

WHAT GOOD IS GOOD DOCTRINE?

What Good is the Doctrine of God?

Introduction: Over the last several weeks, we have talked about how God has revealed Himself to us, first through the testimony of created things and second through the testimony of the Bible, the Word of God.

Through His handiwork in creation, God shows us that He exists, is supremely intelligent and powerful, and that He controls nature.

The Scriptures reveal everything else we know about God. In the Bible, God shows us who He is by His names, by statements about Him, and by accounts of His words and actions.

So, what does God tell us about Himself? First,

I. WHAT DOES GOD REVEAL TO US ABOUT HIS NATURE?

A. God is One. Mark 12:29 NKJV Jesus answered him, "**The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'**"

1. God is Spirit. John 4:24 NKJV **God is Spirit**, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

2. God is personal, not just a "higher power."

God thinks, feels, and acts as a person thinks, feels, speaks, and acts. I say this not to diminish God to a man but to help us realize what it means to say that God is personal. We are persons because we are created in the image of God. He does not think, feel, and act as He does because of us. We think, feel, and act as we do because of Him. The point is that God is not some vague or impersonal force or power. God is personal.

3. God is infinite. (In time, expanse, and in all of His attributes.)

B. God is Trinity. (God is a tri-unity; He is 3 in 1.)

1. God reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 NKJV Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**...

2. Man-devised models of the Trinity fall short of accurately describing this truth.

- a. **God does not have three parts – 1/3 Father, 1/3 Son, 1/3 Spirit.** No! Jesus is fully God. **Col. 2:9 NKJV For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;**
 - b. **God does not have three forms like water:** liquid water, solid ice, and steam which is a gas.
 - c. **God does not have three roles like a man who is a father, a son, and a brother.** In such a case the father does not speak to the son nor speak of his brother. But God the Father does speak to God the Son, who in turn speaks of God the Spirit.
- 3. In my opinion, it is better to consider other examples of trinities than look to a model.**
- a. **A person is a trinity: body, soul, spirit.**
 - b. **The universe is a trinity: matter, space, and time.**
 - c. But even these and other trinities do not define, capture, nor fully explain the essence of the Trinity.
 - d. The Trinity is a mystery to be believed without being fully understood.

The essence of the doctrine of the Tri-Unity of God is that God is One God who exists and reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

II. HOW DOES GOD DESCRIBE HIMSELF?

1. **God is Eternal - God has no beginning and no end.** **Psalm 90:2 NKJV Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.**

There was never a time when God did not exist. Although this concept is impossible to fully comprehend, this truth is both the testimony of Scripture and is logically necessary. The alternative is that someone or something created God. There is neither evidence nor revelation to imply this as a possibility, and it creates more confusion rather than clarity. While not fully comprehensible, the biblical testimony makes the most sense. God is forever. He is eternal!

2. **God is Imutable - Unchangeable.** **Hebrews 1:12 NKJV “Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.”**

This attribute of God has very important implications for our study of God and of biblical doctrine. Because God does not change, we can know that what He revealed concerning Himself thousands of years ago is still true today. If God were fickle, changing according to the mood of the day, or changing according to circumstances or times, then we might know what God used to be like, but we could never be sure what He is like today. But because God is imutable,

unchangeable, what the Bible reveals about the character, purpose, and plan of God is also forever the same.

Knowing that God does not change helped to rescue me from the darkest days of my life. I have told you about this before, so I will not repeat the story, but suffice it to say that after several tumultuous years in both our ministries and our family, Karen and I were finally seeing the sunbeams break through the clouds of trouble. Then all of a sudden, the sky darkened and poured out another great storm. This one made me feel like I had been a failure as a father to my sons.

And if the overwhelming sadness in my heart were not enough, it caused me to think I should give up my calling as a pastor. For the first and only time since God had called me to preach when I was a senior in high school, I began to seriously contemplate leaving the ministry. I began to consider what else I could do to support my family. I thought about a friend who had gone into business for himself in another state, and I considered calling him to see if I might join him in his venture.

But as I thought about what my life without preaching, pastoring, and ministering would be like, I remembered this characteristic of God. He never changes.

- He cared for Karen and I before any of this trouble fell upon our paths, and He still cared.
- He provided what we needed before and during the troublesome times, and He would still provide.
- He called each of us into ministry, separately and before we were planning to spend our lives together, and He had not revoked His calling.
- Ultimately I repented of my wounded pride and my lack of faith, called a halt to my pity party and picked up the cross the Lord had for me and journeyed on.
- We walked through the valley a little longer, but the God who never changes continued to be Himself to us – loving us, caring for us, strengthening us.

And He will for you! God Himself tells us that He is ...

3. God is Self-Sufficient - God lacks nothing. He is complete. Psalm 50:12 NKJV "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world *is* Mine, and all its fullness."

Neither man nor any other part of His creation supplies something that is lacking in God. That does not mean that God does not have desires. For instance the Bible says that God desires that all men everywhere would be saved. But if God's desire is not fulfilled, God is not diminished nor needy.

God shares things with mankind. God makes man a steward and tells man to bring the tithe to the storehouse and to give proportionally to every good work. But God does not need our money.

God sends believers out to be witnesses from Jerusalem to the end of the earth, but God is not at a loss, nor is His plan frustrated, if we are disobedient. Folks, when we are not good stewards or faithful witnesses, it is not God who is hurt, but us!

God is self-sufficient and all-sufficient.

4. **God is Sovereign - God is free to do as He pleases.** Daniel 4:35 NKJV All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing; **He does according to His will** in the army of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

It pleases God to act out of His character which never changes and which He has revealed to us in His Word.

Therefore the sovereignty of God does not make Him capricious. He acts consistent with His character and promises, not because He has to but because He wants to.

5. **God is Omnipotent - All-Powerful.** Jeremiah 32:17 NKJV 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. **There is nothing too hard for You.**

Understanding that God is omnipotent moves us to prayer. There is nothing that we ask of the Father that is impossible or even difficult. We may be denied a request because what we seek is not best or right, but we are never denied because God is not able. All power belongs to Him.

6. **God is Omniscient - All-Knowing.** Psalm 147:5 NKJV Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power; **His understanding is infinite.**

God knows the past, present, and future. God's knowledge of the future is called His foreknowledge. When God shares some of His foreknowledge with His servants, it is called prophecy.

Foreknowledge does not mean advanced determination. Man has limited foreknowledge. I know that when I drop a pen from my hand that it will fall to the ground. I know this because I am familiar with the law of gravity. I did not cause gravity, I just know about it.

God even knows the choices a man will make in the future. This does not mean that God forces the choice and therefore the man is not free to choose after all. It simply means that God can look into the future as easily as we can look at the present and can see what is going to happen. Therefore Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him before the cock crowed. It was still a very real temptation and choice on Peter's part, but God knew it would happen.

7. **God is Omnipresent - Everywhere Present.** Psalm 139:7-10 NKJV 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

This attribute means that no one can hide or escape God.

8. **God is Wise.** 1 Timothy 1:17 NKJV Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

This is distinct from all-knowing. It means that God always chooses the best means for the accomplishment of His purpose. This characteristic of God should cause us to seek His instructions to us from His Word. If we want to live wisely and act wisely, we must learn from Him.

9. **God is Good.** Mark 10:18 NKJV So Jesus said to him, (a man who had not yet believed He was God,) "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God."

We rightly praise God for this attribute. "God is good, all the time; and all the time, God is good!"

Folks, as I wrestle with trying to get a church restored, its people, its ministries, its buildings, I am glad that God is good and it is one of the unchangeable characteristics of His divine Person. Aren't you?

10. **God is Holy - Separate, Distinctive.** Revelation 4:8 NKJV The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

If there is a single attribute of God emphasized in the Scriptures more than any other it is this one, the holiness of God. It is said that God is thrice holy because of the often heard refrain, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty."

11. **God is Righteous.** Psalm 11:7 NKJV For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.

Simply put, God always does the right thing. If God did it, it was right. Man is sinful, but God is altogether righteous.

12. **God is Loving.** 1 John 4:16 NKJV And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

Love is so much a part of who God is that He says in His Word, "God is love." The actions of God demonstrate for us what true love is.

John 3:16 NKJV For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

13. God is Just. Deuteronomy 32:4 NKJV *He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*

The world seeks but seldom finds justice. But God is just and when His Son reigns in person over all of the earth, the earth shall know the true justice it has sought through the ages.

14. God is Merciful. James 5:11 NKJV *Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.*

Mercy means withholding punishment due to a guilty party. Mercy is the daughter of love. Love gives birth to mercy. God is merciful, but God is also righteous and just. While man struggles to find the balance between justice and mercy, God always does. God is not a sentimental old man who always lets the grandkids get away with murder. God always acts with perfect justice, accomplishing righteousness, and yet showing love by extending mercy.

15. God is True. Titus 1:2 NKJV *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,*

What a wonderful truth: God cannot lie. Why not, if God is sovereign? He cannot because He always acts consistent with His character. God is holy and righteous. For Him to lie would be contrary to His holiness and His righteousness. Therefore, every word of God is truth. Jesus said, "Thy Word is truth."

16. God is Faithful. 2 Timothy 2:13 NKJV *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

God always keeps His promises, even when we do not keep ours.