

The Attributes of God

GOD'S PERSONALITY

Definition of Personality: the type of person you are, shown by the way you behave, feel, and think

Our God is a person, though not a human being. He has a mind, emotions and a will. He is not some kind of energy, a force, or a source of power that we can just tap into like the Force from Star Wars.

God weeps, gets angry, is joyful and knows each one of us intimately.

In the Muslim religion they see God as unknowable. Hinduism views God as cosmic energy. In ancient Greek religion God is seen as stoic which means free from passion, and unmoved by joy or grief

The life of Jesus shows us that in contrast to the teachings of other religions, God experiences a full range of emotions and He passionately loves us. It grieves His heart when we forget about Him or when we try to live life apart from Him.

Scripture Reference:

Psalm 6:4 (NLT) *Turn to me and deliver my life because I know you love and desire to have me as your very own.. “*

The words “love” and “desire” in this scripture demonstrates that our God is a personal God. Therefore, we have the opportunity to interact and have a relationship with HIM. He is big enough to fill the universe and small enough to live in our hearts.

GOD'S NATURE

Though God is a person, He is Spirit and does not have flesh, bones, nor blood.

Scripture References:

John 2:24 (NLT) *For God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.*

Even though God the Father is spirit and does not have a body we are still able to have a relationship with him, a spirit to Spirit relationship.

John 3:6 (NLT) *“Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.”.*

When we become Christians, our spirits come alive. Because of that “New Birth” we experience, we can have a relationship with the God who created the universe. We can know Him, hear His voice, and experience His love and power working in and through us. We do this mainly through prayer, reading the Bible and worship. Prayer is not just sharing our needs with God but its also having a conversation with our loving Heavenly Father.

We may not be able to see God because he is Spirit, however through Jesus, He has provided a way. In **John 14:8** the disciple Phillip asked Jesus to show them the Father in order for them to be satisfied. Jesus replied in verse **9-11** that if you have seen Him then you have seen the Father, because He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. We have the privilege to see the Father who is Spirit through Jesus the Son because Jesus is the very embodiment of God. Jesus put a face on God. If we want to know what God is really like we look at the life of Jesus as portrayed in the New Testament.

GOD'S NATURAL ATTRIBUTES

An attribute is a quality, property or unique characteristic of something. God possesses certain basic qualities. These include the following:

1 - He is ETERNAL – For Him to be the true God, He must have neither beginning nor ending.

Scripture References:

Psalm 90:2 (NLT) *“Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.”*

Isaiah 57:15 (NLT) *“The high and lofty one who lives in eternity. . .”*

Throughout the Bible there are countless scriptures that speak of God’s pre-existence. GOD HAS ALWAYS EXISTED. He is not a created being like us.

2 - He is UNCHANGEABLE – God cannot and will not change. He is not moody and unpredictable. He is faithful to His Word; the Bible and He doesn’t make promises one day and then break them the next. Then same Jesus we read about in the Bible is the same Jesus who lives today. People change for the good or for the worse. God will never change.

Scripture references:

Malachi 3:6 (NLT) *“I am the Lord, and I do not change. . .”*

Hebrews 13:8 (NLT) *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

3 - He is OMNIPOTENT – God is all powerful.

God is unlimited in power; He can do anything and everything

Scripture References:

Jeremiah 32:27 (NLT) *“I am the Lord, the God of all the peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me?”*

Matthew 19:26 (NIV) *Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

One of God's names in Hebrew is El Shaddai which means: God almighty or all powerful

4 - He is OMNIPRESENT – God is everywhere at one and the same time. His presence fills the entire universe. Because He is everywhere, a child of God is never alone

PSALM 139:7-10 (NLT) *I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.*

5 - He is OMNISCIENT – Nothing is hidden from God. He knows every detail.... past, present and future. He knows everything about us, yet he loves us.

Scripture References:

1 Chronicles 28:9 (NLT) *the Lord sees every heart and knows every plan and thought.*

Isaiah 40:28 (the Message Bible) He knows everything, inside and out.

GOD'S MORAL ATTRIBUTES

Holy –To say that God is holy means there is no trace of evil in his character. He is incorruptible and perfect in all of His ways.

Scripture Reference:

James 1:17 (the Message Bible) *There is nothing deceitful, in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. - God is perfect in every attribute, every attitude, every behavior, and every word.*

Merciful and Gracious – Mercy means that God doesn't treat us in the manner we deserve. We deserve punishment for our sin and disobedience but instead He shows us grace. Grace means that God gifts us with His love and forgiveness even though we don't deserve it and haven't earned it.

Grace doesn't mean that God doesn't care how we live our life or treat others. Grace actually gives us the ability to say no to sin and overcome it.

Scripture Reference:

Psalms 116:5 (NLT) *How kind the Lord is! How good he is! So merciful, this God of ours!*

Loving – **1 John 4:8** states that God is love. **1 Corinthians 13** tells us love is patient, kind, not easily angered, etc. The attributes of love are the attributes of God. Human love is totally conditional. God's love is unconditional. The Scripture teaches that He will drop everything to search for and win back even one soul who has walked away from Him. Because we have the love of God in us we have the ability to love those of ethnicities, political parties and nationalities different than their own. Its that love that empowers us to forgive and love even our enemies.

Scripture Reference:

Matthew 5:44-45 (The Message Bible) *This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.*

Compassionate – God has compassion on the hurting, the broken, the grieving, the poor and the sick. He cares about your hurts and tears. In fact Jesus stood up and proclaimed the following as His mission:

Luke 4:18-19 (NLT) *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

As His people we carry His heart of compassion and are commissioned to make an impact in a broken and hurting world

Additional Scripture References:

Psalms 86:15 *But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness*

Psalms 34:18 *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Just – God is perfect in love and mercy, but He is also a righteous judge who is perfectly fair and just in His judgments. Many times, in the Bible God is portrayed as a judge. The Bible says that He will one day judge the world. Many of us shy away from the thought of God as a judge because the examples of justice that we see on earth are flawed: some judges are corrupt and, even when their intentions are good, they can make mistakes. However, the fact that God is just assures us that when He acts as a judge, He will administer justice perfectly.

Fortunately, we also know that God is a God of mercy. In His mercy, He has provided a way for us to be reconciled with Him and to meet His standards. He has provided a substitute in Jesus who was willing to pay our penalty if we are willing to accept Him as Lord and savior. He did this through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, who died to cover the penalty we would have to pay for our wrongdoing.

Psalms 99:4 (NLT) *Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established fairness. You have acted with justice and righteousness throughout Israel.*

The Trinity - The Bible teaches there is one God comprised of 3 distinct persons who are God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. They are distinct yet they are one because they exist in perfect love, perfect unity and perfect harmony. They are always in perfect agreement. We will look at each one further in a future lesson

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 - Who is God? Pose this question to the group, and then together discuss how you would answer: Pretend for a moment that you have been visited by a person from another planet. In the course of discussing what it is like to live on Earth, they ask about God. How would you describe God to this person from another planet who has no idea about who or what God is?

2 - Ask if anyone would like to share a time when they experienced God in one of the ways that is described above: His power, His love, His compassion, etc

3 – List 3 ways that God’s attributes have been reflected in your life. For example has the love of God shone through you to others in some way.