

1. Come to two more attributes of God

- A. Seen His sovereignty, His omnipotence, His holiness
Now His immutability and His wisdom

I. THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

1. Immutability defined = God never changes – He is always the same

Mal 3:6 (ESV) “For I the LORD *do not change...*

James put it this way: Jas 1:17 (ESV) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the *Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

Thought: Again we are confronted with the thought of how different God and man are

- A. We change all the time – in every way
- 1). Our bodies are changing – we are growing older
 - 2). We live in an age of technology that is constantly changing – CD’s to MP3’s – Myspace?
 - 3). Our moods change from day to day – sometimes from moment to moment
 - 4). People change all around us – some you never know what to expect
- B. So everything is constantly changing in our world – some for the better – some for the worse
- 1). For the worse – society – there is a reason people speak of the good old days
 - 2). For the better – Greatest example: When you were saved that change was for the better

Point: Because we are so used to change we tend to forget God never does

- A. But this attribute gives us great rest – here is our stability in a changing world around us

Transition: I want to show you why it is impossible for God to change = so you can rest in that

God’s Perfect Nature

1. God’s nature makes it impossible for Him to change

- A. We’ve seen change is always for the better or for the worse – We cannot speak of God in those terms
As A. W. Pink put it: “He cannot change for the better, for he is already perfect; and being perfect he cannot change for the worse.”
- 1). A perfect God cannot get any better – perfection leaves no room for improvement
 - 2). If He changes for the worse then He’s no longer perfect – but He is perfect
- B. Perfection does not change
- 1). He does not grow old – He does not mature – He does not develop
 - 2). He does not get stronger and He cannot lose any of the strength He already has

Transition: Let’s see how this immutability brings stability into our life – and affects our thinking

The Immutability of God in an Age of Relativism

1. We live in a day that has removed all absolutes

- A. Everything in the moral realm is relative to the age we live in
- 1). IOW what was unacceptable 30 years ago is acceptable today
 - a). That is considered normal because times change
So morals must keep pace by changing with them

2. The doctrine of immutability is the answer to this foolishness

- A. This doctrine tells us that morals don’t change with time
Why? Because the author of those moral truths has not changed with time

- 1). Therefore what He said was wrong 2000 years ago is still wrong today
 - a). And what He said was right 2000 years ago is still right today
- B. But if we hold to God's moral absolutes – we are told we are old fashioned and out of touch
 - 1). It has nothing to do with being old fashioned and out of touch with our times
 - a). It has everything to do with being in touch with an immutable God

Understanding if He never changes then neither will His truth

Point: Therefore every promise, demand, or warning addressed to the NT believer

- A. Is as valid today as it was when it was written – wrong is still wrong and right is still right
- B. Scripture tells us clearly that it never changes

Psa 119:152 (NIV) Long ago I learned from your statutes that *you established them to last forever.*

Is 40:8 (ESV) The grass withers, the flower fades, but *the word of our God will stand forever.*

Transition: So the immutability of God has an effect on the age of relativism we live in

- A. But let's get more personal and see how it has an effect on every person who lives in this age

The Immutability of God and its Effect on Mankind

Intro: Let's see how this affects the unbeliever, the backslidden Christian and the Christian walking with God

1. The effect of immutability on the unbeliever

- A. It speaks clearly to those who defy God's law and think they will get away with it
 - 1). Who think this ancient book has nothing to say to modern man – Good for those days but...
- B. We've already seen the answer to that – it may be old but it's truths are everlasting
 - 1). Because it's truths are authored by an unchanging God
 - 2). Therefore what He said was sin then is still sin now
 - 3). AND what He said was the consequences of sin then is still the consequences of sin now

Ro 6:23 (ESV) For the wages of sin is death... (Second death – eternity in hell)

Point: The thought of God's immutability is a horrifying reality to an unrepentant sinner

It tells them they won't get away with their sin

- A. At the same time the immutability of God offers them the greatest hope
 - 1). Tells them that God's way of salvation has not changed either
 - 2). There is still hope for any who see their need of salvation – repent and call out on the Lord in faith

2. The effect of immutability on the backslidden Christian

- A. Tells them though their love for God may have grown cold - God's love for them hasn't
 - 1). His love is immutable – it does not waver nor diminish
 - 2). Therefore that love He had for them when they first believed and served with all their heart
 - a). That love is still the same today

Point: Therefore the backslider can return knowing they will be gladly received – Prodigal Son

- A. For it was not God's love that changed towards them – it was their love that changed towards Him

3. The effect of the immutability of God on the Christian

- A. It brings *stability* into our life
 - 1). If He constantly changed from one day to the next – we could never trust Him
 - a). Are those promises we stand on today valid tomorrow?
 - b). Are His purposes we give ourselves today still be what He wants tomorrow?
 - 2). Because He is immutable – we can rest – we have stability
 - a). His promises are guaranteed today, tomorrow, 10 years from now
 - b). His purpose are fixed - I can give myself to them knowing it will not be a wasted effort

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- 1a). What I give myself to today will still be just as important tomorrow
- B. It brings *confidence* into my prayer life
- 1). If God was always changing – confident prayer would be impossible
 - a). We'd always be wondering
“What kind of mood is He in? Does He want to be around me?”
“Is He sympathetic to my needs today?”
 - b). Immutability answers that – He is not like us – He is not moody
 - 1a). You may have had a father who wanted you near him one day
Was mad the next – you had to see his mood before you went near
 - 2a). God is always the same – always willing to listen – always sympathetic
Always wanting us to come near to Him
 - 2). God is stable therefore we can be confident in our prayer life
- C. It brings and *anticipation* and *expectancy* into our Christianity
- 1). We serve same God who displayed His power by opening up the Red sea – stopping the sun
 - 2). Who displayed His power by taking ordinary folk & turning the world upside down with them
 - a). Read the book of Acts and see what God can do with ex-fisherman, tax collectors...
- Point:** We serve the same God – who still acts that way
- 1). Who still powerfully overcomes obstacles for His children
 - 2). Who still takes ordinary men and women and enables them to be used in extraordinary ways
 - 3). Just remember – the God you see in the Bible – in the book of Acts
Is the same God we serve today
- Transition:** That's immutability - I love the next one
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II. THE WISDOM OF GOD

1. Defined = it is more than just an accumulation of knowledge

- A. Wisdom is knowing what to do with the knowledge we have
 - 1). How to use it to achieve the best and highest possible end
 - B. We all know people who have all kinds of knowledge stored up but very little wisdom
 - 1). They seem to make one foolish choice after another
You think “How can somebody so smart be so stupid?”
 - 2). Therefore it seems their vast amounts of knowledge never do much for them
 - C. J.I. Packer defined God's wisdom like this:
“The power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it”
 - 1). God always wants the best and the highest goal in all He does
 - a). Including what He does in our life
 - 2). The next is important - He may have that desire – but not have a clue what that highest goal is
 - a). But His wisdom means He always sees what the best and highest goal is
 - 1a). Including what that is for us
 - 3). Then the ability to always see the best and surest way of achieving that goal
- Transition:** To show you how important this is – let's see how this works with other attributes
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God's Wisdom and Omnipotence (unlimited power)

1. For God's wisdom to be effective it must be coupled to His power

It is in Scripture: Job 9:4 (ESV) He is wise in heart and mighty in strength

Job 9:4 (NIV) His wisdom is profound, his power is vast...

- A. He has unlimited power AND perfect wisdom
What this means is: He has the power to carry out what His wisdom plans
- B. What good would it be to have the wisdom to plan great plans – but no power to accomplish them
 - 1). But with an omnipotent God – His wisdom is never frustrated
- C. And how frightening would it be – if He used that power without wisdom

God's Wisdom and Omniscience

1. Omniscience defined = all knowing – having all knowledge

- A. Remember wisdom desires the highest end
 - 1). It is because God knows all things – He can determine the best and surest way to reach that goal
- B. He doesn't plan like us – the best we can do is make educated guesses
 - 1). Because we don't know what will happen the next moment
We're not really sure what our actions will produce
 - a). We think – we hope - they will produce a positive result
 - 2). Because we're guessing – we're constantly readjusting as circumstances change

Thought: God does none of that – He knows all things before they happen – *He never guesses*

- A. He plans with complete knowledge of what every action will produce
- B. So His plan to take you from point A to point B – which is a higher and better point
 - 1). Is a plan that has already considered every circumstance that will come into our life
 - 2). He plans with full knowledge – there is no mistakes
 - a). It will be the best and surest way to get you where He wants you

Point: He uses His knowledge as a resource for His wisdom to achieve the best for us

- A. And to plan that perfect plan that will get us to His best for us

2. When we see that it brings a calmness and confidence into our life

- A. It takes the panic out of living life with constantly changing circumstances
 - 1). When things seem to be going adversely I can still rest
The plan God has for my life has already taken that circumstance into account
 - a). That won't stop Him from getting me to where He wants me to be
In fact He has allowed it because He is going to use it as part of the process
- B. That brings such a rest – His plan will not fail because of this event – it hasn't surprised Him one bit

Transition: This is important let's stay on this for a moment – why it's important to understand this

God's Wisdom and Adversity in our Life

- A. If we're not convinced of this attribute of God's wisdom we will lose our joy and peace
 - 1). We can begin to wonder if God has made a mistake in His planning this time
 - 2). We will begin to doubt we are headed towards the best and highest for our life
- B. When are tempted to doubt like this we need to retreat to the truth – what we do know
 - 1). The Bible tells us God is wise – When He plans it is flawless – always perfect
 - 2). Just because I don't understand how THIS plan could be perfect – it doesn't change the truth
 - a). I don't have to understand all that God does in my life
I can rest in the fact that He understands all He is doing and never makes a mistake

Point: Therefore when I go through dark times in my life I can sit still and not panic

Corrie Ten Boom "When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away your ticket and jump off. *You sit still and trust the engineer.*"

- A. That's exactly right! We do exactly that with God when things seem to get dark
- 1). We trust that His good plan took this time of darkness into consideration
Therefore - We are still on that path to good things – this momentary trouble won't stop that!

Transition: We need to remember this – that God is wise – He knows what He's doing

- A. That every adversity – every change of direction has been taken into account in His perfect plan
- B. But I admit this isn't always easy – Why?
- 1). Because His wisdom is so different than ours – He doesn't plan like we would
 - 2). I want to show you this – so you can recognize how His wisdom works when adversity hits

III. RECOGNIZING GOD'S WISDOM

1. If we had the power to plan for our life we wouldn't plan like He does

- A. Our plan: Perfect health and plenty of money
- 1). We think – give me that and the rest will take care of itself
- Question:** But would those things promote or hinder what is really important – what is really best?
Would they enhance or impeded our relationship with God – our personal holiness

- A. Only God knows what will help and what will hurt each individual life
- 1). He gives wealth to one and they use it for the kingdom
Wealth to another would become an idol and ruin them spiritually – so He withholds it
- B. We plan for comfort – He plans for what is best
- 1). Therefore He is willing to allow discomfort for a time to bring that about
- C. We want material possessions – God wants an intimate relationship
- 1). Therefore He is willing to remove possessions to free our heart from loving this world
 - a). So that He becomes our master passion and our primary pursuit

Transition: Does the Bible have any examples of this – how different but good God's plan is than ours

2. The example of Jacob's growth and a crippled hip – Gen 32

- A. Jacob was really no use to God until God crippled him
- 1). He was a schemer and a deceiver – always getting by through his own carnal means
 - 2). He lived for 20 years like that – prospering by deceit – not by trusting in God
- B. But when God wanted to use Him – He had to break him first – make him God-dependent
- 1). At Peniel God touched his hip and put it out of place – God crippled him (Gen 32)
 - 2). Jacob limped the rest of his life as a reminder – you can't win when you wrestle with God
 - a). It was a continuous reminder of his constant dependence upon God
- C. He was never the same after Peniel

Point: Jacob would have never chosen that plan for his life

"God, I pray you will cripple me. What I'd really like to do is limp for the rest of my life"

- A. This was God's wisdom – He knew exactly what Jacob needed to become a godly man
- 1). He left Peniel physically weaker but much stronger spiritually
 - 2). He entered Peniel self-dependent – and exited God-dependent

3. The example of Paul's contentment with a thorn in his flesh – 2 Cor. 12

- A. Why would God's plan include suffering for Paul? Trouble. A thorn in the flesh! Is that loving?
- 1). Remember Paul had been given a glorious vision of heaven
 - 2). But God saw this incredible experience would make Paul proud and destroy him

- a). So in His wisdom He sent what as necessary to protect him – keep him humble
2 Co 12:7 (ESV) So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Thought 1: Paul wouldn't have chosen that way for his life – *asked God 3 times to have it removed*

God's answer: 2 Cor 12:9a (NIV) But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, *for my power is made perfect in weakness.*”

- A. Watch Paul's reaction – he got it – he understood the wisdom of God's plan
2 Co 12:9b–10 (ESV) ... Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- 1). He saw how God's plan was perfect to achieve the highest possible end for him
 - 2). That which his (Paul's) plan would have removed entirely – now he delights in
 - a). Weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities
 - b). Why Paul? Because when I am weak, then I am strong
 - 1a). These things weaken me and make me turn to God and depend upon Him

Thought 2: Paul shows us the perfect response to adversity in our life – he handled it with truth

- A. He didn't get bitter “Why me Lord?” – *instead he was able to delight in what he had despised before*
- 1). Because he saw the wisdom in God's perfect plan – what He was doing
 - 2). God's plan was making Paul the kind of man he wanted to be
 It was making him a man who would depend upon God – therefore be used by God

Transition: One more really quickly

4. The example of James joy in times of trial – James 1

Jas 1:2–4 (ESV) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ⁽³⁾ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁽⁴⁾ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- A. How can I find joy in times of trial – I trust God's perfect plan – what that trial is producing
- 1). I don't handle the trial emotionally – I run it through truth – “For you KNOW”
 - a). You know God has brought that into your life to produce something beautiful
 Steadfastness = the ability to carry on – doing the right thing regardless of the resistance
 Completeness = Spiritual maturity – Christlike character

Point: That trial was sent through the wisdom of God – not to destroy you but to take you higher

- A. Wisdom assures us - It is the best way – the surest way to achieve the highest end for us

APPLICATION

1. How comforting this is – I can abandon myself to His plan

- A. To the one who knows all things and plans accordingly
- 1). All I can do is guess – I guess wrong a lot
 - 2). Things I thought would be good – many times harm me

Thought: The place of safety – the place where life really works – is right in the middle of God's plan

2. How comforting to run our life through the thought of the attributes of God

- A. When circumstances hit your life – take a moment and filter them through the attributes of God
- 1). This is a practical way of bringing God into those circumstances
 - 2). Run them through the thought of a sovereign, omnipotent God – nothings out of control
 - 3). Run them through the thought of a wise God – His plan is perfect and will not fail

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- 4). Run them through the thought of a loving God – What He allows into our life comes from love
 - a). He allows ONLY it because He desires the best for us
 - b). And His wisdom is actively planning the best way to bring that about

Point: His attributes understood and applied bring in great comfort

- A. Learn to bring the reality of who God is into the circumstances of your life – it will help!
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CONCLUSION

1. God's immutability

- A. Adds great stability to our life as we can give ourselves to one who never changes

- 1). His character, promises, purposes, love for us is absolutely stable
- 2). His truth will never be altered, added to, or taken from

U: In a world of constant change – it is nice to have something that is rock solid and stable

2. God's wisdom

- A. Adds great direction to my life – here is a plan I can trust and give myself too!

- 1). It will never mislead me – it will always guide me to the best and highest ends for my life
- 2). It is a plan that has no errors in it – never needs to be rethought or readjusted
 - a). It is a plan that is devised with every possible contingency included
 - b). It will take us where it was designed to take us – if we will follow it

Point: These two attributes bring in the wonderful ideas of stability and direction

- A. It's nice to find something we can build our life upon, our hopes upon that will not change on us
- B. It's nice to have a source of direction that we can trust absolutely!