

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrines of God: The Attributes of God Part 3

The Heights Church November 15, 2015

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.

God's Communicable Attributes

1. God is spirit and forbids his people to think of his very being as similar to anything else in physical creation. He is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:4-6

God's Communicable Attributes

Why is God's spirituality a communicable attribute?

God has given each of us a spirit.

- **To worship him** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. John 4:24
- **To be united with him** But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 1 Corinthians 6:17
- **With which the Holy Spirit joins to bear witness of our adoption** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, Romans 8:16
- **In which we pass into the Lord's presence at death** Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. Luke 23:46

Therefore, there is clearly some spiritual communication to us from God that is something like his nature.

God's Communicable Attributes

Are Soul and Spirit different things? Are we body, soul and spirit or are we body and soul/spirit where soul and spirit are interchangeable terms?

- Both the OT and NT use the terms soul and spirit and they are different words in both Hebrew and Greek.
- Generally spirit is used in regard to our relationship with God in both Hebrew and Greek but this is not completely uniform.
- We will take a *dichotomy* view in which soul and spirit are used interchangeably to refer to human's immaterial part.

God's Communicable Attributes

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 5:23

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of **soul** and of **spirit**, of **joints** and of **marrow**, and discerning the **thoughts** and **intentions** of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

- So if we take soul and spirit as different things then in Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30 we have many immaterial parts. So it is best to see this as piling up terms for emphasis.

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind**. Matthew 22:37

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind** and with all your **strength**. Mark 12:30

- We will look more deeply at this when we study the creation of man.

God's Communicable Attributes

2. God's invisibility means that God's total essence, all of his spiritual being, will never be able to be seen by us, yet God still shows himself to us through visible created things.

who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. 1 Timothy 6:16

No one has ever seen God 1 John 4:12

Nevertheless, we will in some way see the Father, Holy Spirit and divine nature of God the Son.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8

God's Communicable Attributes

3. God's Knowledge (omniscience) means God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.

God is perfect in knowledge Job 37:16 and **knows everything** 1 John 3:20 **so he is all knowing**

God fully knows himself because he is infinite and only the infinite can know the infinite.

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

God's Communicable Attributes

3. God's Knowledge (omniscience) means God fully knows himself and **all things actual** and possible in one simple and eternal act.

- **all things actual** means all things that exist and all things that happen as well as the future

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13

for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done Isaiah 46:9-10

God's Communicable Attributes

3. God's Knowledge (omniscience) means God fully knows himself and **all things actual** and **possible** in one simple and eternal act.

- **all things possible** means God even knows all things that might happen but do not come to pass. For example, God knows every possible universe that He could have created and what would have happened in each of them!

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Matthew 11:23

God's Communicable Attributes

3. God's Knowledge (omniscience) means God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one **simple and eternal act**.

- **simple and eternal act** means God is always fully aware of everything. God never needs to reason to a conclusion. He knows the end from the beginning. God's knowledge never changes or grows. From all eternity God has known all things that would happen and all things he would do.

For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. Psalm 90:4

God's Communicable Attributes

Objections to omniscience:

- *I will not remember your sins.* Isaiah 43:25 **God will never again let the knowledge of these sins play a part in his relation to the sinner.**
- *to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.* Jeremiah 7:31 **“nor did it enter into my heart” KJV**
- **The fallacy of Open Theism: God cannot know the future because he cannot know what humans will choose to do.**

God's Communicable Attributes

4. God's wisdom means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Romans 11:33

**to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!
Amen.**

Romans 16:27

God's Communicable Attributes

5. God's truthfulness means that he is the *true God*, and that all his *knowledge and words are both true* and the final standard of truth.

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3

Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge, Job 37:16

- *True God means God in his being is the only being that fully conforms to what God should be.***
- *God himself is the one who has the perfect of idea of what God should be like!***

God's Communicable Attributes

5. God's truthfulness means that he is the true God, and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? Numbers 23:19

it is impossible for God to lie Hebrews 6:18

in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began Titus 1:2

God always does what he has said and fulfills what he has promised.

God's Communicable Attributes

5. God's truthfulness means that he is the true God, and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.

Truthfulness is communicable in that we can in part imitate it by having true knowledge about God.

The more we learn about the reality of the creation the more we discover the truth that God already knows.