

# BASICS • Part 3 – God

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *Drawing God*

1. Mrs. Mason taught 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and on the first day of the new school year asked her students to draw a picture of anything they wanted
2. She thought this would be a good exercise to find out what was important to each student, and so get to know each one better
3. The students took out a piece of paper, colored pencils or crayons and set to work
4. After a few minutes she took a stroll around the classroom to look over each shoulder and see what the students were drawing
5. She saw pictures of families, some pets, a few toys; but one picture was a mystery
6. The young boy who was drawing it was hunched over the paper and seemed to be trying to hide it from her
7. She leaned close to his ear and whispered, “What are *you* drawing Tommy?”
8. He replied, “God.”
9. Mrs. Mason said, “But Tommy, no one knows what God looks like.”
10. Tommy answered, “They will when I’m done.”

### B. *Basics – God*

1. We’ve spent two weeks in our BASICS series considering the inspiration and reliability of the Bible
2. Now we want to take a look at what the Bible teaches us about God
3. Today we’ll be looking at the *attributes* of God – in rather brief fashion for obvious reasons.
4. Like Tommy’s picture of God, it seems terribly presumptuous to attempt a 1-week survey of what the Bible teaches us about God.
5. We will only be talking a look at 4 of God’s attributes today and only the barest coverage of them at that.
6. Your study sheets list several other attributes of God and I hope what we look at today will only whet your appetite to go on to study more

### C. *Theme Verse • Jeremiah 9:23-24*

- 23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;
- 24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the LORD, exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

## II. IS IT POSSIBLE TO KNOW GOD?

### A. *Yes!*

1. Before we begin our investigation of God we need to ask, Is it even *possible* to know Him?
2. Not only is it *possible* – the Bible tells us that it's the very meaning of life.
3. John 17:3 ; Jesus said . . .

**"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."**

- a. Jesus says that the very essence of eternal life is to know God!
  - b. the word for *knowledge* Jesus uses here is the kind of knowledge that is more than the mere intellectual holding of certain facts
  - c. it *includes* that but then goes beyond it to *personal experience*
  - d. it's the difference between just seeing an In-N-Out double-double, and eating it
2. In 1 John 5:20 we read this . . .

**We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**

- a. here again eternal life is equated with knowing God through faith in Jesus Christ
  - b. the kind of knowing described in these two passages is the knowledge of *relationship*
3. So yes – we can know God, in fact, knowing and being in relationship with Him is the very essence of life.

## **B. No!**

1. But having said that, we need to go on to say that while we can know God and have a meaningful relationship with Him, because of who and what God is, we cannot know Him *completely*.
2. God, by His very nature, is infinite while you and I as human beings are finite; we are limited
  - a. so while we can understand some thing about God,
  - b. we cannot understand Him *completely*
  - c. we may be able to explain some things *about* Him
  - d. but we could never explain *Him*
  - e. as Alan Redpath used to say, "A God we could *explain* would be too *small* to worship."
3. I like to say it this way – While we can *apprehend* God, we cannot *comprehend* Him.
  - a. *apprehension* means to have an awareness of – to touch or lay hold of
  - b. *comprehension* means to surround and encompass
  - c. while we can certainly grasp certain truths *about* God, and enjoy Him to the degree that we understand those things, our finite minds could never surround the infinite
5. In Job 11:7-8 we read . . .

**Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? *They are higher than heaven; what can you do? Deeper than [the grave]; what can you know?***

6. In Romans 11:33-34 the Apostle Paul put it this way . . .

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"**

7. In Psalms 139:6, after meditating on the knowledge of God, David cries out . . .

**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.**

8. So, can we know God?

- a. *yes*, we can *apprehend* Him – we can know what He chooses to *reveal* about Himself -
- b. but *no*, we cannot *comprehend* Him because He is *infinite* and we are *finite*.

### **C. The Means of Knowing God**

1. I just said that yes, we can know God to the degree that He *reveals* Himself
  - a. what are the avenues of God's revelation?
  - b. through what means has he made Himself known to man?
2. There are 4 main avenues of by which God has revealed Himself:
  - a. Creation
  - b. Direct Revelation – meaning His Word, spoken by the Prophets and the Apostles
  - c. Jesus Christ
  - d. The Holy Spirit, His Spirits enlightening our spirit.
3. Your study notes give several passages which cover each of these 4 avenues of revelation and I encourage you to look them up later this week for your own study in this area.

## **III. IS GOD A FORCE OR A PERSON?**

### **A. One Of Two Options**

1. We are faced with one of two options when dealing with God;
  - a. either God is an impersonal Cosmic Force, rather like something out of Star Wars
  - b. or God is a personal Being

### **B. Characteristics Of A Person**

1. As we look to scripture, we find that God is clearly revealed as a PERSON
2. A force doesn't possess *feeling*, and it is subject to laws that govern it.
3. A person, on the other hand possesses a Mind, Emotions, and a Will; things a force, obviously does *not* possess
4. Does God have a mind? Scripture clearly indicates that He does.  
Romans 11:34 is representative of the many passages which speak of the Mind of God

**"Who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"**

6. Does God demonstrate *emotion*?
  - a. Genesis 6:6

The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

- b. 1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- c. and of course, John 3:16

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- 7. Does God have a will? Indeed, the revelation of God's *will* permeates scripture!

Revelation 4:11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

- 8. God is A Person, not an impersonal force
- 9. And as a Person, scripture tells us what Kind of A Person He is
- 10. Let's turn to consider some of the *attributes* of God we find in the Bible

## IV. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

### A. *What Is an Attribute?*

- 1. When we talk about the attributes of God we're referring to a quality of Him that is *essential*; in other words it is part of His *essence*
- 2. Attributes are not actions He performs, they are a part of His very being.
- 3. If you take an attribute *away*, then He is no longer God

### B. *Eternal*

- 1. First of all, God is *Eternal*
  - a. in Isaiah 57:15 the prophets says

For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy *place*, With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit, . . ."

- b. Psalms 90:2 says

Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

- c. Revelation 1:4

John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

- 2. When we say that God is Eternal we mean He has *no beginning and no end*
  - a. He is not bound by time
  - b. God is *transcendent*: He transcends, or stands above the limits of space, matter, time.
  - c. though time-less, He is still conscious of the succession of events we know as time.
    - 1) Chuck Smith likes to use the illustration of a parade to describe this

- 2) picture a person standing at the top of a tall building who is watching a parade on the street below.
- 3) that person sees the whole parade at a glance,
  - a) he sees the beginning and the end,
  - b) but is also aware of what part of the parade is passing any given point on the street at any time.
3. God is eternal – He stands above time
  - a. He knows the end from the beginning
  - b. and He is intimately aware of what part of the parade of time is passing before each of us right now.
  - c. the difference between the person on the roof in that illustration and the Eternal God is that He is not just in some lofty and *distant* vantage point, coolly disinterested to what the parade is doing as it passes us
  - d. He is also present right now, right here
  - e. and He is a secure fixed point whom we can fasten ourselves to so that while the parade of life and time wants to sweep us up and carry us away, we can hold fast to Him and not be moved
4. Whenever we speak of God as Eternal, we confront the inevitable question that kids ask: "Who made God?"
  - a. the answer to that is really, surprisingly simple
  - b. God, by definition as God, cannot be made
    - 1) if he was made, then that means there was something before Him
    - 2) and that would have to be God
  - c. logic demands that there be an *original* Creator – a first cause who in Himself is uncaused and who gives rise to everything else.
  - d. there *cannot* be an infinite regression of causes
  - e. logic demands that there is a Being who possesses in Himself His own existence
  - f. that is what we mean when we say God is Eternal
  - g. no one made Him, because He has always been and will always be
  - h. in fact, that we live in a universe of causes and their effects, is a powerful proof there is something or someone out there who stands *above* this universe, who as Creator, stands *above the Creation*.
5. Paul speaks of this very thing in Romans 1:20 when he writes . . .

**For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse**

- a. in other words, to look at the Creation is to *prove* an Eternal, All-powerful Creator
- b. logic *demands* Him
6. Listen if ever there was a time when there was nothing, what would there be now?
  - a. nothing!
  - b. because nothing is NO thing, and nothing can do nothing!
7. That there are things today is proof that there has to be SOMETHING which has always been and which possesses it's own existence – in other words,

ETERNAL!

8. But do you realize what this means?
  - a. if God is eternal, then He is not bound by time
  - b. and that means He is free to work out His plans and purposes without running out of time
  - c. God doesn't have a Day-Timer or a Palm Pilot
  - d. there are no alarms in heaven that go off when it's time for God to do a thing
  - e. that means he is never in a hurry, never rushed, and never late!
9. You don't have to make an appointment with God to squeeze in 15 minutes to talk about what troubles you
10. And when you are in prayer, God does not nervously check His watch and eye the door because He's gotta' go to India to listen to some missionary's prayer
11. God Is Eternal and has all the time in the world – all of it – for YOU!
12. And because He is eternal, He knows the end from the beginning.

### **C. Omnipresence**

1. God is also *omnipresent*, All-present, He is present in every place in all creation.
2. In Psalms 139:5-12 David meditates on God's all-pervasive presence . . .
  - 5 **You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.**
  - 6 ***Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot *attain* it.**
  - 7 **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.**
  - 9 ***If* I take the wings of the morning, *And* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,**
  - 10 **Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.**
  - 11 **If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me;**
  - 12 **Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light *are* both alike *to* You.**

b. In Jeremiah 23:23-24 God asks . . .

**"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off? 24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.**

c. then in Matthew 28:19-20 we have this command and promise . . .

**"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.**

- 1) Jesus sends us to the ends of the earth to make disciples
- 2) then promises no matter where or when we go, He is with us!
3. The omnipresence of God is something that either comforts or convicts us, depending I guess on what we're doing

4. When we are suffering and alone, it's a comfort to know He is there – and there in all His fullness.
  - a. God's omnipresence means that His full being is present
  - b. not just some *part* of Him
  - c. or that He is there but distracted by other more important matters, like the husband on the couch reading the newspaper while his wife talks to him about her day and he just grunts to let her know he's there but not really listening.
5. One of the great pains of our modern age is *loneliness*
  - a. a number of things have conspired to make men and women feel cut off and isolated from others
  - b. because we've lost the tools for developing genuine intimacy with other people, more and more people are realizing a profound sense of loneliness
  - c. they feel like little more than a number, another nameless face in the crowd
  - d. who among us hasn't experienced this: you are in the middle of a crowd, maybe a party, or maybe even at church, but as you look around, while everyone else seems to be having a good time, you feel *totally alone* – and the feeling rise up to almost choke you
6. God didn't create us to be alone – He created us for Himself, to have relationship with us.
7. He intends that we would learn about that relationship with Him through our relationships with one another
8. So understand this – God is here, now!
9. And no matter where you go, there He is!
10. Learning to live in and enjoy His presence is the great lesson and goal of life!

#### **D. Omnipotence**

1. God is also *omnipotent*, meaning He is all-powerful.
2. We see the omnipotence of God revealed in the title ALMIGHTY He is given *hundreds* of times in Scripture
  - a. in the OT He is called *El-Shaddai* = God Almighty  
Genesis 17:1

**When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.**

- b. in the NT, God is given the Greek title of *Pantokrator*, which means "All strong"  
2 Corinthians 6:18

**"I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."**

3. When we speak of God as omnipotent, it's easy to think of *power* in earthly terms.
  - a. we tend to think of God as some kind of heavenly body-builder
  - b. we get this image of this massive figure with rippling arms and chest
  - c. wearing a muscle shirt with the words "God's Gym" on the front of it
4. But God's power is not the kind of power we're familiar with

- a. it's not the strength of muscles
  - b. not is it the power of political position
  - c. it's not even the power that comes from possessing tremendous wealth
  - d. God's power is divine – it is of a nature and order that is completely different from human or earthly power.
5. And God is all-powerful – all the time! His power never abates or dims
  6. There is never a brown-out in heaven
  7. Think of it this way – because God is all-powerful, He never exerts effort when He does something – He just does whatever He does and it is done – without effort, because in the use of His power, none of it is lost
  8. God never gets to the end of a day and says, “I'm tired. It's been a long day of answering some pretty tough prayers. I need to rest.”
  9. Here's how this attribute of God should bring comfort and faith to us –
    - a. when you ask me to do something, I'm going to stop and consider whether or not I have the time or the strength to help you.
    - b. I'll also consider whether I *want* to or not
      - 1) If I know you pretty well, and what you're asking isn't too much of a bother, I'll do it
      - 2) but if I don't know you and it's too much work, chances are I'll try to duck
    - c. time, effort, and relationship: these are the factors we usually use in deciding whether or not we're going to help someone
    - d. but now, consider God and the requests we make of Him
      - 1) is He bound by time? No!
      - 2) does He decide on the basis of how much effort He'll have to exert? No!
      - 3) and finally, does He know and love you? Infinitely!
  10. Why don't we apply this to our prayer life more?
    - a. when someone asks us to pray for a healing of their headache we pray with some confidence
    - b. but if they ask us to pray for their MS we tend to make the prayer more earnest and put more effort into it.
    - c. why – is it harder for God to heal MS than a headache?
    - d. do we think that we have to be more earnest to get a bigger boon from God?
  11. Answered prayer is not the result of changing God's mind or urging Him to do something He isn't inclined to do
  12. Prayer is nothing other than *partnering with God* to see His kingdom come and His will done on earth as it is in heaven.
  13. Prayer is faith opening the door of heaven and seeing God's power & will manifest on earth.
  14. When we say that God is omnipotent, it's important that we qualify that by saying that He is able to do anything *consistent with His nature*
    - a. remember what we saw earlier, the *attributes* of God are descriptions of things that are a *necessary* part of Him.
    - b. God is omnipotent, but he is more than that – He possesses *other* attributes as well
    - c. these attributes all work together in perfect harmony and are never at odds

- with each other
- d. so when we say that because God is omnipotent and can do anything we do not mean He can do something that would violate His other attributes
  - e. He cannot violate His own nature or existence
    - 1) because He is Truth, He cannot lie
    - 2) because He is eternal, he cannot cease to exist
    - 3) because He is righteous and just, he cannot love or reward evil
15. God is perfectly consistent.

## **E. Omniscience**

1. God is *omniscient*, meaning He is all-knowing; God knows *everything*
  - a. He knows all things without effort and equally well.
  - b. He cannot learn anything new and is *never surprised*
  - c. because He knows all *possibilities*, He is also all *wise*
2. In Psalms 139:1-4 David meditated on God's omniscience . . .
  - 1 **O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.**
  - 2 **You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.**
  - 3 **You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.**
  - 4 **For *there is* not a word on my tongue, *But* behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.**
3. In Psalms 147:5 we read . . .
 

**Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding *is* infinite.**
4. In Romans 11:33 Paul writes . . .
 

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!**
5. And finally, in Acts 15:18 we find these words
 

**Known to God from eternity are all His works.**
6. Friends, God is *never surprised*
  - a. nothing ever happens that catches Him *off guard*
  - b. God never says, "Oops!" or "O My!"
7. Remember, because He is eternal, He knows the end from the beginning,
8. And being omniscient means that no matter what happens *in* time, He knows all eventualities and what every course of action will lead to
9. So He knows what is best and where every choice leads
10. Because He is all-powerful, and all-present, as well as all-knowing, He steers all things to the end He knows is the *absolute best*
11. This ought to bring great confidence and peace to us.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

### **A. More!**

1. There are so many more attributes of God that we could take a look at this morning

2. But the 40 minutes we have is up and I need to bring this to a close.
3. So let me end by suggesting that you continue to study these things on your own by looking at the other attributes listed in the study sheet and looking up then meditating on the verses on your own.

### **B. This Is Eternal Life**

1. I want to end this morning by looking once more at Jesus' words in John 17
- 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."**
2. Whether you're a Christian or not, *you will live forever*
3. The only choice you have is what you will live *for*
4. The Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Sovereign, Holy, True, Righteous, and Unchanging God created you to know and enjoy Him
  - a. He doesn't play Hide and seek with us
  - b. He didn't create us and stick us on this tiny planet spinning in the vastness of space and leave it for us to try and figure out
  - c. He has come near -
  - d. He has revealed Himself in Creation, in His Word, and most perfectly in the Person of Jesus Christ.
5. One of the pieces of advice you often get is that having connections is what opens the right doors
6. It's not *what*, but *who* you know that matters.
7. Do you know God?
8. Do you enjoy Him?
9. God longs to reveal Himself to you because He knows that when you make knowing Him your central passion, then and only then, will you know *real life!*
10. Christian, God invites us to know, experience, and enjoy Him!
  - a. God is PERFECT!
  - b. and the more we know He who is perfect, the more we will love Him because He IS perfect.
  - c. the more we love Him, the more we want to know Him.