

The Strange and Wonderful Attributes of God

Lesson #5 – God’s Perfection & Glory²³⁰⁵

Because of God’s “simplicity”, each and every one of God’s attributes are entirely perfect and complete in a way that is unknown to humans and represents the infinitude and transcendence of our God.

I. Definition of God’s Perfection

God’s Perfection:

God’s perfection is defined as: God possesses all qualities without defect. His qualities have no deficiency and are by definition of His very Being, perfect, without any possible imperfection. Nothing more could be conceived that could logically improve or better each and every one of His attributes.

Greek – Perfection (adj.): τελειοω teleioo (Strong’s 5046) 23X in NT; a range of meaning – perfect, mature, complete, and fully developed. Without deficiency or defect or need for change or for betterment.

God possesses all of His attributes without lacking to any degree. Regarding every attribute of God, nothing can be added to it to make it more desirable, nor is there any need to fulfill any deficiency or defect in any of His attributes.

Each and every attribute of God is entirely desirable in relation to His other attributes and in order that He may rule His creations with absolute perfection and precision of purpose.

Note: God’s Glory is defined as His honor, His excellency, His perfect reputation. It is strongly related to His perfection in all of His attributes. It is often referred to in Scripture as associated with visible radiance (Heb 1:3) or a consuming fire (Ex 24:16-17) or a bright light. (Ex 33:17-23) At times, Scripture uses Glory as a proper noun for Himself.

1 Sam 15:29 *“Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”*

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all quoted Scripture is from the NASU translation.

1 Chron 16:10 *“Glory in His holy name; let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.”*

Categorical Discussions:

Is this an Existential or Relational Category? This attribute is an existential attributes of God. This exists independent of any other creature’s existence or need or opinion. God has held this attribute from eternity past, before He ever created anything. His perfection existed by it’s very nature amongst and between the persons of the Triune God. God receives glory from His worshipers because His perfection is complete and astounding/glorious to behold. We are to worship because we can’t know Him and do otherwise!!!

Is this Incommunicable or Communicable Category? We must say that God’s perfection is a Communicable attribute because the Scriptures command that we share this attribute to a degree, limited by our weakness and humanness.

Matt 5:43-48 *You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸**Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.***

James 1:2-4 *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Problem Statement: Since Perfection is a communicable attribute that calls us to share in God’s perfection to the degree that we have any ability to do so, we must so act to transform ourselves by the very power

The Strange and Wonderful Attributes of God

of God that dwells within us. This is so difficult for our flesh and our carnal mind, that we must have spiritual power from the indwelling Holy Spirit to provide this strength. We must deny the flesh, **we must mortify the old man** and its way of thinking. **Christianity is not a casual endeavor!!**

Jesus in referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit as our “comforter” when He came, we think of “comforter” as one who provides solace and nurturing, but the Old English origin of the word “comfort” came from the Latin “*com forte*” meaning “with strength”. In and of ourselves, we are not capable of this kind of “perfection”. Only in the power of God can we be sanctified in the setting aside our old man allowing us to be capable of being of service for him!

This is part of our becoming Christ-like through the sanctification of our souls. Is this taught broadly within our Evangelical Churches today?? No! Does the modern evangelical church teach saintly perfection? Rarely! Does it teach “mortification of the flesh”? Hardly at all.

II. Logic and Importance of God’s Perfection

To imagine that God’s purpose, God’s will, God’s decrees, Gods’ plan can be improved on in the slightest is to deny His complete absolute perfection. Any change that might be made to God’s purpose would be a degradation of His perfection. God is working through our imperfect lives, making them perfect and complete. It doesn’t always feel like that, but God pushes us through trial and error to make us perfect. We must accept His hand of kind and loving instruction and chastisement.

Remember always:

Rom 8:28-30 *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

III. Scriptural Basis of God’s Perfection

Here are some verses pertinent to this goal of knowing of **God’s Perfection & His Glory**

Deut 32:3-4 *For I proclaim the name of the Lord; ascribe greatness to our God! ⁴The Rock! **His work is perfect**, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.* Moses speaking “The Song of Moses”. (vv. 32:1-43)

Ps 19:7-11 *The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

Ps 50:1-6 *The Mighty One, God, the Lord, has spoken, and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. ²Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth. ³May our God come and not keep silence; fire devours before Him, and it is very tempestuous around Him. ⁴He summons the heavens above, and the earth, to judge His people: ⁵“Gather My godly ones to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” ⁶And the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge. Selah.*

Ps 145:3-11 *Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. ⁴One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. ⁵On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works, I will meditate. ⁶Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, and I will tell of Your greatness. ⁷They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness and will shout joyfully of Your righteousness. ⁸The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. ⁹The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works. ¹⁰All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, and Your godly ones shall bless You. ¹¹They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power;*

The Strange and Wonderful Attributes of God

Isa 25:1-2 *O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness. ²For You have made a city into a heap, A fortified city into a ruin; A palace of strangers is a city no more, It will never be rebuilt.*

Matt 5:46-48 *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Therefore **you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect**. Perfection here is commanded of God's saints, so it is a "communicable" attribute!*

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. God's will is perfect!!!*

Phil 1:3-6 *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**.*

If we are in Christ, God will perfect us in His works. If He does not perfect us, we are almost certainly not in Christ!

Phil 3:12-16 *Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of **that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus**. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead**, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; ¹⁶however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.*

1 Tim 1:15-17 *It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. ¹⁶Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, **the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever**. Amen.*

Heb 2:10-12 *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, **to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings**. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹²saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE."*

Heb 5:7-10 *In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. ⁸Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹**And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation**, ¹⁰being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.*

1 Peter 5:6-11 *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, **who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect**, confirm, strengthen and establish you. ¹¹To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

IV. Important Points About God's Perfection

1st How God's Perfection Relates to Other Attributes

The Strange and Wonderful Attributes of God

All of God's attributes are perfect and without deficiency or want. His wrath is perfect, His love is perfect, His holiness is perfect, His justice is perfect, His providence is perfect, etc.

2nd Why God's Perfection is Important to Our Faith

Understanding each and every one of His attributes in the light of His complete perfection enables us to understand God's perfect immutability. He has no possible need to change His character or His purpose or His decrees. **He cannot be immutable without being perfect. If He were mutable, He could not be perfect.**

3rd Confessions or Creeds that Address God's Perfection

1689 Baptist London Confession; Chapter 2: Of God and of the Holy Trinity; Article 1. The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of himself, **infinite in being and perfection**; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; - - -.

4th Heresies that Deny God's Perfection

Religious atheism in all of its forms usually deny God's (Triune) perfectionism. Discuss.

Important Quotes About God's Perfection

I hope that if I am remembered at all it will be for this reason: I have spent my efforts and my energies trying to turn the direction of the people away from the external elements of religion to those that are internal and spiritual. I have tried to take away some of the clouds in the hope that men and women would be able to view God in His glory. I would like to see this sense of glory recaptured throughout the church- too many Christians do not expect to experience any of the glory until they see Him face to face! Within our Christian fellowship and worship, **we must recapture the Bible concepts of the perfection of our God Most High! We have lost the sense and the wonder of His awe-fullness, His perfection, His beauty.** Oh, I feel that we should preach it, sing it, write about it, talk about it and tell it **until we have recaptured the concept of the Majesty of God!** Only that can be beautiful ultimately which is holy—and we who belong to Jesus Christ should know the true delight of worshiping God in the beauty of His holiness!
A. W. Tozer; from *Renewed Day by Day*

Re. the church – But we have suffered some losses in the meantime. These losses I want to name before you. We have lost our gospel Christianity almost altogether what **people used to call religious fear.** And **along with our loss of religious fear came a corresponding flippancy and familiarity toward God that our fathers never knew.** **A. W. Tozer;** from *Volume 1 of The Attributes of God*; p. 178

A God whose presence and scrutiny I could evade would be a small and trivial deity. But **the true God is great and terrible**, just because He is always with me and His eye is always upon me. Living becomes an awesome business when you realize that you spend every moment of your life in the sight and company of an omniscient, omnipresent Creator. **J. I. Packer;** from *Knowing God*; p. 86

A merciful man aims at his neighbor's good and so does "God's will", **consciously co-operating with 'the simple good'.** A cruel man oppresses his neighbor, and so does simple evil. **But in doing such evil, he is used by God**, without his own knowledge or consent, **to produce the complex good** - so that **the first man serves God as a son, and the second as a tool.** For **you will certainly carry out God's purpose, however you act, but it makes a difference to you** whether you serve like Judas or like John.
C. S. Lewis; *A Year with C. S. Lewis*; p. 317 (17 October)
from Lewis' - The Problem of Pain

My comment^{RRW}: R. C. Sproul often uses the Latin phrase "**Corum Deo**", meaning that we live before the face of God. **That is a glorious and terrible truth!**