

The Implication/Application of the Excellencies of God

Lesson 8 – Holiness, Wrath, and Righteousness

Randy Thompson
Valley Bible Church, Lancaster, CA
www.valleybible.net

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).

We have just finished studying a group of excellencies called the *absolute* or *incommunicable* or *divine* excellencies. These are excellencies that deal with God's transcendency and belong to Him alone.

- **Transcendence** means that God is distinct, far above, greater than His creation.
 - **Immanence** – God remains in His creation and is intimately involved in it.
 - **Perfection** – God lacks nothing in type or quality of excellency.
 - **Beauty** – God is the possessor and the sum of all desirable qualities.
 - **Blessedness** – God delights fully in himself. He is self-happy, self-content, self-fulfilled.
 - **Aseity** – God does not need anything, He is perfectly independent and self-sufficient.
 - **Glory** – the composite of His excellencies so magnificent that He shines.
 - **Immutability** – God is unchanging in being, excellencies, eternal purposes, and promises.
 - **Omniscience** – God fully and perfectly knows all things actual and possible in one simple, eternal act.
 - **Omnipresence** – God is present at every point of space at every point of time.
 - **Omnipotence** – God is able to do all His holy will without any effort. He has an incomprehensible plenitude of power.
 - **Sovereignty** – God's exercise of His rule over His creation using His absolute power.
- ❖ **Are you striving to allow the truth of these excellencies to impact your life?**

Now we will move to the *relative* or *communicable* or *personal* excellencies. These are excellencies that deal with His immanency and are qualities that God is working to build, to some degree, in His children through the Spirit's work of sanctification.

Introduction

Think about the most perfect heart motive, thought, word, or deed that you personally have experienced. Even in that completely selfless thought, word, or deed (from your perspective) there was the taint of sin that made it not “perfect”.

This is not so with God. Every motive, thought, revelation, or deed of God is morally perfect. There is no possibility of sin or mistake. He is holy and righteous.

Today, we will look at the excellencies of holiness, wrath, and righteousness.

Holiness

Holiness means God is pure and separated from sin.

¹¹“Who is like You among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, **majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?** (Exodus 15:11)

²“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.** (Leviticus 19:2)

Hannah’s song of thanksgiving... ²“**There is no one holy like the Lord,** Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God. (1 Samuel 2:2)

¹The Lord reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned *above* the cherubim, let the earth shake! ²The Lord is great in Zion, And He is exalted above all the peoples. ³**Let them praise Your great and awesome name; Holy is He.** ⁴The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. ⁵**Exalt the Lord our God And worship at His footstool; Holy is He.** ⁶Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called on His name; They called upon the Lord and He answered them. ⁷He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; They kept His testimonies And the statute that He gave them. ⁸O Lord our God, You answered them; You were a forgiving God to them, And *yet* an avenger of their *evil* deeds. ⁹**Exalt the Lord our God And worship at His holy hill, For holy is the Lord our God.** (Psalm 99)

⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that **God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.** (1 John 1:5)

It is not just that God cannot sin, it is that He is perfect. There is no moral defect found in Him. He is morally perfect, holy.

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

Holiness is the only attribute of God mentioned in triplicate in the Bible. Once is a declaration of truth, twice is for emphasis, three times is supreme.

³And one called out to another and said, “**Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts,** The whole earth is full of His glory.” (Isaiah 6:3)

⁸And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God,** the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.” (Revelation 4:8)

Holiness is such an important excellency that God is called “the holy One of Israel” 31 times in the OT. This is a title that infinitely contrasts the sinfulness of the creatures with the moral perfection and absolute separation from sin of the Creator.

²Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the Lord speaks, “Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. ³“An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master’s manger, *But* Israel does not know, My people do not understand.” ⁴Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the Lord, They have despised the **Holy One of Israel**, They have turned away from Him. (Isaiah 1:2-4)

❖ **Think about the absolute moral perfection of God and contrast that with yourself?**

Implications of holiness

- Because God is holy, every thought, word, and deed of God is perfect. Everything that God does is morally perfect, unassailable.
- Because God is holy, one of the things that He does at salvation is sets His new child apart from sin until Himself; He sanctifies. Sanctification is God’s one-time work where He positionally sets the believer apart from sin and eternal death for Himself. The believer is declared to be holy and identified as a saint.

¹³But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.** (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

¹¹For both He **who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father***; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, (Hebrews 2:11)

This setting apart occurs at conversion, but sanctification is also God’s work where the believer cooperates in the process to more and more die to sin, and live unto righteousness. This “practical” or “experiential” or “progressive” sanctification comes as the Spirit does His transforming work within us day by day (2 Corinthians 3:18).

¹⁸But 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)

¹²So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling;**

¹³**for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.** (Philippians 2:12-13)

- Because God is holy, His children are to be striving for holiness out of love for Him and gratitude for His gracious salvation.

²⁸Therefore, **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)

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

¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, ¹⁵but **like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves** also in all your behavior; ¹⁶because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:14-16+)

¹Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.** (2 Corinthians 7:1)

- Because God is holy, Christ’s true body, the church, will be becoming more and more holy.

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is **growing into a holy temple in the Lord**, ²²in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; **but that she would be holy and blameless.** (Ephesians 5:25-27)

- Others?

❖ **Are you striving for holiness?**

Wrath

Wrath means that God intensely hates all sin. Because God is holy, He cannot allow sin to dwell in His presence.

⁴For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; **No evil dwells with You.** ⁵The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. ⁶You destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit. (Psalm 5:4-6)

²A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; **The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies.** (Nahum 1:2)

³⁶He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**” (John 3:36)

⁵For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:5-10)

⁶For it is because of these things that **the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience**, (Colossians 3:6)

¹⁰and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who **rescues us from the wrath to come**. (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

❖ **What does God's wrath drive you to do?**

Implications of wrath

- Because God is wrathful, you should take sin seriously.

⁸“If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. ⁹If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. (Matthew 18:8-9)

- Because God is wrathful, you should be filled with gratitude for your salvation.

³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Ephesians 2:3)

- Because God is wrathful, you should be filled with gratitude for His patience toward you that brought you to repentance.

⁴Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)

⁸The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. (Psalm 103:8)

⁹The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

- Others?

❖ **Are you repulsed by your own sin?**

Righteousness/Justice

Righteousness means that God always acts in accordance with what is right or just and is himself the final standard of what is right or just. Whatever conforms to God's moral character is right. Justice is due reward or punishment; justice is getting what is deserved. In English, “righteousness” and “justice” are two words with two ideas. In Hebrew and Greek, they come from the same root words.

³“For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God! 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. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4)

⁹O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For **the righteous God tries the hearts and minds**. ¹⁰My shield is with God, Who saves the upright in heart.

¹¹**God is a righteous judge**, And a God who has indignation every day. (Psalm 7:9-11)

⁷For **the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness**; The upright will behold His face. (Psalm 11:7)

¹⁴**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne**; Lovingkindness and truth go before You. (Psalm 89:14)

⁵**Gracious is the LORD, and righteous**; Yes, our God is compassionate. (Psalm 116:5)

¹³⁷**Righteous are You, O Lord, And upright are Your judgments**. (Psalm 119:137)

¹⁷**The Lord is righteous in all His ways** And kind in all His deeds. (Psalm 145:17)

³¹because He has fixed a day in which **He will judge the world in righteousness** through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

²⁵For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that **without partiality**. (Colossians 3:25)

Justice is always in accord with God’s righteousness. What is just is also what is right. God will always have perfect justice, but not always immediately. For example, God will have justice for sin – for the believer through Christ’s sacrifice for sin or for the unbeliever through eternal wrath in hell.

⁵*This is* a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 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. ⁹These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10)

Also, we must not confuse God’s righteousness/justice with our culture’s idea of “fairness” or “justice”. In our culture, “fairness” has come to mean “equitable”. Biblical righteousness and justice are never culturally defined, they are defined by God’s revelation.

Righteousness has a unique relationship to justification. Justification is the instantaneous work of God (Romans 8:33) where the repentant, believing sinner is declared righteous. Our sins are placed on Jesus (1 Peter 2:24) and Christ’s righteousness is placed on us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). God’s righteousness moves Him to be both just and the justifier through faith of all those whom He calls to himself.

²⁴and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

²¹He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, (Philippians 3:9)

²¹But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, **so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** (Romans 3:21-26)

❖ **Are you striving to be morally right and just in your dealings with people?**

Implications of righteousness/justice

- Because God is righteous, He has declared what is right in His word.
- Because God is righteous, He gave the way of salvation.
- Because God is righteous, He will one day right all wrongs.
- Because God is righteous, you should do justice as an outflow of your salvation.

⁶With what shall I come to the Lord *And* bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? ⁷Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn *for* my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸**He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?** (Micah 6:6-8)

- Others?

❖ **Are you content with God's justice and His timing?**

Conclusion

We are studying God's excellencies in order to know Him better and be impacted by that knowing. God is holy, wrathful, and righteous. May we be impacted by those excellencies.

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 build godly responses to His holiness, wrath, and righteousness into your life.
- Memorize Hebrews 12:28-29.

²⁸Therefore, **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)