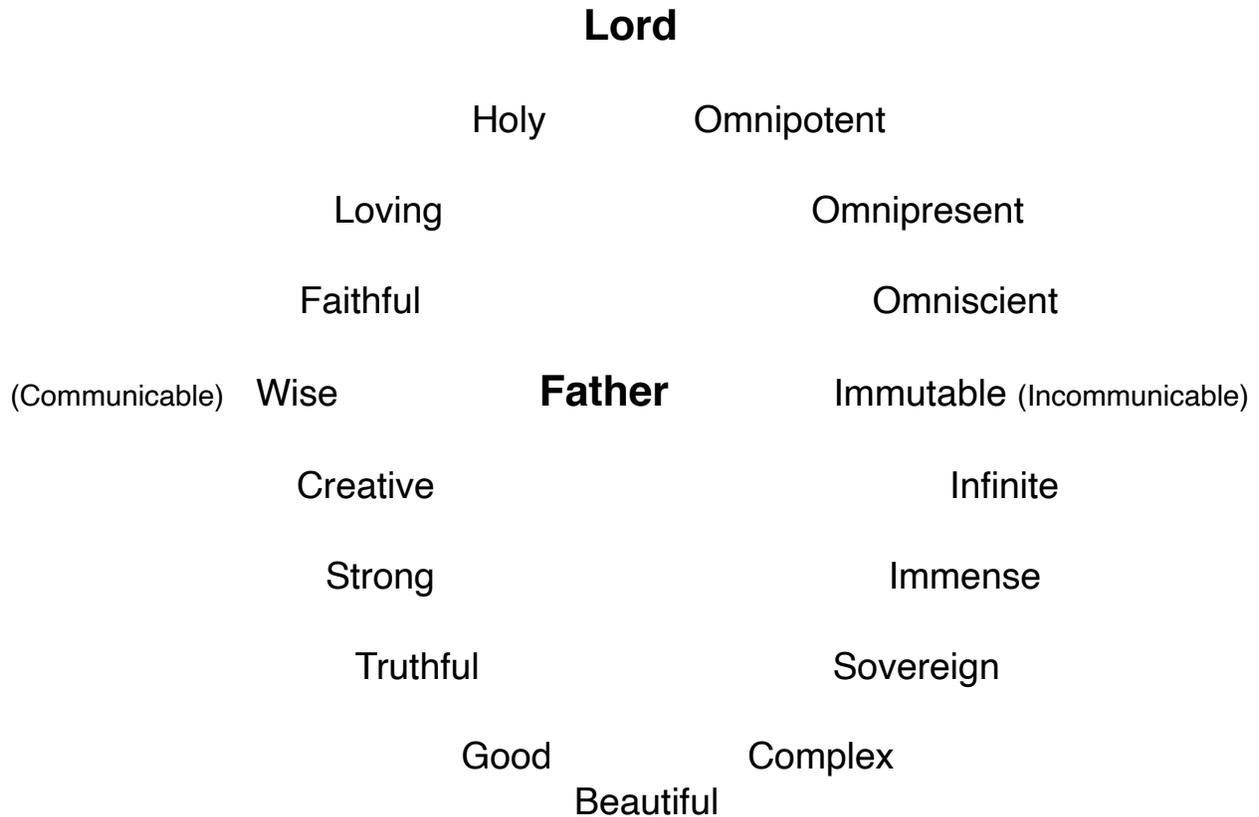


What is God Like?

WHO IS GOD?

Theology comes from two Greek words: theos meaning “God” and logos meaning “the study of”. **Who is this God that we worship? That is the question of theology.**

Attributes of God



The Bible reveals two over-arching attributes of God: Sovereign Lord (he is in control, he is beyond us) and Father (He is relational and near to us. Above are just a few of the scores of attributes of God that we know from the scriptures. Scholars call the ones on the left “communicable attributes because God transferred these attributes to mankind when he made us in his image. The ones on the right are called “incommunicable attributes” because they are true of God, but not true of men.

The Bible teaches us that there are many tensions in the character of God. For instance, he is both:

<u>Lord</u>	and	<u>Father</u>
Holy	and	Loving
Transcendence	and	Immanence
Justice	and	Mercy
Strong	and	Tender
Immutable	and	Flexible
Sovereign	and	Relational

Studying God is tricky because we may think that he is a subject that can be known completely. Actually, God is both knowable (to the degree that he has revealed himself to us) and unknowable. He is unknowable because as finite human beings, we are incapable of knowing the infinite God. Yet, he has revealed himself to us through his creation, his Word (the Bible), his Son, Jesus Christ, and through our intuition and consciences. Our language cannot convey the depth of the mystery of God and our knowledge is incomplete. Still, he wants us to know him.

Our concept of God will dictate our life experiences and our response to him, so it is important to get it right. The astounding thing is that the Sovereign Lord, Creator of the universe and all that is in it wants us to know and enjoy him in an ever-growing relationship as our Father.

1. God is the Beginning of All Things:

Acts 17:24 *Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling.*

- This scripture answers some of our most basic questions:
 - He is the first cause of everything. Genesis 1:1 gives no explanation of God simply, "In the beginning, God..." God is not a created being; He has no beginning He has no end.

- o He is the creator. He has made the earth, and all men upon the earth.
- o He is a Spirit. He does not dwell in temples made with hands.
- o He is sovereign. He gives life and breath to all things and he is Lord over His creation.

God is a Triune Being:

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let **us** make man in Our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

- From the beginning the plurality of God was revealed. The Trinity is a great mystery we cannot comprehend with the natural mind. The scriptures teach that there is one God revealed as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

God the Father:

John 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks

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- God reveals Himself, not only as a powerful and Sovereign God, but as a loving and approachable Father

God the Son:

John 1:1,14 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

- Jesus was the expression of God in the earth. The Word took on flesh and lived among us. In theological terms this is called the incarnation.

God the Holy Spirit:

John 5:7 ⁷For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He inspired the scriptures, He convicts the world of sin, and He empowers Christians to live a Godly life.

2. God Knows Everything:

Psalms 147:5 Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

- God knows everything. The theological term for God's knowledge is omniscience. Not only does He have all knowledge, He also knows each of us intimately.

Psalm 139:16“ O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. For *there is* not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before and laid Your hand upon me. *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot *attain* it.”

3. God is All Powerful:

Luke 1:37 “For with God nothing will be impossible”

- Theologians call this omnipotence. God's power is seen throughout the scriptures:
 - o The children of Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea.
 - o The incarnation of Christ.
 - o Redemption of man.
 - o His power is at work in His church.

4. God is Present Everywhere:

Psalms 139: 7-10 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there*. *If* I take the wings of the morning *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea even there your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

- The theological term for God's presence is omnipresence. It means that God is never separated from His creation. Not only is God present everywhere in space He is present in relationships with us.

5. God's Character

- **God is holy.** As He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, because it is written, "*Be holy, for I am holy.*" 1 Peter 1 15:16
- **God is love.** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John. 3:16
- **God is eternal.** God has always existed; He has no beginning or end.
- **God is a spirit.** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. John 4:23-24
- **God is a Father.** You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?⁷And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?⁸Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect

6. Attributes of God: And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

- This is called God's self revelation of Him self. This is how He desires to be known.
 - Compassionate
 - Gracious
 - Slow to Anger
 - Merciful
 - Faithful
 - Forgiving

Arguments for God's existence:

*** These are arguments, not proofs, for ultimately one must assert God's existence by faith - Hebrews 11:6**

- 1) **Ontological Argument** - the very idea of God suggests there is a God. Since we are finite beings, we could not have thought up infinity. Finite and infinity are correlatives - you can't have one without the other.
- 2) **Cosmological Argument** - all beginnings have a cause. How did the order and wholeness of the universe come into being? There must have been a first cause. That cause is God.
- 3) **Teleological Argument** - Design supposes a designer. Just as a coke can could not have designed and created itself, there must have been a designer. God is the designer of the universe
- 4) **Anthropological Argument** - The fact that we are personal and moral beings supposes that there is a higher moral conscience, a moral cause from which we came.

Arguments Against God (unbelief theories)

- 1) **Atheism** - A dogmatic belief that there is no God of any kind. No absolute exists. No evidence of a God exists anywhere. One problem with this belief system is that proof of a negative is difficult. Also, in order to know this, one would have to know what God would look like if he existed and have all possible knowledge. If this were true, all believers past and present were mistaken.
- 2) **Agnosticism** - A belief that God's existence cannot be established. A complete agnostic (who would believe that humans cannot know anything for sure) lives in contradiction; to know that you cannot know is an impossibility.
- 3) **Secularism (Materialism)** - A lifestyle that denies awareness or accountability to God. A secularist protects his own personal interests. Personal interests are all that matters.
- 4) **Pantheism** - A belief that the universe is God and God is the universe. God has no personality; he simply is.

Because of the fallen, depraved state of man, when God's existence is denied, there is a need to replace him (worship something else). When God's existence is affirmed, there is a desire to dominate and define him. All this is true because of mankind's refusal to do the one thing that God requires of all people: *to love him*.