

The Implication/Application of the Excellencies of God

Lesson 4 – Aseity and Glory

Randy Thompson

Valley Bible Church, Lancaster, CA

www.valleybible.net

Review

We are studying the excellencies of God (1 Peter 2:9) – characteristics that describe God’s intrinsic eminence. The excellencies are what God has stated and/or exhibited in His self-revelation, the Scriptures. God’s excellencies are the perfect, full manifestation of the characteristic and are intrinsic to His being. We are studying them in order to know God better (have knowledge) and be impacted by that knowing (sanctification).

- 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.
- 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.
- Perfection means that God lacks no qualities that would be desirable for him. There is no excellency that is missing from God. There is nothing that can be added to God to make Him better.
- Beauty means that God is the possessor and the sum of all desirable qualities.
- Blessedness means that God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character. God is perfect in all respects and, therefore, He is perfectly happy because He has perfectly pure character. The transcendent, self-existent, only true God is “self-happy,” “self-content,” or “self-fulfilled”.

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

Introduction

Let’s start listing all the needs that people have, whether true or felt.

Now, thinking of all those needs, let’s answer these questions about God.

Did God create the universe, and us, because He was lonely and needed us for fellowship, worship, and love?

Does God need us to be His agents of working out His plans and purposes on earth?

Does God need us to be agents of prayer, that we might change Him and the world?

Does God need us to give our time and money to Him so that He might accomplish His will and purposes through us?

Today, we will look at the truth about God’s “needs” by looking at His aseity (self-existence or independence) and His glory.

Aseity

Aseity comes from the Latin meaning “from self”. This excellency is also called independence or self-existence. Aseity means that God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, He is absolutely, perfectly independent and self-sufficient. He is without origin. Everything other than God depends on God, but He depends on nothing outside Himself. He “needs” nothing. God’s aseity or self-existence or independence is most clearly seen in His name, Yahweh.

¹³Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” ¹⁴God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM**”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘**I AM** has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The **LORD**, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. (Exodus 3:13-15)

When Moses asked for God’s name, God told him that He was “I am”. “I am” is the Hebrew consonants “yhwh” known as the tetragrammaton. “I am” is the “be” verb. It means to exist. God said, “I exist”. He is the source of His own existence. If the universe were to cease to exist, the Lord would still be the “I AM”.

²Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even **from everlasting to everlasting**, You are God. (Psalm 90:2)

²⁴The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵nor is He served by human hands, **as though He needed anything**, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; (Acts 17:24-25)

³³Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? ³⁵Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? ³⁶For **from Him and through Him and to Him are all things**. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

¹¹“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for **You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.**” (Revelation 4:11)

❖ **Is your view of God aligned with Scripture?**

Error(s) associated with aseity

There is a danger/error in under-emphasizing God’s excellency of aseity/independence. There are some people who think that the universe and people were created because God was lonely or bored. He needed companionship or a diversion. A similar thought is that somehow God needs to use people to work out His plan otherwise His plan is unexecutable. Others say that without the freewill prayers of His people, God will not act to accomplish His purpose. Still others believe (or perhaps say in order to manipulate) that without the dedication of believers’ spiritual gifts, talents, time, energy, and finances, God cannot accomplish His work.

How arrogant to think that the self-existent, independent, transcendent God needs us. Instead, He graciously uses His people as part of His glorious plan, in spite of ourselves. We will talk more of this when we get to sovereignty and our part in His plan next with God's glory.

❖ **Have you been tempted to think these errors or listen to teachers who say them?**

Implications of aseity

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

- Because God is the “I AM”, there is nothing about Him that changes. People change because we are not independent, we are dependent ultimately on the Lord, but also on His natural processes for growth. Because He is independent, He does not change. We will see more of this with immutability.
- Because God is self-existent and independent, He is the eternal source of life and godliness for His children. We can go to him to satisfy all our needs with a never-ending supply of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, etc.
- Because God is self-existent and independent, there is nothing too difficult or powerful for Him to handle. Those “difficulties” and “power” are less than the “I AM”.
- Because God is self-existent and independent, He is not answerable to His creatures. God does not have to defend or explain Himself to His creatures. But, we are all answerable to Him.
- Because God is self-existent and independent, He needs nothing to accomplish His perfect will, including me. That he desires to save me and use me is all amazing grace.
- Others?

Glory

God's glory is the central theme of Scripture. But what is meant by the word “glory” in Scripture? The Hebrew and Greek words that are translated “glory” have multiple uses.

- A manifestation of light/brightness or a manifestation of noticeable splendor

¹¹“But since I could not see because of the **brightness** (lit. glory) of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus. (Acts 22:11)

⁴⁰There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the **glory** of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another. ⁴¹There is one **glory** of the sun, and another **glory** of the moon, and another **glory** of the stars; for star differs from star in **glory**.

⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in **glory**; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; (1 Corinthians 15:40-43)

- An excellent reputation, honor, praise

¹⁰But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will have **honor** in the sight of all who are at the table with you. (Luke 14:10)

⁸“I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give **My glory to another**, Nor My praise to graven images. (Isaiah 42:8)

⁸by **glory** (ESV – honor) and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; (2 Corinthians 6:8)

⁴What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?
⁵Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with **glory** and majesty! (Psalm 8:4-5)

- Referring to God’s excellency

⁷Lift up your heads, O gates, And be lifted up, O ancient doors, That the **King of glory** may come in! ⁸Who is the **King of glory**? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. (Psalm 24:7-8)

³The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The **God of glory** thunders, The LORD is over many waters. (Psalm 29:3)

²And he said, “Hear me, brethren and fathers! The **God of glory** appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, (Acts 7:2)

⁸*the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the **Lord of glory**; (1 Corinthians 2:8)

¹Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are **clothed with splendor and majesty**, ²**Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak**, Stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain. (Psalm 104:1-2)

⁹And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the **glory of the Lord shone around them**; and they were terribly frightened. (Luke 2:9)

¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His **glory, glory** as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

²And **He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light**. (Matthew 17:2)

God’s glory is the composite of His attributes and essence; the sum total of what He is; the beauty, power, wisdom, and splendor of His character. The sum total of God’s excellencies are so magnificent that they cause Him to shine forth. Unless self-limited, God’s glory results in an outshining, visible display of brightness that humans cannot endure. Adam Clarke, a British Methodist theologian notes, “God’s glory is essentially the profound, glowing, visible, confluent expression of the attributes of Deity which bears witness to a still more profound and incomprehensible reality of essence.”

In Exodus 33, God says that He will proclaim His name before Moses. God’s name refers to all that He is, the sum of His excellencies.

¹⁸Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" ¹⁹And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." ²⁰But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" ²¹Then the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand *there* on the rock; ²²and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. ²³Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:18-23)

❖ Is God's glory important to you?

Implications of glory

The primary implication/application of understanding God's glory is to fulfill our ultimate purpose to glorify Him. The self-existent, independent, transcendent God does not need His creatures, but we have the ability to glorify Him. In fact, that is our purpose. We were created to glorify God.

⁷Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have created for My glory**, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made." (Isaiah 43:7)

⁸There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, Nor are there any works like Yours. ⁹All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And **they shall glorify Your name**. ¹⁰For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God. ... ¹²I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And **will glorify Your name forever**. (Psalm 86:8-10; 12)

¹¹"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to **receive glory and honor and power**; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

³¹Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

But, what does it mean to glorify God? God is infinitely glorious in nature, so there is nothing we can add to Him. His glory is never diminished, so it does not have to be replenished or bolstered or somehow helped along by His children.

So, to glorify God is to display His character and goodness in your life and therefore bring Him honor. It is to show His character in your motives, thoughts, words, and deeds. You glorify God when you live in a way that those around you can look at you and see what God's character is like (Exodus 33:17-23). You glorify God by placing His attributes on display in your life by walking in the Spirit and progressing in sanctification.

When a Christian lives a life that brings glory to God, they are fulfilling their purpose (2 Peter 1:5; Isaiah 43:7). Glorifying God is the believer's highest calling. We can do it every minute of every day no matter what our circumstances. We can glorify God at home, school, church, community, work (whether we enjoy it or not); with family, coworkers, brethren, or strangers; at rest, at leisure, in any marital status, whether married to a wonderful or horrible person, i.e., all the time.

❖ Do you make it your purpose from morning to night to glorify God?

The true believer is freed from the power of sin over their life. Therefore, we can glorify God all the time because glorifying God is a choice. Regardless of the circumstances, we can choose to display the fruits of the Spirit as we are filled with the Spirit.

❖ **Do you desire to honor God with your choices?**

We should strive to glorify God for several reasons.

First, because God is worthy to be glorified. He created us, He saved us, He is worthy!

¹¹“**Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory** and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

¹²saying with a loud voice, “**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.**” ¹³And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “**To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.**” (Revelation 5:12-13)

❖ **Do you live as if God is worthy?**

Second, because we should seek, through the power of the Spirit, to live like Jesus did (1 John 2:5-6). Jesus’ purpose was to glorify God (John 17). Third, as we already discussed, because glorifying God is the believer’s ultimate purpose.

Here are several ways to glorify God.

1. By believing what God says, trusting Him to fulfill His promises.

Abraham’s example... ¹⁹Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; ²⁰yet, **with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,** ²¹and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. (Romans 4:19-21)

When we do not trust God, we make him out to be a liar (1 John 5:10).

❖ **Are there areas of your life that you do not trust God to handle?**

2. By confessing sin, agreeing with God that you have sinned.

Achan gathered part of the spoils after the fall of Jericho (Joshua 7:1) which was direct disobedience to God’s command (Joshua 6:17-19; Leviticus 27:28; Deuteronomy 20:17).

¹⁹Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, **give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done.** Do not hide it from me." ²⁰So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, **I have sinned against the LORD,** the God of Israel, and this is what I did: (Joshua 7:19-20)

❖ **Are there areas of your life that you “keep secret” from God or your brethren?**

3. By bearing much fruit, doing good works.

⁸"My **Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples. (John 15:8)

¹⁶"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may **see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven**. (Matthew 5:16)

"Good works" are love (for Christ and people) motivated acts with accompanying words that fulfill the believer's mission of disciple making (Matthew 28:18-20).

Remember, the reason for doing good works is out of gratitude for all the God has done for us in Christ and to glorify God – NOT to get something.

²⁸**Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;** ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:28-29)

❖ **Are all your good works driving toward fulfilling your mission?**

4. By serving Christ's church (in our case VBC).

¹⁰As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things **God may be glorified** through Jesus Christ, **to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever**. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

We each have special gifts that we should be using to serve. Even by simply making body involvement a family priority and faithfully attending and participating, you are present and, therefore, add to the body.

- Sunday worship and Sunday school (two services)
- Growth Group (foundational)
- Age-specific ministries (AWANA, children, JH, HS, college, career, etc.)
- Gender-specific ministries (various men's and women's activities)
- Retreats and conferences (men, women, ROCK, career)
- Evangelism training
- Various local outreaches
- Missions
- Music
- Administration and maintenance
- By serving in any area of need
- By an attitude of serving the brethren when present

We each have something to offer, but we have to be there to offer it!

❖ **How are you serving the body?**

5. By humbly attributing success to God, by making sure He gets the credit for the good things that happen in your life.

King Herod didn't do that... ²¹On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. ²²The people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" ²³And **immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory**, and he was eaten by worms and died. (Acts 12:21-23)

¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, **yet not I, but the grace of God with me.** (1 Corinthians 15:10)

²³**"He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me;** And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God." (Psalm 50:23)

Have you ever done something well and someone else gets takes the credit for it? How do you feel? Think about how God feels – we are taking the credit for what He has done. What should He get credit for?

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. (James 1:17)

❖ **Inwardly or outwardly, do you take credit that belongs to God?**

6. Others?

The bottom line:

³¹Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.** (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Conclusion

We are studying God's excellencies in order to know Him better and be impacted by that knowing. God is completely independent of us, not needing us. Yet, He graciously uses His people to display His glory so that others may see His great works.

Additional Study

- Each day this week, reread the passages that we looked at today.
- After reading the passages, spend time in prayer adoring God. Ask Him to search your heart and disclose to you ways in which you are not glorifying Him.
- Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:31.

³¹Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.** (1 Corinthians 10:31)