



attributes of *God*

WEEK 2 — GOD'S INDEPENDENCE



COLOSSIANS 1 : 9 - 10

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...

A. W. Tozer:

“An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, or worshipped”

Review: What is an attribute of God?

“Those qualities or characteristics of the divine being by virtue of which he is distinguished from all created beings and without which he would not be worthy of the worship and service of man” (WT Conner)

Last week: Unity of God

The Independence of God

Incommunicable attribute =

God’s independence is also called His self-existence, aseity, solitariness, self-sufficiency, or selfhood

Here are some ways people have attempted to define it:

A. W. Tozer	“God is self-existent selfhood”
Herman Bavinck	God “is whatever he is by his own self or of his own self”
Novatian	“God has no origin”
Wayne Grudem	“God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify Him and bring Him joy.”

God does not need any part of creation, including us:
in order to exist
or for any other reason

God has an independent, unsupported existence.

Where do we see “God’s independence” in Scripture?

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 41:11 --- Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.

Psalms 50:8-15 --- ⁷ "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. ⁸ Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. ⁹ I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. ¹⁰ For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹ I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. ¹² "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. ¹³ Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? ¹⁴ Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, ¹⁵ and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

Isaiah 40:10-18 --- ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. ¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? ¹³ Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? ¹⁴ Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? ¹⁵ Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. ¹⁶ Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. ¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. ¹⁸ To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?

NEW TESTAMENT

Remember, God does not change. He is always fully all of these attributes all the time!

Acts 17:24-28 --- ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring.

Romans 11:34-36 --- ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

TWO OTHER SIGNIFICANT OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS TO CONSIDER:

Exodus 3:14 --- God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said,
"Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Genesis 1:1 --- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

"There was a time, if 'time' it could be called, when God, in the unity of His nature (though subsisting equally in three Divine Persons), dwelt all alone. 'In the beginning God.' There was no heaven, where his glory is now particularly manifested. There was no earth to engage his attention. There were no angels to hymn his praises; no universe to be upheld by the word of his power. There was nothing, no one, but God; and that, not for a day, a year, or an age, but 'from everlasting.' During a past eternity, God was alone: self-contained, self-sufficient, self-satisfied; in need of nothing." (A. W. Pink)

This Attribute is Incommunicable

God's independence is so radically different from anything we can experience.

Everything we experience, apart from God, has an origin.

A. W. Tozer "Origin is a creature word."
"He is the Cause of all things, the uncaused Cause."

Implications of This Attribute

1. God must be eternal.

2. God did not make people because He was lonely or needed anything.

God was under no obligation or necessity to create anything.

Ephesians 1:11 --- "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will"

3. Everything other than God was created by God. Thus, He owns everything.

Psalms 24:1-2 --- "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers."

Psalms 50:10-12 (see page2)

4. When we give something back to God, we are only giving Him what He already gave us.

5. God can be enriched by no one.

6. For us to want to be independent like God is a sin.

Isaiah 14:12-14 --- "'How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'"

7. God does not need us, but still chooses to delight in us!

Isaiah 62:3-5 --- "You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."

Zephaniah 3:17 --- "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is “independence” good in God’s nature but sinful in our nature?
2. Review the quote from A. W. Pink on page 4.
If God was self-satisfied for all eternity and needed absolutely nothing, then why did He make the world and make us?
3. If we have received everything from God, that means we have nothing of our own. That also means we have nothing with which to “bargain” with God. How does that truth make you feel?
4. Review Isaiah 62:3-5 and Zephaniah 3:18 on page 5. How does those verses encourage you?
5. How does the attribute of God’s independence (self-sufficiency) help us have faith?
6. How does the attribute of God’s independence (self-sufficiency) affect our attitude and approach to prayer?
7. How does recognizing self-sufficiency as something good in God’s nature but sinful in ours affect how we as believers relate to one another?

