

Attributes of God for the Family

an advent to Christmas

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Accessible

The word *accessible* means “easy to approach or enter,” which reveals a wonderful truth about God’s great character. Weak and sinful men can approach God in humility. Without this accessibility, mankind would be doomed in their sin.

- For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? (Deuteronomy 4:7)
- But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)
- Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)
- But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:13)
- Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)
- Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)
- Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:8)

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to have a friend who is accessible? How is it helpful?
2. Why is it important that God is accessible by sinful beings like us?
3. What does accessibility say about God’s good character?
4. How can we take advantage of God’s accessibility?

Creator

Everything in time and space has a beginning. Something cannot come from nothing. As an uncreated Being, God is supreme (a higher order of being than created beings). Before anything was created, God existed. Without Him, nothing would exist. He created all things.

- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)
- The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)
- And I have put my words in your mouth and covered you in the shadow of my hand, establishing the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’” (Isaiah 51:16)
- “It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me. (Jeremiah 27:5)
- ‘Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. (Jeremiah 32:17)

Discussion Questions

1. What did God create in the beginning?
2. Was there a time when absolutely nothing existed?
3. If God existed before all other things, what does it mean to you?
4. What are some things that you have made? How do they differ from what God made?

Eternal

The word *eternal* means “everlasting, having no beginning and no end.” God has no beginning. He never started because He always existed. In the same manner, God has no end. He will never cease to exist.

- The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you and said, ‘Destroy.’ (Deuteronomy 33:27)
- Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. (Psalm 90:1)
- Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:2)
- And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (Revelation 4:9)
- You are the same, and your years have no end. (Psalm 102:27)
- But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8)
- Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. (Isaiah 40:28)

Discussion Questions

1. What comes to mind when you think about God being eternal?
2. Is there anything else—beside God—that is eternal?
3. Why is it important to us that God is eternal?
4. How can we take comfort in God’s eternity?

Faithful

To be faithful is to be true or trustworthy in your performance. God is constant and always fulfills His promises. He is faithful and therefore worthy of belief. We can trust Him because His nature is worthy of trust.

- Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” (Genesis 28:15)
- “And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed. (Joshua 23:14)
- For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. (Hebrews 6:10)
- Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)
- Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (1 Peter 4:19)
- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
- The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Discussion Questions

1. How important is God's faithfulness?
2. What comfort can you draw from knowing that God is faithful?
3. Since God is faithful, what should we believe about His promises to us?
4. Are you faithful?

Father

God gives His children the right and privilege to call Him “Father.” By this, we come into the presence of His majesty and address Him as an adopted child. Additionally, we are considered co-heirs with His holy Son, Jesus, and beneficiaries of His eternal love.

- “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:44-45)
- “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 18:19)
- And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39)
- “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13)
- “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” (John 6:27)
- “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:13)
- My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)

Discussion Questions

1. How does it make you feel that you are adopted into God’s family?
2. What comes to mind when you consider your privilege to call God “Father”?
3. Can those who are not adopted children of God call Him “Father”?
4. What benefits do you have when God is your Father?

Goodness

Creatures have shadows cast by the darkness of sin, but God has no shadow. He is not under Law, nor is He apart from Law. God is a Law unto Himself. Therefore, whatever He does is good.

- Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. (Psalm 25:8)
- Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! (Psalm 34:8)
- For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things. (Psalm 107:9)
- The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. (Lamentations 3:25)
- If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:11)
- Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)

Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, what does it mean that God is good?
2. Are you good? How are you different from God in His goodness?
3. What comfort can you have knowing that God is eternally good?
4. What does God's goodness tell us about Jesus Christ? Why is this important?

Gracious

To be gracious is to show kindness to an inferior. It is an act that flows from sincere compassion. We are inferior people to God and in need of His favor. When God shows compassion for us and acts on that compassion by meeting our need, He is being gracious.

- For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)
- Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)
- You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:1-2)
- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Discussion Questions

1. What is grace, or being gracious, in your own words?
2. Has God been gracious to you? In what ways?
3. How different would it be if God were not gracious?
4. In your opinion, what is the greatest expression of God's grace?

Holy

Holiness refers to being set apart and being pure and righteous. God is both set apart from His creation and totally pure and righteous. We are called to be holy—to reflect God’s righteousness and purity.

- “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. (Leviticus 19:2)
- “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)
- For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. (Psalm 33:4-5)
- To declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. (Psalm 92:15)
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:10)
- “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)
- This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

Discussion Questions

1. What does God’s holiness have to do with being perfect?
2. Are you holy in all you are and do? Why?
3. How important is it that God is holy?
4. What does God’s holiness have to do with you?

Immanent

God's immanence is closely related to God's omnipresence. Since God is everywhere, we are always near Him. This is what is meant by God's immanence--He is near. God is always present within the universe, though distinct from it.

- “Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? (Jeremiah 23:23)
- For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)
- And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:17)
- He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:3)
- And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.(John 1:14)

Discussion Questions

1. What does God's immanence mean in your life?
2. What advantages are there when loved ones are immanent?
3. What advantages are there when God is immanent?
4. In what ways has God shown His immanence to you?

Immutability

God never changes in His character, will, or covenant promises. He is the same all the time. All of His attributes remain equally infinite and full as they were before time existed.

- God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (Numbers 23:19)
- And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.” (1 Samuel 15:29)
- They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, (Psalm 102:26,)
- “For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)
- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)

Discussion Questions

1. What does the immutability of God mean in your own words?
2. Why is it important that God is immutable?
3. Are you immutable? Why or why not?
4. What does God’s immutability mean to your eternal life?

Incomprehensible

No matter how deep our knowledge of theology, there will always be much about the nature and character of God that will remain a mystery to us. No human being can have a comprehensive knowledge of God. The doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God does not mean that we can know nothing about God. It means that our knowledge is limited, bound by our humanity.

- “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)
- “As for me, I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause, who does great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number: (Job 5:8-9)
- Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?” (Job 26:14)
- Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (Romans 11:33)
- For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11)

Discussion Questions

1. What does God's incomprehensibility mean in your own words?
2. Why is it important for God to keep some things unknown?
3. What things do you know about God that He has revealed?
4. How different would your life be if God did not disclose anything to you?

Justice

To give what is due to someone is justice. Biblical justice is linked to righteousness—to doing what is right. Since God is eternally righteous, He is also eternally just. He never gives people what they don't deserve—injustice. Mercy, on the other hand, is outside of justice and is withholding punishment that people deserve.

- The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tests hearts. (Proverbs 17:3)
- To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. (Proverbs 21:3)
- For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” (Hebrews 10:30)
- And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, (1 Peter 1:17)
- They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. (2 Peter 2:19)
- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Discussion Questions

1. What does God's justice tell us about God's nature?
2. Why is it important to you that God be just?
3. What does justice have to do with mercy? How are they different?
4. Can you relate God's justice to the life and work of Jesus, His Son?

Loving

God is not just loving, He is the definition of love. It is a core aspect of God's character. Everything about Him comes from His love, so everything He does is in love. He is the perfect example of love because He is love.

- “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)
- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)
- But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4-5)
- I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. (Proverbs 8:17)
- “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

Discussion Questions

1. What is the greatest expression of God's love?
2. How has God shown His love to you?
3. Would you be different if God did not show you love? How so?
4. Can you recall some ways that Jesus showed His love to mankind?

Omnipotent

God is all-powerful over His creation. Nothing in the universe can thwart or frustrate God's plans. He has sovereign power, authority, and control of all things. This is a threat to the wicked, but a comfort to the believer.

- Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. (Psalm 115:3)
- For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. (Romans 11:36)
- In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (Ephesians 1:11)
- He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:3)

Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, what does God's omnipotence mean?
2. Is there anything that is outside of God's power?
3. Can anyone stop God from doing what He plans to do?
4. How does God's omnipotence bring you comfort and peace?

Omnipresent

Only an infinite Spirit can be omnipresent—everywhere at all times. God is infinite and Spirit. He is not bound by time or space. He transcends time and space. All of Him is in every place at every time.

- So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.”(Genesis 16:13)
- Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” (Genesis 28:16)
- An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you. (Exodus 20:24)
- You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. (Psalm 139:5)
- The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, (Acts 17:24)
- The church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:23)

Discussion Questions

1. What does God’s omnipresence mean in your own words?
2. How should God’s omnipresence bring believers comfort?
3. How should God’s omnipresence bring unbelievers terror?
4. What does God’s omnipresence mean for your future and eternity?

Omniscient

God is all knowing. An infinite Being can possess infinite knowledge. So God has a higher degree of knowledge than His creatures, but it is of the same logical order. His omniscience is crucial to His role as the Judge of the world.

- For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.” (Deuteronomy 2:7)
- But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. (Job 23:10)
- You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. (Psalm 139:2-4)
- Your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:4)
- Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (Romans 11:33)
- And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:13)

Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, what does it mean that God is omniscient?
2. Why is it important that God be omniscient?
3. How does knowing that God is omniscient change the way you act and think?
4. Is there anything that God doesn't know?

Provider

God is never at a loss when the economy of the land is in famine. He owns everything and does whatever He wants with it. He is the master of resources. Everything is at His disposal, and He desires to meet the needs of His people.

- The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)
- You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:5-6)
- Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! (Psalm 34:9)
- But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)
- And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no money bag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.” (Luke 22:35)
- “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to you that God is your provider?
2. In what ways has God shown you that He is your provider?
3. How is God different from providers here on earth?
4. How does knowing that God is your Provider help you live a godly life?

Savior

God is our deliverer and healer. In our time of trouble, God is able to deliver us. When we are sick, God is able to heal us. The Bible teaches that we have all sinned against God and deserve His wrath. But, He is able to save us and heal us.

- The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)
- The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. (Psalm 34:22)
- Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. (Psalm 68:19)
- “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)
- God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, (2 Timothy 1:9)
- For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people. (Titus 2:11)

Discussion Questions

1. What does knowing God as Savior tell us about His character?
2. What does having a Savior mean to you?
3. What can God save you from?
4. Why is Jesus called our Savior?

Sovereign

God is sovereign over all His creation. This means that all things are under His rule and control. Nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works all things according to the counsel of His own will to accomplish the end He desires.

- The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. (Psalm 103:19)
- Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. (Psalm 115:3)
- All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” (Daniel 4:35)
- And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)
- In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will. (Ephesians 1:11)

Discussion Questions

1. Is there anything that God does not ultimately control?
2. Why is it helpful to know that God is in control of everything?
3. What comfort do you have in knowing that God controls everything?
4. What does God’s sovereignty tell us about Jesus and your salvation?

Transcendent

God is near and involved in human history, but He is also transcendent. This means that God is above, other than, and distinct from all He has made. His transcendence refers to the difference in His nature from that of His creation.

- For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)
- One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:6)
- For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. (Psalm 97:9)
- He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:3)
- “But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.” (Exodus 33:20)

Discussion Questions

1. What does God’s transcendence mean in your own words?
2. In what ways is God near and far?
3. What does God’s transcendence tell us about His nature?
4. How does God’s transcendence help you live today?

Triune

The Triunity of God is difficult to comprehend because nothing like it exists around us. However, the Bible teaches that God is one in essence, and three in person. We refer to this as the Trinity. God is eternally distinguished by the work assumed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)
- And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-17)
- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 28:19)
- The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)
- ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood. (1 Peter 1:2)

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe God’s Triune nature in your own words?
2. What other Scriptures come to mind when you think of the Trinity?
3. Who are the three persons of the Trinity?
4. Are all the persons of the Trinity eternally and equally God at the same time?
5. What works did each person of the Trinity do in the Bible?

Wise

The term *wisdom* can be summarized by “know-how.” God is infinitely and all-wise. His wisdom is vastly superior to human wisdom. With respect to this wisdom, God alone is wise. The Bible teaches us further that God is the source of wisdom.

- Then the Lord said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” (Exodus 4:11-12)
- He is wise in heart and mighty in strength—who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded? (Job 9:4)
- “With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. (Job 12:13)
- With him are strength and sound wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are his. (Job 12:16)
- O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. (Psalm 104:24)
- To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! (Romans 16:27)
- So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 3:10)

Discussion Questions

1. How do you think wisdom is different from knowledge?
2. Does God being all-wise help you live your life in a more godly way? Why?
3. Does God’s wisdom encourage you to pray more? If so, why?
4. Who is more wise than God? Why is this important?