

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrine of God: The Attributes of God Part 1

The Heights Church November 1, 2015

The Big Picture

- We seek to **become** and then **make** disciples (believing learners) by:
- Knowing what we believe.
- Why we believe it.
- Being able to communicate what we believe and why in an effective, winsome manner to fulfill the commands for all Christians in Matthew 28:18-20 and 1 Peter 3:15-16.

Reformation Day commemorates Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses on the Wittenburg church door October 31, 1517.

Martin Luther's first theses

Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when he said repent willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.

When Luther read the *Textus Receptus* he discovered that Matthew 4:17 said,

“From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

In the Vulgate Matthew 4:17 says, “**Do penance** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

- God gives us the revelation of sacred Scripture in order for us to have our minds changed so we begin to think like Jesus. Sanctification and spiritual growth is all about this. If you just have it in your mind and you don't have it in your heart, you don't have it. **But you can't have it in your heart without first having it in your mind.** We want to have a mind informed by the Word of God.
R.C.Sproul on the naming of his radio program *Renewing Your Mind*

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

- The key method Paul underscores as the means to the transformed life is by the “renewal of the mind.” This means nothing more and nothing less than education. Serious education. In-depth education. Disciplined education in the things of God. It calls for mastery of the Word of God. We need to be people whose lives have been changed because our minds have been changed. *The Holiness of God* by R.C. Sproul
- Burning hearts are not nourished by empty minds. R.C. Sproul
- If you don't know who God truly is you will invent a “god.”
- You cannot truly love God if you don't know who he really is!

God's Character Attributes

- **We can never fully understand God or even any single thing about God.**
- **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.**
Psalm 139:6
- **Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.** Psalm 145:3
- **Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.** Psalm 147:5
- **Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor?"** Romans 11:33-34

God's Character Attributes

- On the other hand we can know something about God's love or power and so forth.
- Because we are finite and God is infinite we will never understand him fully. Nevertheless we can continually increase in our knowledge of him and increase in our delight in him throughout eternity.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. Psalm 139:17-18

so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:10

God's Character Attributes

- We do know many true things about God.

God is love (1 John 4:8), God is light (1 John 1:5), God is spirit (John 4:24), God is just or righteous (Romans 3:26) and so forth.

- Best of all we actually know God as a person(s) not just facts about him.

Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23-24

God's Character Attributes

- **Incommunicable attributes** are those attributes of God that are less shared or communicated to others. **Communicable attributes** are those attributes that God shares or communicates to others.
- **However, no attribute is completely incommunicable or completely communicable.**
 1. **God is unchangeable (incommunicable). We change but not completely .**
 2. **God's wisdom is communicable but we will never be infinitely wise.**

God's Incommunicable Attributes

1. Independence (self-existence): *God does not need us or the rest of creation for any reason and exists by virtue of his very nature.*

- **God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. Acts 17:24-25**
- **God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you." Exodus 3:14**
- **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. Psalm 90:2**

God's Incommunicable Attributes

2. Eternity: *God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.*

**But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
2 Peter 3:8**

- Thus God sees events in time and acts in time, but events from long ago are in God's perspective as if they had just happened and events that just happened seem to God to last forever.**

God's Incommunicable Attributes

2. Eternity: *God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.*

- **But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4-5**
- **The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” Acts 17:30-31**

God's Incommunicable Attributes

2. Eternity:

We are finite creatures and will never be like God, always experiencing events one after another even in the New Heaven and New Earth.

- **They cast their crowns before the throne, Revelation 4:10**
- **the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month Revelation 22:2**