holy Spirit confirms what is truly good.

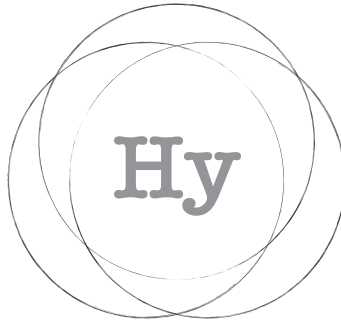
If I have failed to mention something through these devotionals, I'll do so now. When God created mankind, He created us in His image. That doesn't mean we "look" like God with two arms and a nose and knee caps. It means that we are God's representation on earth. So if God is good so are we to be good. But Jesus says no one is good but God (Luke 18:19). Well, what that means is that we all have broken God's commands at one time or another and therefore cannot be good since we are all breakers of God's laws. However, we are commanded to do good. In a world of trouble and pain, we are to be God's representation to a dead and dying world. That requires us to do good. Recall the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. Fruit is proof that the Spirit is in us. Goodness is one of those fruits. Therefore, we should be good to our fellow man, good to nature, and good to ourselves.

Someone may ask, "what about those things that don't feel good?" These times can be really hard on our emotions, our physical health, and even our mental health. I can say, however, that God promises to be with us in any and every trial and tribulation we go through. That aside, God told us that "we know that for those who love God all things work together for the good for those who are called according to His purpose." Read that slowly and hold to the words "We know..." This is a promise that we can place close to our heart as absolutely true. No matter what we go through, God is working it out for our good. We may not see the reason at first. We may not ever see how something really worked out for our good. We only know how things do work out not how they would have worked out.

Conclusion: God is good all the time. All the time, God is good. Never is God anything but good. God gives good things to those who love Him just as a loving father gives good things to His children. So anything truly good in this world comes from God. We, likewise, should do good in this world as God's ambassadors.

Read: Psalm 25:8, Matthew 7:11, Romans 8:28

Holy



Day 32

Holy

(Unmatched, Perfect, Pure, Divine)

I have been asked a question multiple times before. The fact that more than one person has brought this question to me makes me think that a lot of people have this same question. I believe it is a legit question. I also believe this question drives people from the faith and keeps some of those who do believe in bondage. The question although asked different ways is basically, "Why do Christians have to obey all these rules?"

I usually answer this question in a way I think most people can relate to. Most of us understand romantic relationships even if we've never had a serious relationship ourselves. I use the more serious example of marriage. In a marriage there are "rules" if you want to have a healthy relationship. One of the main ones is that both spouses remain faithful to each other. Another is that you make time for intimacy. This means you talk, you spend quality time together, you pray together, and of course there's the physical aspect of marital intimacy. The thing is, loving your spouse makes these "rules" not burdensome, but enjoyable. I don't have to do these things with my wife, I get to do these things. It's a matter of the heart. I want to do these things because I think my marriage is worthy. I married my wife because she is different than other women. I saw her as "set apart" and as she became my wife she became even more so.

Holy means set apart. Our God is the holiest being there is. He is set apart from His creation. He is set apart from the angels. Moreover, He is set apart from sin, meaning God cannot sin. Since God is the ultimate good, to sin would mean acting contrary to His nature, which we've already discussed He cannot do.

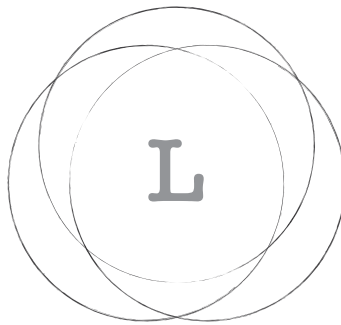
One thing that "sets" Christianity "apart" from other religions, is that God is viewed as desiring a relationship with His people. The Bible uses many relational terms to describe God's relationship with us. We see Him as a Father in some instances. He is also described as a husband in other instances. Either way it is a relationship of a loving God and believers who reciprocate that love. Therefore, when people talk about "all those rules," it's not how the heart of the believer sees it. God is holy so we want to please God and we want a healthy relationship with Him. When we love God we hate what separates us from Him. Plus, some of those "rules" are just good guidance for anyone to live by. Some of those rules keep you safe and on the path to a healthy and prosperous life.

We should not only love God, we should have a healthy fear of Him. In the book of Isaiah, the angel's declaration is "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD!" When something is repeated three times in Scripture, it's pretty significant. In this vision the prophet Isaiah knew he was unworthy to be in the presence of a holy God. He lamented, "I am a man of unclean lips, but my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Isaiah knew He was in trouble. He knew that God's holiness was not to be taken lightly. Just as the sun makes flowers grow, that same sun has the power to destroy anything that won't respect its power.

Conclusion: God is holy. The first commandment is to have no other god before Him. Since He is set apart, no other god is worthy enough to be worshipped. There is no one like our God and sin separates us from Him. Sin marred our image in the Garden of Eden. It separated mankind from his God the intimacy was broken. Every time we sin we drive a wedge between us a God. This is why we need repentance and forgiveness. Jesus experienced this separation on the cross. Our sins we placed on Him creating the largest separation possible. God the Father had to look away from His suffering Son. The sin was too great. But it was all done for us. It was done so that God would never have to turn His face away from us. It was done so that we could be forever with God and experience all the joy of His presence.

Read: Exodus 15:11, 1 Samuel 2:2, Isaiah 6:1-7, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15-16

Love



Day 33

Love

There is a meme making its way around the internet depicting Christ on the cross. A caption says, "I asked Jesus 'How much do you love me?' He stretched out His arms and said, 'This much.'" While some may find this meme somewhat cliché, I believe it illustrates just how much God loves us.

In Scripture there are several words for love. In Greek, we have Phileo, Agape, Eros, and Storge. The first, phileo, is a brotherly type of love. Eros is a passionate sensual type of love that a husband would have for his wife. Storge describes love shown between family members. Finally, we have agape. This love is unconditional and altruistic. Agape loves regardless of the outcome or the actions of the devotee. Agape love could be present in all the aforementioned types of love mentioned above. A father can have agape love for his child. A husband can have agape love for his wife. A man can have agape love for his friend.

When we speak of God's love, we can easily (and do often) place it over God's other attributes. We like to speak of God's comforting qualities like His mercy, His patience, His grace. We love to be reminded of the verse that says God is love. In doing so we are tempted to place His love over His holiness and His wrath. There is even a popular book in which the God figure explicitly rejects the notion of "God's wrath." However, remember when we talked about divine simplicity; God cannot be separated from any of His characteristics.

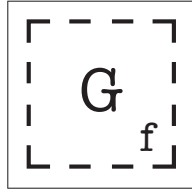
A loving father corrects his children. Although correction doesn't always feel good, love demands it. Love tells us when we are wrong lest we continue down a path of destruction. Perhaps the cultural depiction of an old man in the sky has subconsciously given us the impression that God is like a heavenly grandfather. Many of us know that grandparents don't have the heart to punish children like the parents do. Grandparents love to say yes to everything and give us ice cream for dinner. But, God is more like the stern yet loving father who out of his love for his child will get in her face, correct her, and then take her to get ice cream only after she's eaten her vegetables.

However, the love of God doesn't just correct. It gives of itself and since God is love He gives of Himself. John the apostle tells us, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." This is why the cross is the ultimate display of His love. His wrath, holiness, grace, mercy, and selfless love all on show for the world to witness. "At no other time in human history has God so plainly and blatantly revealed Himself than at the cross," apologist Bobby Conway expressed. For God so loved the world that He gave of Himself to us even while we were still sinners, even though He had no sin to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus stepped down off His eternal throne and took our punishment; something He didn't have to do. Now that's love.

Conclusion: Since God created us in His image to be ambassadors to the world and since God is love, then the application for us is to mirror this same love to others. Jesus tells us, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Your neighbor is anyone who is not yourself: your family, your next-door neighbors, coworkers, those with different political and philosophical ideologies, those with ethnical differences, and those who are from different places in the world, even your enemies. In other words, the Christian is not allowed to hate or walk in unforgiveness, but to speak and walk the truth in love and humility. This is how the world will know we are His.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I praise you and thank you for loving me even though I am undeserving. Help me to walk in your love and forgiveness by reflecting it to those I come in contact with. Lead my heart from a place of hurt and unforgiveness to those I feel have wronged me. Teach me to love others as you have loved me. In Jesus' holy name I pray. Amen.

Read: John 3:16, John 13:35, John 15:13, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 John 4:8-16



God's Nature

For further reading on our site about God's character and His nature:

<https://theogetics.org/witnessing-tools/>

<https://theo-tab.web.app/?p=element&aabbreviation=g&v=124>

<https://theogetics315.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/poster-gods-attributes.pdf>

<https://theogetics315.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/comprehending-god.pdf>

<https://theogetics315.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/love.pdf>

<https://theogetics315.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/hell.pdf>

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