

## LESSON 2: GOD

### I. Introduction

A. W. Tozer famously said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

- A. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- B. What are some popular perceptions of God?
- C. What is the danger of having the wrong perception about God?

Depending upon whom you ask, God is “a purely mathematical mind” (Einstein), a cosmic killjoy, a celestial Santa Claus, a sentimental old man who needs us, a terrorist who uses fear to control, or a divine spark within every individual. With so many skewed characterizations put forth by the world, it is crucial for Christians to develop a clear, biblical understanding of the God we worship. By defining who God is, we also make clear what God is not. In this lesson we will engage in “Theology Proper,” or the study of God, that we may come to an accurate perception of the Almighty.

### II. God’s Natural Attributes

These are characteristics which describe the essence, or nature, of God.

#### A. God is Spirit

1. Definition: God is spirit (not *a* spirit) who does not have corporeity or physical form (John 4:24). A body localizes, but God as spirit is everywhere; He cannot be limited. Although God does not have a body, He is nonetheless a substance but not material.<sup>1</sup>
2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. John 1:18 ***No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.***
  - b. John 4:24 ***“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”***

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<sup>1</sup> Enns, Paul P.: The Moody Handbook of Theology. Chicago, Ill. : Moody Press, 1997, c1989, S. 188.

- c. 2 Corinthians 3:17 ***Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.***
- 3. Relevance: Spirituality goes further than simply identifying God as not having a body; it also means He is the source of all life. The prohibition of Exodus 20:4 was given because God does not have a physical form; hence, it is wrong to make any likeness of Him.
  - If God is spirit, what should we make of the references to His walking (Genesis 3:8), His eyes (1 Kings 8:29), His ears (Psalm 34:15), and His hands (Isaiah 65:2)?

## B. God is Omnipotent

1. Definition: Simply put, God is all-powerful and is thus able to do all His Holy will. An omnipotent God can do whatever He pleases.
2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. Genesis 18:14 ***“Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”***
  - b. Jeremiah 32:17 ***“Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You”***
3. Relevance:
  - What impact should the knowledge of God’s omnipotence have on us when we are going through particularly difficult trials?

Romans 8:38-39 ***For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Hebrews 13:5 ***Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.”***

### C. God is Omnipresent

1. Definition: God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with His whole being, yet He acts differently in different places. <sup>2</sup>
2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. Jeremiah 23:24 ***“Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD.***
  - b. Psalm 139:7-10 ***Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.***
3. Relevance: Theologian Herman Bavinck quotes the following from an unknown source:

*“When you wish to do something evil, you retire from the public into your house where no enemy may see you; from those places of your house which are open and visible to the eyes of men you remove yourself into your room; even in your room you fear some witness from another quarter; you retire into your heart, there you meditate; he is more inward than your heart. Wherever, therefore, you shall have fled, there he is. From yourself, whither will you flee? Will you not follow yourself wherever you shall flee. But since there is One more inward even than yourself, there is no place where you may flee from God angry but to God reconciled. There is no place at all whither you may flee. Will you flee from him? Flee unto him.”<sup>3</sup>*

### D. God is Omniscient

1. Definition: This means that God knows all things actual and possible. In the words of A. W. Tozer:

*God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all*

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Harman Bavinck, The Doctrine of God, p. 164.

*relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motions, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell. Because God knows all things perfectly, He knows nothing better than any other thing, but all things equally well. He never discovers anything, He is never surprised, never amazed. He never wonders about anything nor (except when drawing men out for their own good) does He seek information or ask questions. <sup>4</sup>*

2. Scriptural Support:

- a. Psalm 147:4 **He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.**
- b. Psalm 139:16 **Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.**
- c. Acts 15:18 **“SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.”**

3. Relevance:

- a. How should the omniscience of God impact our prayer life?
- b. How should the omniscience of God govern the way we live, especially when no one is looking?

**E. God is Eternal**

1. Definition: God never had a beginning, nor will He die, but His existence extends endlessly backwards and forwards through every moment of time.<sup>5</sup>

2. Scriptural Support:

- a. Exodus 3:14 **God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”**
  - What is the significance of God using the present tense to name Himself? Why not say, “I AM WHO I WAS” or “I AM WHAT I WILL BE.”

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<sup>4</sup> A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, (N.Y.:Harper, 1978), pp. 62-3.

<sup>5</sup> Feinberg, p. 255.

- b. Psalm 90:2 ***Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.***
  - c. Isaiah 46:9-10 ***“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’”***
    - According to this passage, why does God know the future?
  - d. Revelation 1:8 ***“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”***
3. Relevance: This attribute answers the question, “Who created God?” with “Nobody!” The eternality of God means that He exists for all time, with no inception or termination. In addition, “A comforting ramification of God’s eternity is that confidence that God has never, nor will He ever cease to exist; therefore His sustaining, providential control of all things and events is assured.”<sup>6</sup>

## F. God is Infinite and Unlimited

1. Definition: God is not limited by or confined to the universe He created. He is independent of finite (measurable) things and beings, even time and space, although He has on occasion placed limitations upon Himself (i.e. Jesus Christ taking the form of a man).<sup>7</sup>
2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. 1 Kings 8:27 ***“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!”***
  - b. Jeremiah 23:23-24 ***“Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD, “And not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD.***

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Ryrie, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Little, Know What You Believe, p. 28.

- c. Isaiah 66:1 ***Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?"***

3. Relevance:

- How does this attribute help us to understand the second commandment?

Exodus 20:4 ***"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth."***

### G. God is Unchangeable

1. Definition: God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and He acts and feels differently in response to different situations.

2. Scriptural Support:

- a. Malachi 3:6 ***"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."***
- b. James 1:17 ***Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.***

**Note:** Some object to this attribute with, "How can God be immutable if the Bible says He repents, as in Genesis 6:6 and Jonah 3:10?" In the Genesis passage, the term 'repent' expresses God's extreme displeasure with mankind's extreme sinfulness. In the case of Jonah, God qualifies all prophetic announcements of judgment with Jeremiah 18:8, ***"If that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it."***

3. Relevance: The immutability of God means that every one of His precious promises in the Bible still applies today. We can know God through the Scriptures and trust that when we finally meet Him in heaven, there will be no surprises. As the author of Hebrews reminds us, ***"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever"*** (Heb. 13:8).

- What would it be like to worship a god *not* characterized by this attribute?

## H. God is Personal

1. Definition: God is a person, and we are not to think of Him as a mere impersonal force behind the universe. God is spirit, yet He has all the elements of personality – intellect, feelings and will. <sup>8</sup> Hence He can be truly described as wise, loving, wrathful, attentive, and merciful.

2. Scriptural Support:

In Genesis 1:26 God says, ***“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*** It follows that what is created cannot be of a higher order than its creator.

3. Relevance: Because God is personal, we know that His sovereign will is not akin to the blind fate (“kismet”) of Islam’s Allah. It is rather the loving purpose of a Heavenly Father to whom His children are precious. And because God is a Person and we are persons, communication between Him and us is possible. <sup>9</sup>

## I. God is Independent

1. Definition: 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. <sup>10</sup>

2. Scriptural Support:

a. Psalm 50:10-12 ***“For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains.”***

- What does this passage suggest about how God relates to creation?

b. John 17:5 ***“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”***

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Little pp. 29-30.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Little p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Wayne Grudem, p. 160.

- c. John 17:24 ***“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”***
- How do the above passages rebuff the notion that God needs people in order to feel fulfilled?
3. Relevance: The independence of God means that God does not need and could not need creation for anything. In addition, He is qualitatively and quantitatively different from all of creation. Such independence may drive some to ponder why God even went through the trouble of creation, the heartbreak of the Fall, and the sorrow of the crucifixion of His only Son. This can be answered by the fact that though God does not need us, we can still bring Him joy. God decides to display His glory to a watching world by ordaining situations that will reveal His love and mercy as well as His righteousness.

### III. God’s Moral Attributes

These attributes refer to the ethical or moral exercise of God’s will.

#### A. God’s Holiness

1. Definition: God’s holiness means that He is distinct and different from everything else. He is first distinct because He is infinitely above His creation, as only God has no creator and is self-sustaining. Second, He is distinct because of His moral perfection: God always unswervingly abides by all the standards which He has issued to His creation and is completely set apart from all that is sinful, profane, impure, and unclean. Every thought, characteristic, and action of God is perfect. And finally, He is distinct in alone deserving all glory; thus God’s holiness speaks of His devotion to His own honor.
2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. 1 Samuel 2:2 ***“There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.”***
  - b. Isaiah 6:3 ***And one [seraph] called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.”***

Commenting on this passage R. C. Sproul writes, *“Only once in sacred Scripture is an attribute of God elevated to the third degree. Only once is*

*a characteristic of God mentioned three times in succession. The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy. Not that He is merely holy, or even holy, holy. He is holy, holy, holy. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love, or mercy, mercy, mercy, or wrath, wrath, wrath, or justice, justice, justice. It does say that He is holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory.”<sup>11</sup>*

- What is the significance of the threefold declaration of God’s holiness?

c. How does the following passage teach God’s holiness?

**Isaiah 40:25-26 “To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing.**

3. Relevance: In Leviticus 19:2 we read, **“Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.’”** From this passage, The LORD makes it clear that the conduct of His chosen people must reflect the character of their God. We – like God – should be separate from all the defilements of the world. In the words of 1 John 2:16, **“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”** As His children, our Lord requires us to forsake any activities and desires which are inconsistent with His holy character.

## B. God’s Righteousness

1. Definition: God’s righteousness refers to the fact that, because He is perfect, He always does right. He never leaves evil unpunished nor good unrewarded. Inherent in God’s righteousness is the standard of right and wrong by which He rules His universe. God binds Himself and His creation to these standards and legislates His righteousness accordingly. Thus, God is never unfairly harsh nor excessively lenient; He makes the right judgment every time.
2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. Deuteronomy 32:4 **The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.**

<sup>11</sup> R.C. Sproul, The Holiness of God (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1985), p. 40.

- b. Psalm 119:137 ***Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are Your judgments.***
  
- 3. Relevance: God’s perfect righteousness means that He always does the right thing. When we see the rapists, child molesters, thieves, and murderers who seem to get away with their heinous crimes, we can rest assured, knowing that they *will* ultimately pay the price for the wrongs they have done. No crime escapes God’s righteousness, and all of the wicked people of this world must one day pay for their rebellion against God. And while we take great comfort in God’s vengeance upon the wicked, His righteousness should also cause us to reevaluate *ourselves* in light of His perfect standards. Though we may not be as wicked as Charles Manson on the human morality scale, our conduct has fallen severely short of God’s measuring rod and we, too, have committed wrongs that must be punished.

### C. God’s Love

- 1. Definition: God’s love means that God eternally gives Himself to others. This definition understands love as self-giving for the benefit of others. It is part of God’s very nature to give of Himself in order to bring about blessing or good to others.<sup>12</sup>
  
- 2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. God’s Essence is Love:
    - 1 John 4:8 ***The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.***
  
  - b. God’s Love is Unconditional:
    - Hosea 3:1 ***Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.”***<sup>13</sup>
  
  - c. God’s Greatest Act of Love:
    - Romans 5:8 ***But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***
  
    - 1 John 4:10 ***In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***

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<sup>12</sup> Grudem p. 198.

<sup>13</sup> New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update. LaHabra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, 1995

3. Relevance: Because God is so holy and so righteous, we might cower in fear, feeling that it must be impossible to please Him or to have a positive relationship with Him. However, God's holiness and justice are counterbalanced by the fact that He is also a God of love.<sup>14</sup> While God's grace, mercy, and longsuffering are often treated as separate attributes, in reality, they are subsets of God's love.
  - How should God's love lead us to respond to Him and to others?

#### D. God's Goodness

1. Definition: The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.<sup>15</sup>
2. Scriptural Support:
  - a. Psalm 34:8 ***O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!***
  - b. Psalm 100:5 ***For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations.***
3. Relevance: Like His love, God's goodness is closely related to other characteristics such as mercy, grace, and patience. God's mercy is His goodness toward those in distress; His grace is His goodness toward those who deserve only punishment; His patience is His goodness toward those who continue to sin over a period of time.<sup>16</sup>
  - Why is it especially important to meditate on God's goodness in the midst of a trial or a period of suffering?

### IV. The Sovereignty of God

#### A. God's Will and Providence

God is not only the Creator of the universe, but also the sustainer of Christians and the moral governor of intelligent agents.<sup>17</sup> According to the Scriptures:

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<sup>14</sup> John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton IL. Crossway: 2001) p. 349.

<sup>15</sup> Grudem, p. 197.

<sup>16</sup> Grudem, p. 198.

<sup>17</sup> Little, p. 36.

Psalm 135:6 ***“Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.”***

Acts 4:28 ***“to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”***

Colossians 1:17 ***He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.***

Ephesians 1:11 ***also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will***

God’s providence means that He governs the course of all human events so that they fit into His eternal plan.

## B. God’s Eternal Plan

God’s control of the universe is often spoken in terms of “decrees.” The term *decree* is defined by the Westminster Shorter Confession as “[God’s] eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”<sup>18</sup>

When dealing with the sovereignty of God, we have two options: Either God is sovereign and has absolute control over the universe, or He is not sovereign and the world can carry on in defiance of His will. The following Scriptures demonstrate that only the former option is feasible:

Isaiah 45:18 ***For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), “I am the LORD, and there is none else.”***

Isaiah 46:10 ***“Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’”***

Daniel 2:21 ***“It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.”***

## C. Does This Make God the Author of Sin?

The answer to this question lies in the two aspects of God’s will:

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<sup>18</sup> Enns, Paul P.: The Moody Handbook of Theology. Chicago, Ill. : Moody Press, 1997, c1989, S. 204

- (1) The *directive* will of God. There are some things in which God is the author; He actively brings about the events. He creates (Isa. 45:18); He controls the universe (Dan. 4:35); He establishes kings and governments (Dan. 2:21); He elects people to be saved (Eph. 1:4).
- (2) The *permissive* will of God. Even though God has determined all things, He does not actively bring all of them about Himself; some He brings about through secondary causes. This means that although God is not the author of sinful acts, such acts do not frustrate God's plan. God permits those sinful acts that are within the scope of His decree and part of His eternal plan and purpose – such as the crucifixion of His Son. Nonetheless, man alone is responsible for his own sinful acts. Hence, “a distinction must be made between the decree and its execution.”<sup>19</sup> All acts—including sinful acts—conform to the eternal plan of God, but He is not directly the author of all acts.

There are many biblical examples of how these two aspects of God’s will work together.

- When the people of Israel demanded a king to rule over them, they were sinning against the Lord by rejecting His kingship (1 Sam. 8:5–9, 19–22). But the Lord had foreordained that kings would come from Abraham’s lineage (Gen. 17:6; 35:11), culminating in the Messiah. Thus, by allowing the people to sin in this way, God was executing His plan.<sup>20</sup>
- Or, we could look at the sin of Joseph’s brothers when they sold him into slavery. God permitted this sin, then ultimately used it to rescue their entire clan from starvation in Canaan (cf. Gen. 50:20).
- David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed – a grievous set of sins that God condemned and punished with the death of their child. But God then used this union, despite its sinful origins, to carry on the lineage of Christ through David and Bathsheba’s son Solomon.

The bottom line is, while God *allows* sin, He is not the *author* of sin. In His infinite wisdom, God uses even the sinful acts of humans to accomplish His good purposes and proclaim His glory.

#### D. What About Free Will?

The statement, “God is sovereign over all that happens,” raises some big questions. If God directs everything, how can people be free agents and therefore morally responsible?

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<sup>19</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 102–3 gives a clarifying discussion of the distinction between God enacting His decree or God determining His decree through secondary causes.

<sup>20</sup> Enns, Paul P.: *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, Ill. : Moody Press, 1997, c1989, S. 205

1. A person's will is always a relatively small part of any given circumstance. People have no control over when or where they are born, or over the abilities, disabilities, advantages, or disadvantages they are given at birth. They are subject to many influences beyond their control.
2. God's foreknowledge of future events does not indicate that He is the cause of all that happens. For example, although God certainly foreknew that Demas would forsake the Apostle Paul for the love of this world, His foreknowledge did not predispose Demas to turn back, much less compel him to do so. In a limited way (see above), Demas was able to make a choice. And mysteriously, this human choice accorded with God's sovereign will.<sup>21</sup>
3. God does not coerce the will of man. Our wills operate within the desires of our hearts. So God does not override our will but changes our hearts so that our will chooses Him. ***"We love Him because He first loved us"*** (1 John 4:19).

#### E. Relevance

1. How can the knowledge of God's providence give us hope in the midst of trials?
2. How should the doctrine of God's sovereignty impact our understanding of how and why we pray? How does it impact our understanding of how and why we engage in evangelism?

#### V. Conclusion

The study of God should be an exhilarating topic for those who hunger after Him. As we reflect on His love, justice, goodness, holiness, omnipotence, and omniscience, we should stand back in amazement and marvel with Paul, crying out,

***Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*** (Romans 11:33-36)

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<sup>21</sup> Little. P. 38.

## Appendix:

### COULD GOD MAKE A STONE SO BIG HE CAN'T PICK IT UP?

This is one of those pesky questions that atheists like to pose to try to justify their unbelief. The argument goes like this: If God is omnipotent, as Christians claim, then this means He can do *anything*. But if He can create a stone so big that He can't lift it, then there is something He cannot do, and He is no longer really omnipotent. Similarly, if He *cannot* create an unliftable stone, then He is not omnipotent. Since these are the only two possible answers, it is therefore logically impossible to have an omnipotent God.

Now there are a few problems with this little proof. First of all, the question itself is illogical and absurd. It presumes His omnipotence would enable God to live in two separate and simultaneous realities. For instance, a cynic may say that if God could do anything, then He could cease to exist. But a God who does not exist is not a God at all. Once He moves into the non-existent category, He is no longer God, nor anything else. No one can exist in two contradictory realities; it's as absurd as a square circle, or a married bachelor.

Secondly, this "omnipotence paradox" rests upon a definition of omnipotence that is simply wrong. God's omnipotence, as *He* defines it, has never meant that God can do absolutely anything. A brief survey of the Bible demonstrates that there are certain things which God cannot do:

Titus 1:2 ***"in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago"***

2 Timothy 2:13 ***"If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."***

James 1:13 ***"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone."***

God cannot lie, sin, deny Himself, or be tempted to evil. God cannot cease to exist, stop being God, or act in any way contrary to His attributes or will. To say, as in the cynic's original assertion, that God's omnipotence means that He can do *anything*, is biblically ill-informed (and, since God invented the term, we'll let Him define it). Rather, God's omnipotence *as He defines it* means that He has unlimited power to do all things *which a being of God's perfection could possibly do*. In the words of John Feinberg, "He cannot do everything whatsoever, nor is he required to do everything he can do, but anything we would want or expect a being of God's character to do, he has power to do."

God always does what He wills. So, to answer the original question, Yes, God can make an immovable stone. He can also move any stone. But He will not try to move the immovable stone that He made, as that would contradict His created purpose for that stone. His will is singular and never shifts. A correct understanding of this attribute is crucial for us—it gives us confidence that God will never condemn the elect, nor will He break His promises to the saints. A perfect and holy God must keep His promises—He has bound Himself to do so. And, being omnipotent, we know that He has the power to fulfill them. In the words of Job, ***"I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted"*** (42:2).