

# The Implication/Application of the Excellencies of God

## Lesson 3 – Summary Excellencies – Perfection, Beauty, and Blessedness

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### Review

Creation itself declares the attributes of God in a general sense.

<sup>1</sup>The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. (Psalm 19:1)

<sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

Yet it is only in God's specific self-revelation in the Bible that God has stated and exhibited His specific divine attributes or "excellencies".

<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the **excellencies** of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9)

We are studying those excellencies in order to know God better and be impacted by that knowing. God's excellencies are the perfect, full manifestation of the characteristic and are intrinsic to His being. God "is" (name the excellency). God's excellencies describe His nature. Last week we looked at transcendence and immanence.

- Transcendence (or beyondness) means that God is distinct, far above, greater than His creation (including people) and independent from it (them). He is so lofty, so different from His creatures, so perfect and enthroned in glory, that there is no possible way we can approach Him in our own merit or strength, no possible way we can fathom His greatness, no possible way we can compare ourselves to Him. We pictured God as a mountain compared to ourselves. He is so big we cannot fathom His bigness. He is infinite in elevation and infinite in prominence before us. He is such a majestic mountain that the peak cannot be seen with the naked eye or any human aid. Only through the eyes of Christ can He be seen.
- Immanence (nearness or intense closeness) means that God exists and remains in His creation. He is very much involved in creation. Creation is continually dependent on him for its existence and functioning. He is intimately involved in the affairs of people, particularly His redeemed since He intervened to make you His adopted child. As the great expanses in the universe remind us of God's transcendence, the indescribable closeness in atoms in a molecule or molecules in a visible amount of matter points us to the immanence of God.

A biblical understanding of transcendence and immanence sees God as both existing beyond and in the world. God is always majestic and beyond and also near and involved – lofty and beyond His creation and yet intimately involved with His creation. Both (as well as all others) working in perfect harmony.

❖ **How did thinking of these two excellencies this week impact you?**

## Introduction

A common party (or maybe social media) question is: “What superpower would you like to have and why?” Maybe flight, invisibility, super strength, super speed, super hearing, super vision, etc.? We could think about this question in other ways too. “What quality or attribute would you most like to have that you currently don’t or currently don’t to the degree that you would like?”

We can relate to these questions because we do not have something that we think would be desirable to have. We lack in some area. Perhaps we want what we do not have so we can help others, but maybe just for the enjoyment or the prestige or some other reason.

This is not like God. God lacks nothing in His excellencies. If any excellency would make God more God, then He would have it. He lacks no single excellency nor does He lack in the quality or fullness of any excellency that He does have.

We will look at this concept today. Today we will look at three summary excellencies of God – perfection, beauty, and blessedness. These are “summary” excellencies, similar to infinitude, because to some extent they apply to all or describe some aspect of all the excellencies.

## Perfection

The excellency of “perfection” means that God fully possesses all excellent qualities and lacks no qualities that would be desirable for him. The focus of this excellency is that there is nothing that God lacks. There is no excellency that is missing from God. There is nothing that can be added to God to make Him better. God is the sum total of all possible, conceivable excellencies.

Also, there is nothing lacking from any of His excellencies. God is always perfect in love, perfect in mercy, perfect in grace, etc. He is “complete” or “perfect” in every way.

### ❖ **Do you think God is lacking anything in quality or kind of excellency?**

The Hebrew word for “perfect” means complete, whole, entire, sound. The Greek word for “perfect” means wanting nothing necessary to completeness or perfection. Everything about God is perfect.

God’s works are perfect.

<sup>3</sup>“For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God! <sup>4</sup>“The Rock! **His work is perfect**, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4)

<sup>30</sup>As for God, **His way is blameless** (perfect – ESV); The word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. (Psalm 18:30)

### ❖ **Are there works of God in your life that you describe as less than perfect?**

God’s law (word) is perfect.

<sup>7</sup>**The law of the Lord is perfect**, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. (Psalm 19:7)

### ❖ **Do you view God’s word as anything less than perfect?**

God is morally perfect, holy (we will look more at that specifically later).

<sup>48</sup>Therefore you are to be perfect, as **your heavenly Father is perfect**. (Matthew 5:48)

❖ **Do you view God as anything less than holy?**

God's excellencies are perfect.

<sup>5</sup>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**. (Isaiah 25:1)

❖ **In all of God's excellencies, do you view him as anything less than perfect?**

Error from overemphasis on perfection

There is a danger or error in over emphasizing God's excellency of perfection.

- One error goes like this... Because God is perfect and He calls His redeemed ones to be perfect, believers have the ability to be morally perfect in this life through a second work of grace of God subsequent to salvation. This idea is known as Wesleyan "perfectionism" (see the Ecclesiology class titled Topic 8 – Survey of Denominational Beliefs – "Free Will" Churches for more on this idea). This errant view of "perfectionism" or "sinless perfection" is the belief that sinless perfection, or freedom from conscious sin, is possible in this life for the Christian. This belief is derived from a study of Scripture which is interpreted by tradition, personal experience, and reason. Therefore, while the following passages are used to support this view of sanctification, proper exegesis does not see the connection: Ezekiel 36:25-26; Matthew 5:48; Romans 6:1-2; 6:14; Philippians 3:15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 6:1; 13:20-21; James 1:4; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 John 4:16-18.
- Another error goes like this... Because God is perfect and He desires his redeemed ones to be perfect and He has given commands to be obeyed in His word, believers should add other rules to keep themselves away from the line that He has drawn. Not only should they keep those rules themselves, but they should help others by requiring that they keep those man-made rules also. This is legalism and it is condemned in Scripture with respect to both salvation and sanctification.

Matthew 15:1-9 provides a good description of legalism. "Traditions" are those man-made doctrines, teaching, or rules which take the place of Scripture. Hand washing in this passage is ceremonial washing to remove ritual defilement. Legalism...

- Is based on "tradition" or "application" of Scripture (v2)
- Places man-made rules before God's word (v3)
- Invalidates the word of God by placing man-made rules over it (v6)
- Is hypocritical (v7)
- Appears to bring people close to God but in fact takes them far away (v8)
- Is vain worship of God (v8-9)
- Lies about man-made rules and calls them God's word (v9)

❖ **What are some man-made rules that people want you follow?**

❖ **Do you allow these errors into your thinking/practice?**

## Implications of perfection

Here are some implications/applications of understanding the perfection of God.

- Because God is perfect, I recognize my own need for perfection and that I fall desperately short and therefore need the Savior.
- Because God is perfect, there is nothing lacking in His excellencies. Every one of the excellencies is so perfectly. Therefore, the questioning of His character towards us has no place for the believer.
- Because God is perfect, He makes no mistakes in His perfect, sovereign plan (we will speak more of this later). Therefore, the questioning of His plans has no place for the believer.
- Because God is perfect, believers have a different perspective on “hard times”. They are difficult from my perspective, but are “perfect times” from God’s perspective. They are perfectly designed by the perfect One for the perfecting of myself and the display of His perfect glory.
- Because God is perfect, I strive for perfection in my own life. I strive to work out my salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in me, both to will and to work for His (perfectly) good pleasure (Philippians 2:12).
- Others?

## Beauty

God’s excellency of beauty means that God is the possessor and the sum of all desirable qualities. This excellency is related to perfection. The focus of perfection is that God lacks nothing desirable. Beauty means that God possess all desirable qualities. These are two ways of looking at a similar summary concept which permeates the infinite, unfathomable, transcendence of God. Perfection comes from the negative (lacking nothing) and beauty from the positive (has all desirable). If God does not lack anything desirable, then He is perfect. If God has everything desirable, then He is beautiful.

<sup>4</sup>One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, To behold the **beauty** of the Lord And to meditate in His temple. (Psalm 27:4)

The Hebrew word means “delightfulness” or “pleasantness” or “beauty”.

## Error from overemphasis on beauty

There is a danger/error in over emphasizing the excellency of beauty. This error does not specifically focus on the excellency that belongs only to God, but morphs the excellency to the material and superficial. This is the lie of Satan that says that the material and external are important and moves believers to lose focus on glorifying God by progressing in sanctification. This is replacing the worship of the beautiful God for the worship of His creation.

❖ **Do you take your focus off of God’s beauty?**

## Implications of beauty

Here are some implications/applications of understanding the perfection of God.

- Because God is beautiful, there is nothing in the world that we should desire more than God. That desire will drive you to know Him better through His word.

<sup>25</sup>Whom have I in heaven *but You*? **And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.**

<sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:25-26)

- Because God is beautiful, we should strive to reflect that beauty in our own lives by progressing in sanctification. We should “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior (Titus 2:20) because He chose us to be “holy and blameless before Him” (Ephesians 1:4).

<sup>18</sup>But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

- Because God is beautiful, our ultimate fulfillment can only be found in a relationship with him.
- Because God is beautiful and, in the Trinity, has perfect, beautiful fellowship, believers should seek for that fellowship with Christ and within the body of Christ and not from the world.
- Others?

## Blessedness

In the English NT, there are two different words that are translated “blessed”. One is from the Greek “eulogeō” and has the idea of “praise” and from where we get “eulogy”.

<sup>61</sup>But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the **Blessed One**?” (Mark 14:61)

<sup>25</sup>For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is **blessed** forever. Amen. (Romans 1:25)

<sup>5</sup>whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God **blessed** forever. Amen. (Romans 9:5)

<sup>3</sup>**Blessed** be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1 Peter 1:3)

The word that is used as an excellency of God is also translated “blessed” but is from the Greek “makarios” and means to be happy, but not based on positive circumstances. It is the word that is translated in the sermon on the mount, “blessed be the ...”. This is an inner peace, happiness, joy that comes from being free from daily cares and worries. When applied to God, it denotes that the transcendent, self-existent, only true God is “self-happy,” “self-content,” or “self-fulfilled”. With God, it expresses a happiness identified with pure character.

As an adjective for God it is used twice. Both times by Paul in 1 Timothy.

<sup>11</sup>according to the glorious gospel of the **blessed** God, with which I have been entrusted. (1 Timothy 1:11)

<sup>13</sup>I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, <sup>14</sup>that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the **blessed** and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup>who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (1 Timothy 6:13-16)

In God's presence there is fullness of joy.

<sup>11</sup>You will make known to me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy**; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. (Psalm 16:11)

Interestingly, in the midst of his pastoral letter to his child in the faith and ministry, Paul spends much time in doxology or praise/worship to God. Besides the two passages that call God "blessed", this passage later in chapter one breaks out in praise.

<sup>15</sup>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*. <sup>16</sup>Yet 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. <sup>17</sup>Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:15-17)

So, God's "blessedness" is defined that God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character. He is perfectly happy due to His perfect character.

In our limited, finite understanding of God, we look at a definition like this and we think it strange, almost narcissistic. Yet God, being perfect in all respects is also perfectly happy because He has perfectly pure character.

#### ❖ **Through your union with Christ, do you avail yourself of God's blessedness?**

##### Error from overemphasis on blessedness

There is a danger/error in over emphasizing God's excellency of blessedness. This error does not specifically focus on the excellency that belongs to only God, but places a high priority in one's life to find the feeling of being "blessed" or "happy". Many people (believers and unbelievers alike) believe Satan's lie and seek after apart from God that which only God truly has and that only truly God can provide. They seek after happiness, contentment, and fulfillment in things other than in the "blessed" one who makes His chosen ones partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

#### ❖ **Do you take your focus off of God's blessedness?**

### Implications of blessedness

Here are some implications/applications of understanding the blessedness of God.

- Because God is blessed, believers can find their greatest happiness by resting in Him.
- Because God is blessed, we can imitate that blessedness when we find our happiness, contentment, and fulfillment in Him.
- Because God is blessed, as we walk in the Spirit, we can experience His blessedness.
- We can imitate God's blessedness at the finite level by delighting in the things that please God.
- Others?

### Conclusion

We are studying God's excellencies in order to know Him better and be impacted by that knowing. God's perfection, beauty, and blessedness are excellencies that permeate all the other excellencies. Our response to these excellencies is to display them to the unbelieving world as we walk in the Spirit, so that others might see Christ in us and that He would be glorified.

### Additional Study

- Each day this week, reread the passages that we looked at today.
- After reading the passages, spend time in prayer only adoring God. Ask God to show you personal applications of understanding His excellencies.
- Memorize Psalm 73:25-26.

<sup>25</sup>Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. <sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:25-26)