

The Implication/Application of the Excellencies of God

Lesson 6 – Omniscience and Omnipresence

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Review

We are studying the excellencies of God. God has made us true worshipers (John 4:23) for the purpose of declaring His excellencies (1 Peter 2:9). His excellencies are the perfect, full manifestation of characteristics that describe His intrinsic eminence, His nature. They are what God has stated and/or exhibited in His self-revelation, the Scriptures.

We are studying the excellencies in order to know God better (have correct, true knowledge) and be impacted by that knowing (grow in sanctification). There is no shortcut to the study of God. God designed growth in the knowledge of Him to be a lifetime pursuit culminating with entrance into glory. This growth is a marathon, not a sprint. It is a lifelong pursuit that we should never be satisfied with in the depth of our learning. Horner notes, “There can be no condensed learning of God; the very thought is an insult to His transcendent majesty.”

- **Transcendence** (or beyondness) means that God is distinct, far above, greater than His creation (including people) and independent from it (them).
- **Immanence** (nearness or intense closeness) means that God exists and remains in His creation. He is intimately involved in creation including people, particularly His redeemed. Creation is continually dependent on him for its existence and functioning.
- **Perfection** means that God lacks no qualities that would be desirable for him. There is no excellency that is missing from God and nothing missing from any excellency. Also, there is nothing that can be added 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. 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”.
- **Aseity** (self-existence, independence) means that God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, He is absolutely, perfectly independent and self-sufficient. Everything other than God depends on God, but He depends on nothing outside Himself.
- 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 His excellencies is so magnificent that they result in an outshining, visible display of brightness.
- **Immutability** mean that God is unchanging in His being, excellencies, eternal purposes, and promises. He who exists (“I AM”) does not change. He is not subject to change through time or circumstances. He never differs from Himself. He is always the same.

Meditating on the excellencies of God can provide the believer, joy, peace, comfort, hope, strength, etc.

❖ **How does thinking of these excellencies impact you?**

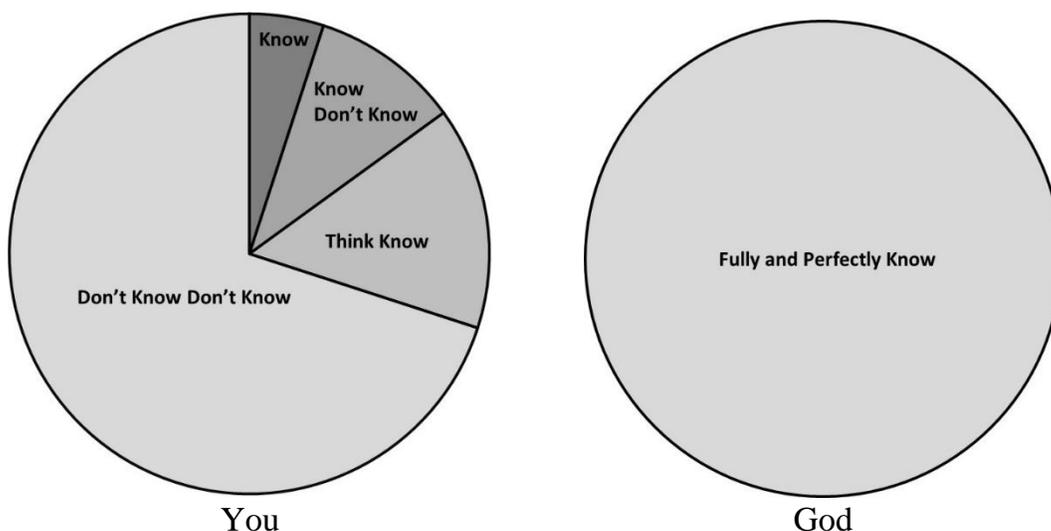
Introduction

Do you know how a toilet works? You know that when you flush that the water in the tank pushes the waste down, right? There is more to it than that.

1. Press the handle to flush the toilet and you operate a lever inside the cistern (tank).
2. The lever opens a valve called the flapper that allows the cistern to empty into the toilet bowl beneath.
3. Water flows from the cistern through holes in the rim so it washes the bowl as well as flushing the contents away.
4. There is enough water flowing down from the cistern to flush the toilet's contents around the S-bend or S-trap. This produces a siphon effect that sucks the bowl clean (that's why sometimes you hear a gurgle). It also ensures some water remains at the bottom of the bowl (on the bowl side of the S-bend), which keeps sewer system gasses from coming back into the house.
5. The contents of the toilet are flushed down the drain.
6. As the cistern empties, the plastic float goes down that causes a valve to open allowing the cistern to fill. Pressurized water flows in, refilling the cistern, and pushing the float back up again. When the float reaches the correct level, the valve switches off the water supply and the toilet is ready to flush again.

This illustrates different types of "knowing". There are things that you know. There are things that you know you don't know. There are things that you think you know, but really don't. And there are the things that you don't know you don't know. On any one topic there can be all four types of "knowing".

This is not like God. God knows everything, fully and perfectly and He is everywhere. He does not know because He is everywhere and sees everything, He just knows. His knowing is an intrinsic excellency. Today, we will look at omniscience and omnipresence.



Omniscience

“Omniscience” is a compound word from the Latin meaning “all” and “knowledge”, to know all or to have perfect knowledge. God has perfect knowledge of all things including actual and possible, past, present, and future. He knows the past, the present, and the future with equal clarity and absolute certainty. He knows all thoughts and heart motives of all people who have been, are, and will be. There is nothing that He does not know fully and perfectly.

Grudem defines omniscience as God fully, perfectly knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act. Let’s look at those parts of the definition.

1. God fully, perfectly knows Himself. The fact that anyone could actually “know” themselves is amazing in itself. People are notoriously bad at self-awareness. Yet, God perfectly knows Himself who is infinite. Since God is infinite, only He can fully, perfectly know Himself.

¹⁰For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; **for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.** ¹¹For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? **Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.** (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)

2. God fully, perfectly knows all things actual. God knows all things that have existed, now exists, or will exist; all things that have happened, are happening, or will happen; and all thoughts that have been thought, are being thought, or will be thought. He knows every detail of everything.

¹O Lord, You have searched me and known *me*. ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. ³You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all. ⁵You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. ⁶**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.** (Psalm 139:1-6)

⁴He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. ⁵Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; **His understanding is infinite.** (Psalm 147:5)

²⁰If we had forgotten the name of our God Or extended our hands to a strange god,
²¹Would not God find this out? **For He knows the secrets of the heart.** (Psa 44:20-21)

²¹For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths. (Proverbs 5:21)

³The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good. (Prov 15:3)

²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And *yet* not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰**But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.** ³¹So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

¹⁸Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. ¹⁹We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him ²⁰in whatever our heart condemns us; **for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.** (1 John 3:18-22)

3. God fully, perfectly knows all things possible. There are an infinite number of possible things that “could” happen, but only one that God has ordained (we will study more of that when we get to sovereignty). Yet in order for all things to work together for God’s maximum glory, He has to know all of those possibilities.

When David was fleeing Saul, he rescued Keilah from the Philistines and stayed there for a time. He decided to ask God whether Saul would come to Keilah to attack him and, if Saul came, whether the men of Keilah would surrender him to Saul. – ¹⁰Then David said, “O Lord God of Israel, Your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. ¹¹Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Your servant has heard? O Lord God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will come down.” ¹²Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will surrender you.” ¹³Then David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit. (1 Samuel 23:10-13)

²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the* day of judgment than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the* day of judgment, than for you.” (Matthew 11:21-24)

4. God fully, perfectly knows everything in one simple, eternal act. God does not know in parts. He is fully aware of everything at one time. He does not need to think about a different aspect of his knowledge to understand it. He has full understanding, all the time. He is not reasoning conclusions or coming to previously unknown decisions. He does not have to count the number of hairs on your head or the sands in the seas, He simply knows. His knowledge never changes, never grows or diminishes. From eternity past He has had full, perfect knowledge; He has that same full, perfect knowledge now; and will have the same full, perfect knowledge in the future.

❖ **Do you live as if God knows everything about you?**

Error(s) associated with omniscience

We already looked at the error of open theism. It is a theology that says that God does not have full, perfect knowledge of everything, but instead the future is “open” to Him. Open theism rejects the classic view of God’s immutability and omniscience and believes that God grows, discovers things He did not know, and changes. It believes that God is adding to His knowledge the experiences of all humankind. It is a belief that is derived from human reason that does not take the Scriptures at face value. Open theism is not just a misunderstanding about who God is or a different way to look at God, it fundamentally describes a different God. One made in the image of man rejecting His self-revelation that declares His immutability and omniscience.

Implications of omniscience

- Because God is omniscient, you understand that He knows everything you have ever gone through, everything you are going through today, and everything you will go through tomorrow. He is not a stranger to your sufferings.
- Because God is omniscient, coupled with His other excellencies of wisdom, goodness, love, and compassion means we can trust Him with our suffering, uncertainty, anxiousness, fear, etc.
- Because God is omniscient, you are comforted when you suffer unjust accusations.
- Because God is omniscient, it acts as a deterrent to the temptation to sin. This is especially true of secret sins (thoughts).
- Because God is omniscient, it acts as a deterrent for hypocrisy.
- Because God is omniscient, you do not have to explain your situation or confusion to Him. You simply bow before Him in worship asking for help since He knows just what we need.
- Because God is omniscient, you should strive to do your best in all things.
- Because God is omniscient, He is able to work all things together for His glory and your sanctifying good.
- Because God is omniscient, He knows the best way to grow you in sanctification.
- Others?

❖ Does God's omniscience give you hope?

Omnipresence

Omnipresence means that God is present at every point of space with his whole being at every point of time. God is everywhere. Remember that God is not like us. You can be in two rooms at the same time, but only part of you is in each room. God does not have parts of Him everywhere all the time. He Himself is present everywhere all the time.

⁷Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. ⁹If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, ¹⁰Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," ¹²Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike *to You*. (Psalm 139:7-12)

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! (1 Kings 8:27)

God rebuking false prophets... ²³"Am I a God who is near," declares the Lord, "And not a God far off? 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. (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

God on those whom He will judge... ²"Though they dig into Sheol, From there will My

hand take them; And though they ascend to heaven, From there will I bring them down.
³“Though they hide on the summit of Carmel, I will search them out and take them from there; And though they conceal themselves from My sight on the floor of the sea, From there I will command the serpent and it will bite them. ⁴“And though they go into captivity before their enemies, From there I will command the sword that it slay them, And I will set My eyes against them for evil and not for good.” (Amos 2:2-4)

It should be noted that God being omnipresent is different than individuals experiencing His presence.

⁶For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹**These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,** (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9)

Implications of omnipresence

- Because God is omnipresent, you cannot hide your sin.
- Because God is omnipresent, you are comforted in your loneliness.
- Because God is omnipresent (and immanent), He is near to you always.
- Because God is omnipresent, you cannot run from God, so you should run to God.
- Because God is omnipresent, He is there to save from all types of harm at all times.
- Because God is omnipresent, you can have real fellowship with God any time.
- Others?

❖ Does God’s omnipresence give you hope?

Conclusion

We are studying God’s excellencies in order to know Him better and be impacted by that knowing. God knows all things and is everywhere which provides the believer with comfort and hope.

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 pleasing to Him.
- Memorize Psalm 139:23-24.

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;

²⁴And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.
(Psalm 139:23-24)