

# Attributes of God

An attribute is something God *is*. We can learn about who God is through observing what God does. I often ask my son to think through his day and remember something God did for him. Then we discuss what we learn about who God is from what He did. And that becomes the attribute we pray about for the day.

Studying God's attributes is bedrock theology. When I began studying God's attributes, I wrote them down in a notebook along with scriptures that represented each attribute to me personally. My Attributes of God notebook has become a storehouse, a place for me to bring out treasures new and old. (Mt 13:52) My prayer is that God would help you to know him better so you can love him more.

**Eternalness** - God has no beginning and no end. He is not limited by time.

*Scriptures:* Ps 90:2, Isa 57:15

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Eternal, Everlasting, Never-ending

**Faithfulness** - God will never be or act inconsistently. He will always be true to His character and to His creation. Since God is already perfect, He will never change.

*Scriptures:* Ps 89:1-8; 1 Jn 1:9; 2 Tim 2:13; 1 Thess 5:24

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Faithful, Constant, Never-changing, Promise-keeper, Trustworthy, Unfailing

**Goodness** - God is kindhearted and gracious. He wants His creation to be happy and blessed. He is good perfectly and infinitely, not partway or mostly.

*Scriptures:* Ps 34:8, 36:7, 119:68, 139:17; Isa 63:7; Mt 7:11

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Good, Kind, Kind-hearted

**Grace** - Grace and mercy are similar in that they both come out of God's goodness.

One way to think of the difference is mercy is when God doesn't give us what we deserve (punishment); grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve (blessing).

Because God *is* grace, it gives him pleasure to bless us.

*Scriptures:* Prov 3:34; Jn 1:16-17; Rom 3:24, 5:15; Eph 1:6-7

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Grace, gracious, Giver of Blessings, Joy-giver

**Holiness** - Holiness is purity, meaning unmixed, separate from everything. But it's so much more than that. It means above everything. Far above. The New Testament word for holy means "an awful [awe-full] thing." We, as sinful man, cannot adequately understand or describe God's holiness because we are so far short of it.

*Scriptures:* Ex 15:11; Ps 22:3; Isa 6:3; (Job 25:5-6)



*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Holy, High and Lofty, Highest One, Pure

**Immanence** - God penetrates everything. For the believer, this attribute means we have the ability to sense God's pervasive presence at every moment. You don't have to go far to find Him. Tozer illustrates it as "the bucket that is sunk into the depths of the ocean is full of the ocean. The ocean is in the bucket, but also the bucket is in the ocean - surrounded by it. This is the best illustration I can give of how God dwells in His universe and yet the universe dwells in God." (Vol 1, pg 138)

*Scriptures:* 1 Kings 8:27; Ps 139:7-10; Acts 17:28

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Creator, Sustainer

**Immensity** - God is so vast that in comparison everything (people, the planets, the universe) is just the size of a hazelnut.

*Scriptures:* Isa 40:12-26; Ps 104:1-3

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Immense, Big, Great, Shepherd of the Universe, Uncontainable

**Immutability** - God does not change. God always has been and always will be the same, in every way.

*Scriptures:* Mal 3:6; Heb 6:17-18, 13:8; Jms 1:17

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Constant, Always the Same, Never-changing, Our Rock, Unchangeable, Unfailing

**Infinitude** - God has no boundaries and He cannot be measured. When you think of any attribute of God, you must think of it in infinite terms. He is all-wise, all-powerful, all-good. He cannot be measured. C.S. Lewis illustrated God's infinitude this way, "If you picture Time as a straight line along which we have to travel, then you must picture God as the whole page on which the line is drawn. We come to the parts of the line one by one: we have to leave A before we get to B, and cannot reach C until we leave B behind. God, from above or outside or all round, contains the whole line, and sees it all." ("Mere Christianity: Beyond Personality," C. S. Lewis, 1952, pg 168.)

*Scriptures:* Ps 145:3, 147:5; Eph 3:19; Php 4:7

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Infinite, All We Need, Limitless, Never-ending, Perfect

**Justice** - God's justice and righteousness are closely connected. God justice is based on the fact that He is perfectly righteous. God applies his justice to a moral situation and finds man either righteous (meaning "right with God"), resulting in blessing, or unrighteous, resulting in punishment.

*Scriptures:* Gen 18:25; Ps 19:9, 92:15, 97:2; Isa 28:17; Rev 16:5-7

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Just, Judge, Righteous, Decider of Rights and Wrongs

**Love** - Love is the desire for only good and no harm to come to another. When the Bible says "God is love" it means all love comes from God and God can do nothing without doing it in love. Love permeates God and colors all that He does.

*Scriptures:* 1 Jn 4:7-21

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Love, Father, Joy-Giver



**Mercy** - God's mercy means he has pity on those who are inferior. (That's everyone!) He is actively compassionate. God's mercy leads him to compassionate action, most notably, the sacrifice of his son Jesus for the salvation of suffering sinners.

*Scriptures:* Ex 34:4-7; Ps 103:8-17; 2 Cor 1:3; Jms 5:11; 2 Pet 3:9

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Merciful, Caring, Compassionate, Savior

**Omnipotence** - God has infinite power. He is the source of all power. Even though He gives His power to His creation, He does not run out.

*Scriptures:* Gen 17:1; Matt 19:26; Luke 1:37; Rev 19:6

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Almighty, Powerful, Strong

**Omnipresence** - God is all-present. He is everywhere. God is near everything and everyone. We do not need to go far to "find God."

*Scriptures:* 1 Kings 8:27; Ps 139:7-10; Jer 23:23; Acts 17:27-28;

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Everywhere, Always with me, Find-able, Here, Near

**Omniscience** - God's understanding is limitless and His knowledge is perfect. God cannot learn anything because God already knows all that can be learned. He knows it instantly and without effort. He knows it all.

*Scriptures:* Ps 147:5; Rom 11:33-36; Heb 4:13

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Incomprehensible, The Perfect Know-it-all, Smart

**Perfection** - Perfection means having all of what is needed -- the highest possible excellence. But we cannot describe God in degrees of excellence because God is incomparable. So when we apply perfection to God we mean that He is immeasurably and fully complete. God has all He should have of everything. He has everything He should have and nothing He shouldn't have. This applies to all God's attributes. He is perfectly infinite, perfectly merciful, perfectly wise.

*Scriptures:* Ps 50:2; Isa 40:25

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Perfect, Complete, Everything, Incomparable

**Self-Existence** - God has no origin. He caused all of creation to exist yet nothing caused Him to exist. He is not created.

*Scriptures:* Ex 3:11-15; Ps 90:1-2; Isa 43:10, 44:6

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* I AM, The Beginning, Creator, The Only One

**Sovereignty** - God is supreme. Nothing is out of His control. Because God is all-powerful and has all authority, He is free and able to do all He wills to do.

*Scriptures:* Deut 32:39-40; Jer 18:6; Dan 4:3, 35; Nahum 1:3

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* In Control, King of Kings, Mighty, Supreme, Victorious

**Transcendence** - God, as the self-existent Creator, is far above his creation. We are not talking physically far above, but in the ways of the heart that matter. God is high and lifted up, elevated, and lofty.



*Scriptures:* 1 Chron 29:11; Job 11:7-8; Isa 55:8-9; 1 Tim 6:16

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* A High God, Exalted, The High and Lofty One

**Wisdom** - Wisdom is the skill to achieve the most perfect ends by the most perfect means. When we apply it to God we add a moral connotation so that it is a skill to achieve on a high, pure, and loving level. (Keep in mind that God views things from an eternal perspective.) He never makes a mistake because He always knows what is right and does it right the first time.

*Scriptures:* Job 12:13; Ps 147:5; Prov 3:19; Jer 10:12; Rom 16:27; Eph 3:10

*Child-appropriate Synonyms:* Wise, Always Right, Incomprehensible, Never Makes Mistakes



## Resources

“The Attributes of God” Volumes 1 & 2, A. W. Tozer, 1997 & 2001.

“Praying the Attributes of God”, Rosemary Jensen, 2002.

Bible Study Fellowship, School Program, [www.bsfiinternational.org](http://www.bsfiinternational.org)

“Mere Christianity”, C. S. Lewis, 1952.

