

THE ATTRIBUTES of GOD

To study God's attributes is to study his character, to answer questions like, *Who is God?* and *What is God like?* A typical classification of God's attributes divides them into those that are **incommunicable** (those that he does not share or "communicate" to anyone or anything else) and **communicable** (those that he shares with other beings). Like most theological classifications, this one is imperfect but still helpful as we seek to understand what is so far beyond ourselves.

God's communicable attributes can be further categorized into: attributes of God's being, mental attributes, moral attributes, attributes of purpose and "summary" attributes (attributes that, in a more particular way, modify each of the others).

It is important to consider that God is not simply the sum of his attributes. His attributes are not separate from one another, but each one modifies or qualifies each of the others.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

ASEITY

God is self-existent and self-sufficient and has no need of human beings or the rest of creation.

BEAUTY

Summary attributes

God is the possessor and the sum of all desirable qualities.

BLESSEDNESS

Summary attributes

God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character.

ETERNITY

God has always existed, having no beginning and no end, and experiencing no succession of moments.

FREEDOM

Attributes of Purpose

God does whatever he pleases.

GLORY

Summary attributes

The created brightness that surrounds God's revelation of himself.

GOODNESS

Moral attributes

God is the final standard of all good, and all he is and does is worthy of approval.

HOLINESS

Moral attributes

God is separated from sin and he is committed to seeking his own honor.

IMMUTABILITY

God cannot change in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises.

INVISIBILITY

Attributes describing God's being

God's total essence, all of his being, will never be visible to us.

JEALOUSY

Moral attributes

God always seeks to protect his own honor.

KNOWLEDGE

Mental attributes

God fully knows himself and all actual and possible things. (This is also known as God's omniscience)

LOVE

Moral attributes

God eternally gives of himself to others.

MERCY

Moral attributes

God is good to those in misery and distress and he is good to those who deserve punishment.

OMNIPOTENCE

Attributes of Purpose

God is able to do all his holy will. (This is also known as God's sovereignty)

OMNIPRESENCE

God has no size or shape and is present in all places with his entire being.

PEACE

Moral attributes

God, in his being and actions, is separate from all confusion and disorder.

PERFECTION

Summary attributes

God fully possesses all excellent qualities and lacks no qualities that would be desirable for him.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Moral attributes

God is the final standard of what is right and he always acts in accordance with what is right. (This is also known as God's justice)

SPIRITUALITY

Attributes describing God's being

God is a being who is not made up of matter and who cannot be perceived by our bodily senses.

TRUTHFULNESS

Mental attributes

God is the true God whose

UNITY

God's whole being includes all of his attributes at all

WILL

Attributes of Purpose

God approves and

WISDOM

Mental attributes

God always chooses the

WRATH

Moral attributes

God intensely hates all sin.