

H. God is _____.

1. We have already noted God's omniscience (all knowledge) is based upon his eternity and omnipresence (everywhere present). We may now suggest his wisdom is grounded upon his omniscience. Robert Lightner writes:
 - a. "Though very closely related, knowledge and wisdom are not the same. Nor do they always accompany each other. No doubt we have all known those who had acquired a great deal of facts but who lacked the ability to use them wisely. Both knowledge and wisdom are imperfect in man but perfect and perfectly related to each other in God. Only He knows how to use His infinite knowledge to the best possible end. Through His wisdom God applies His knowledge to the fulfillment of His own purposes in ways which will bring the most glory to Him." (*The God of the Bible*, p. 99)
2. Following are but a few of the passages which declare the wisdom of God.
 - a. Psalm 136:5; Proverbs 3:19; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 1:25

I. God is _____ (unchangeable)

1. In a sentence, this says that God never differs from himself. He may on occasion alter his dealings with men in a dispensational sense, but his divine character remains constant.
2. This is a vital attribute of God, without which he could not be God. For example, a person may only change in two directions. He may go from better to worse or from worse to better. But it is unthinkable that God could travel down either of these roads.
3. Hebrews 1:10-12; James 1:7; Acts 1:11
4. "Jesus Christ the same **yesterday**, and to day, and for ever." Hebrews 13:8

J. God is _____.

1. This means that God is the absolute and sole ruler in the universe. To be truly sovereign demands that one have the total freedom, power, knowledge, wisdom, and determination to carry out a predetermined course of action. God possesses all these in infinite measure and is thus sovereign.
2. Even Satan and his evil hosts are subject unto God, and they can do nothing without His permission (Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6; Isaiah 14:12-15; Zechariah 3:1-2; Matthew 4:3-11; Colossians 2:13-15; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 8:5-6).
3. To be sovereign however, does not mean that God can do anything He wishes – He to be a good God, must do right, and hence must limit Himself, and His actions to His promises that he has made in the past (Psalm 138:2).
4. Two ancient problems usually surface during any discussion of the sovereignty of God.
 - a. **If God is sovereign, how do we explain the presence of sin and evil?**
 - i. A. W. Tozer writes: "The Zend Avesta, sacred book of Zoroastrianism, loftiest of the great non-biblical religions, got around this difficulty neatly enough by postulating (assume without proof) a theological dualism. There were two gods, Ormazd and Ahriman, and these between them created the world. The good Ormazd made all good things and the evil Ahriman made the rest. It was quite simple. Ormazd had no sovereignty to worry about, and apparently did not mind sharing his prerogatives (privileges) with another." (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 117)

- ii. This explanation is of course totally unscriptural. The only positive statement in our present ignorance is that the sovereign God has indeed allowed for (but not arranged for) sin to enter this universe, that through it all he might receive the most glory (Revelation 4:11) and that the elect (Romans 8:28) might receive the most good.

b. If God is sovereign, how do we reconcile the responsibility and freedom of man? (Psalm 135:6; Isaiah 46:9-11)

- i. Again, to quote from A. W. Tozer: “Here is my view: God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God but fulfills it. Inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice the man should make but that he should be free to make it.” (*Ibid*, p. 118)
- ii. Change the names, places, and rearrange some of the details. But, the searing and searching question remains: Why does God permit such terrible things? A clue (and only a clue) to this question is seen in Revelation 10:7: “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”
- iii. But until the sound of that blessed trumpet, the perplexed child of God can arrive at no better conclusion than once offered by Abraham: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25).
 - 1. This sublime statement is amplified on at least three other biblical occasions.
 - A. By Moses (Deuteronomy 32:4)
 - B. By Job (Job 1:21; 13:15)
 - C. By a Galilean crowd in Jesus’ day: (Mark 7:37)

M. God is _____.

1. Without a doubt the most prominent attribute of God as presented by both Old and New Testament Scriptures is his holiness. This one single perfection would perhaps come closer to describing the eternal Creator than any other characteristic he possesses. It has been suggested that his holiness is the union of all other attributes, as pure white light is the union of all the colored rays of the spectrum.
2. Note but a few biblical references: Leviticus 19:2; Psalm 99:9; 1 Peter 1:15
3. A. W. Tozer writes: “Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, (unending) incomprehensible (not able to be understood) fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, all His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy. God is holy and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. Sin’s temporary presence in the world only accents this. Whatever is holy is healthy; evil is a moral sickness that must end ultimately in death. The formation of the language itself suggests this, the English word holy deriving from the Anglo-Saxon *halig*, *hal*, meaning “well, whole.”

Since God's first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from inseparable moral collapse, He is said to be angry. Every wrathful judgement in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that would take the life of her child. (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 113)

4. In the Bible God underlines His holiness by direct commands, objects, personal visions, and individual judgments.
 - a. The direct commandments.
 - i. The moral law (Ten Commandments) - (Exodus 10:10-25; 20:1-17)
 - ii. The spiritual law (feasts and offerings) - (Exodus 35-40; Leviticus 1-7, 23)
 - iii. the ceremonial law (diet, sanitation, etc.) - (Leviticus 11-15)
 - b. The objects - The main object was the tabernacle and the temple itself.
 - c. Personal visions.
 - i. Moses' vision. (Exodus 33:18-23)
 - ii. Isaiah's vision. (Isaiah 6:1-5)
 - iii. Daniel's vision. (Daniel 7:9-14)
 - iv. John's vision. (Revelation 4:8-11)
 - d. Individual judgments.
 - i. Upon Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire (Leviticus 10:13).
 - ii. Upon Korah, for rebellion (Numbers 16:4-12, 31-33).
 - iii. Upon Uzziah, for intruding into the office of the priest (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).
 - iv. Upon Herod, for blasphemy (Acts 12:20-23).
 - v. Upon Christ, for the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:1-10; Psalm 22:1; Hebrews 2:7; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:18).
5. Our responsibility in light of God's holiness.
 - a. First, we should approach God, with 'reverence and godly fear' (Hebrews 12:28)
 - b. In the story of Moses' approach to the burning bush, the smiting of the men at Bethshemesh, the boundary set about Mt. Sinai, we are taught to feel our own unworthiness. There is too much hilarity in our approach unto God.
 - c. Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 inculcates (teaches) great care in our address to God.
 - d. We shall have right views of sin when we get right views of God's holiness. Isaiah, the holiest man in all Israel, was cast down at the sight of his own sin after he had seen the vision of God's holiness. The same thing is true of Job. (Job 40:3, 4)
 - e. We confess sin in such easy and familiar terms that it has almost lost its terror for us.
 - f. Approach to a holy God must be through the merits of Christ, and on the ground of a righteousness which is Christ's and which naturally we do not possess. Herein lies the need of the atonement." (William Evans; *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*; p. 40).

N. God is _____ and just.

1. Righteousness can be defined as moral equity (fairness). Justice is the illustration of this moral equity. In righteousness God reveals his love for holiness. In justice

God reveals his hatred for sin. The Scriptures present this twin attribute in a threefold light.

- a. The intrinsic (real, genuine) righteousness and justice of God. (Exodus 9:27; Ezra 9:15; Nehemiah 9:8; Daniel 9:14)
- b. The legislative righteousness and justice of God. (Psalm 67:4; 7:9; 96:10; 119:137)
 - i. Rewarding the good. (2 Timothy 4:8)
 - A. It should be pointed out, however, that while God’s righteousness guarantees rewards, it does not bestow them.
 - B. A. W. Strong writes: “Neither justice or righteousness bestows reward. This follows from the fact that obedience is due to God, instead of being optional or a gratuity (gift, donation). No creature can claim anything for his obedience. If God rewards, He rewards in virtue of His goodness and faithfulness, but not in virtue of His justice or His righteousness.” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 293)
 - ii. Punishing the evil. (2 Timothy 4:14; Revelation 16:5-7)
- c. The imputed (taken from one and given to another) righteousness of God. (Romans 4:3, 6-8; Philippians 3:7-9; 1 Peter 2:24)

O. God is _____ . (Titus 1:1, 2; John 17:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Romans 3:4)

1. “By truth we mean that attribute of the divine nature in virtue of which God’s being and God’s knowledge eternally conform to each other.” (A. W. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 260)
2. Truth is therefore anything factual about God. The child of God may well say, “I speak (or serve) the truth,” but only the Son of God can say, “I am the truth!” (John 14:6).
3. Again to quote from A. W. Strong: “Since Christ is the truth of God, we are successful in our search for truth only as we recognize Him. Whether all roads lead to Rome depends upon which way your face is turned. Follow a point of land out into the sea, and you find only ocean. With the back turned upon Jesus Christ all following after truth leads only into mist and darkness.” (*Ibid*, p. 262)
4. God is the ultimate and only source and standard of truth. This is why the Bible describes the “God that cannot lie” (Titus 1:2), and concludes that it is utterly “impossible for God to lie,” (Hebrews 6:18). This may be taken a step farther and stated that he not only cannot lie, but that he need not lie. A lie is almost always resorted to by human beings to get out of a tight spot, to impress someone, to gain an advantage, etc. But almighty God never finds himself in any of these situations. In the Psalms he speaks to us concerning this. (Psalm 50:10-12)

P. God is _____ . (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 36:5; 89:1, 2; Lamentations 3:22; 23)

1. God’s faithfulness refers to His self-loyalty and to that of his entire creation. He will not (indeed, cannot) change His character nor fail to perform all he has promised. God’s faithfulness is seen in many areas.
 - a. In nature. (Psalm 119:90; Genesis 8:22; Colossians 1:17)
 - b. In keeping His promises to His friends.
 - i. Adam (Galatians 4:4)
 - ii. Abraham (Genesis 15:4; 18:14; 21:1, 2)
 - iii. Moses (Exodus 3:21; 12:35, 36)

- iv. Joshua (Joshua 1:15; 23:14)
- v. David. (2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Luke 1:31-33)
- vi. Hezekiah. (2 Kings 19:32-34)
- c. In keeping His promises to his enemies.
 - i. Ahab. (1 Kings 21:17-19; 22:34-38)
 - ii. Jezebel (1 Kings 21:23; 2 Kings 9:35-37)
- d. In times of temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- e. In chastening His children. (Psalm 119:75; Hebrews 12:6)
- f. In forgiving our sins. (1 John 1:9)
- g. In answering our prayers. (Psalm 143:1)
- h. In keeping the saved saved. (1 Corinthians 1:8, 9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3)
- i. In defending His people. (Psalm 89:20, 24; 1 Samuel 12:22; 2 Timothy 2:13)

Q. God is _____.

1. He is both the source and strength of all illumination. This refers not only to those golden beams of energy radiating from the sun and stars, but also to moral, mental, and spiritual rays of information and inspiration.
2. 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Timothy 6:16; James 1:17; 1 John 1:5

R. God is _____ . (Psalm 107:8; 23:6; Romans 2:4)

1. A. W. Strong defines goodness as follows: “Goodness is the eternal principle of God’s nature which leads Him to communicate of His own life and blessedness to those who are like Him in moral character.” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 289)
2. A. W. Tozer writes in similar fashion: “The goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of good will toward men. He is tender-hearted and of quick sympathy, and His unfailing attitude toward all moral beings is open, frank, and friendly. By His nature He is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people.” (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 88)

S. God is _____.

1. “Mercy is that eternal principle of God’s nature which leads Him to seek the temporal good and eternal salvation of those who have opposed themselves to His will, even at the cost of infinite self-sacrifice.” (A. W. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 289)
2. God’s mercy is optional, in that he is in no way obligated to save sinners as he is to punish sinners. But he chooses to do so. The Old Testament speaks four times as much about the mercy of God as does the New Testament. It is mentioned twenty-six times in Psalms 136 alone. Mercy then, among other things, is not getting what we deserve, namely, hell.
3. Mercy is _____ !
 - a. The example of David (Psalm 51)
 - i. This is the confessional Psalm prayed by David after his shameful sin with Bathsheba, which included both adultery and murder. He begins by pleading for mercy and ends by acknowledging that no animal sacrifice could clean his sin. He then bypasses the Levitical offerings and throws himself completely upon mercy of God.
 - b. The example of Israel. (Psalm 103:8-17; Hebrews 8:8, 12)
 - c. The example of Jonah. (Jonah 4:2)
 - d. The example of Paul. (1 Timothy 1:13, 16)

T. God is _____. (*Psalm 111:4; 116:5; 1 Peter 2:3; 5:10*)

1. The very simplest definition of this beautiful attribute is _____. It is helpful at this point to contrast mercy with grace. God's *mercy* allows him to withhold *merited* (deserved) punishment. God's *grace* allows him to freely bestow *unmerited* favor. *Mercy* is not getting what we deserve, namely, hell. *Grace* is: _____, namely, heaven.
2. God's grace is seen through all dispensations (time periods) in history.
 - a. It is first mentioned on the eve of the first universal world destruction (Genesis 6:8) and the last reference occurs in Scripture's final verse (Revelation 22:21).
3. God's grace is always a free gift. (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8, 9)
4. God's grace always precedes His peace. (Romans 1:7)
 - a. This little phrase, "Grace to you and peace," a common salutation in that day, is found many times in the New Testament, but always in this order—never, "peace and grace." It is also spiritually true that one cannot experience God's peace until he has first appropriated his grace.
5. God's grace was incarnate (in the flesh) in Christ (John 1:14, 17; Titus 2:11).
6. God's grace is greater than man's sin. (Romans 5:20)
7. God's grace was displayed at Calvary. (Hebrews 2:9)
8. God's grace makes the sinner what he is (2 Corinthians 12:9; 15:10; Hebrews 4:16).
9. God's grace was perhaps the attribute which prompted him to create the world in the first place (see Ephesians 2)

U. God is _____.

1. This is at once the most universally known and universally misunderstood attribute of all. Millions have simply equated love with God, thus weakening or totally denying his other perfections. A man and woman may have an affair hidden from their spouses and justify their adulterous relationship by their great "love" for each other. But God's love cannot be separated or isolated from his holiness and hatred for sin. Having said all this, however, it must be admitted that of all his attributes, God's love is probably more quickly seized upon by seeking sinners than any other perfection. The smallest child can sing with great understanding: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!"
2. Two definitions of love may be offered at this point:
 - a. Love is unselfish concern about another's welfare.
 - b. Love is that act of one person seeking the highest good for another person.
3. Of all the 21 attributes presented in this study, the final three (mercy, grace, and love) will probably be the most difficult to explain to angels who have never experienced them. It would be like attempting to explain the breath-taking majesty of the Grand Canyon during a magnificent sunset and the glorious sound coming from a nearby symphony orchestra to a friend who had been born blind and deaf.
4. Following are a few objects of God's love.
 - a. God loves Israel. (Deuteronomy 7:7, 8; Isaiah 49:15; Jeremiah 3:13; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 1:2)
 - b. God loves the world. (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3, 4; 2 Peter 3:9)
 - c. God loves the church. (Ephesians 5:25-32)
 - d. God loves the sinner. (Romans 5:8)
 - e. God loves the spiritual Christian. (Galatians 2:20)
 - f. God loves the carnal Christian (Luke 15:12-24).
 - g. God loves His Son. (John 3:35; 10:17; 15:9; 17:23, 24; Matthew 3:17; 17:5)
 - h. God loves the cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

(includes material from *Willmington's Guide To the Bible*; D. L. Willmington; pp. 591-608 and *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*; William Evans; pp. ,33, 40).