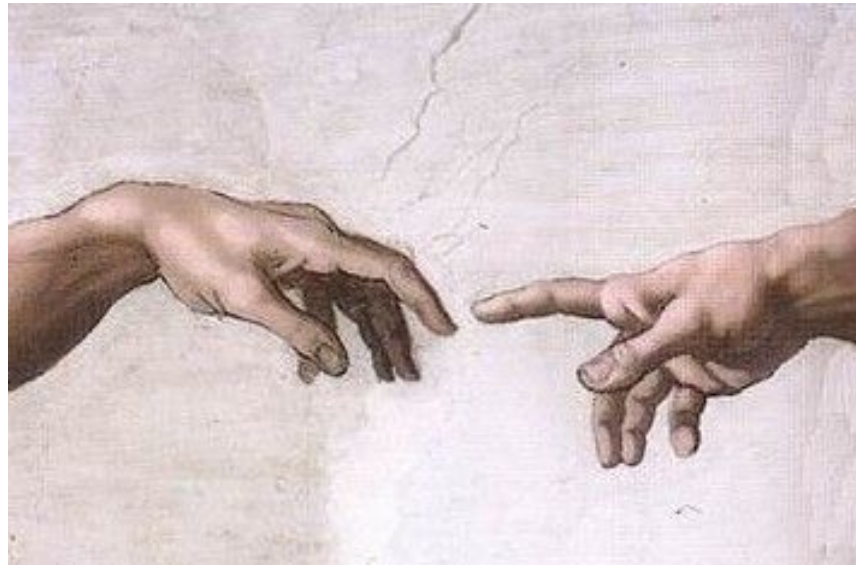


BEHOLD YOUR GOD, Part 2:
The Incomprehensibility of God;
Introduction to the Attributes





THEOLOGY PROPER

- Last session: The Existence of God
- Today's Topics:
 - The Knowability of God
 - Incomprehensibility of God
 - Introduction to the Attributes of God
 - Why Study the Attributes?



The Knowability of God

- The Knowledge of God is Possible
- Knowing God is Based on Divine Revelation
- **Matthew 11:27:** “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”



The Knowability of God

- Knowing God:
 - Pleases God
 - **Hosea 6:6:** “For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”



The Knowability of God

- Knowing God:
 - Is Why Jesus Came
 - **1 John 5:20:** “we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true.”



The Knowability of God

- Knowing God:
 - The meaning of eternal life:
 - **John 17:3:** “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

“When it is said that God can be known, it is not meant that He can be comprehended. To comprehend is to have a complete and exhaustive knowledge of an object. God is past finding out. We cannot understand the Almighty unto perfection...our knowledge of God is partial and inadequate. There is infinitely more in God than we have any idea of; and what we do know, we know imperfectly.”

--Charles Hodge



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- **Psalm 145:3:** “Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, His greatness is *unsearchable*.”
- **Psalm 147:5:** “Great is our Lord and abundant in power, his understanding is *beyond measure*.”
- **Romans 11:33:** “O the depth of the riches and the wisdom and knowledge of God! How *unsearchable* are his judgments and how *inscrutable* his ways!”



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- Why can't we comprehend God fully?



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- Why can't we comprehend God fully?
 1. God is One of a kind, foreign, and unique
 - **Tozer:** “The child, the philosopher, and the religionist have all one question: ‘What is God like?’ God is not like anything; that is, He is not exactly like anything or anybody.”
 - **Isaiah 46:9:** “For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me.”



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- **Ezekiel 1:4ff:** “As I looked, behold a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something *like* glowing metal...within it there were figures *resembling* four living beings. In the midst of the living beings there was something that looked *like* burning coals of fire, *like* torches darting back and forth among the living beings. Now over the heads of the living beings there was something *like* an expanse, *like* the awesome gleam of crystal...



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- **Ezekiel 1:26ff:** “Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was *something resembling* a throne and on that which *resembled* a throne, high up, was a figure *with the appearance* of a man. From the appearance of His loins and upward something *like* glowing metal that *looked like* fire all around within it...such was the *appearance* of the *likeness* of the glory of the Lord.”



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

“Strange as this language is, it still does not create the impression of unreality. One gathers that the whole scene is very real but entirely alien to anything men know on earth. So in order to convey what he sees, the prophet must employ such words as ‘likeness,’ ‘appearance,’ ‘as it were,’ and the ‘likeness of the appearance.’ ”

--A.W. Tozer



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- Why can't we comprehend God fully?
 1. God is One of a kind, foreign, and unique
 2. God is Transcendent

Isaiah 55:9: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- Why can't we comprehend God fully?
 1. God is One of a kind, foreign, and unique
 2. God is Transcendent
 3. God is Infinite

Psalm 90:2: “Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth and the world, *from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*”



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- Why can't we comprehend God fully?
 1. God is One of a kind, foreign, and unique
 2. God is Transcendent
 3. God is Infinite
 4. God does not reveal everything about Himself
 - **Deut 29:29:** “The secrets of God belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us.”

Spectrum of the Comprehensibility of GOD



Biblical Truth



Incomprehensibility

Knowability



Hegel/Speculative
School/Ancient
Philosophy



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- The **PERPETUAL NOVELTY**:
 - In heaven, we are still finite, God is still infinite
 - For all eternity, we will be learning more about God
 - Heaven will be perpetually new



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

“Heaven will be a never-ending, ever-increasing discovery of more and more of God’s glory with greater and ever-greater joy in Him. If God’s glory and our joy in Him are one, and yet we are not infinite as He is, then our union with Him in the all-satisfying experience of His glory can never be complete, but must be increasing with intimacy and intensity forever and ever. The perfection of heaven is not static. Nor do we see at once all there is to see—for that would be a limit on God’s glorious self-revelation. Yet we do not become God. Therefore, there will always be more, and the end of increased pleasure in God will never come.”

--John Piper



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- God is incomprehensible but knowable

Biblical Truth



Incomprehensibility

Knowability





The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- The Emerging Church
 - Based on a Distortion of the Incomprehensibility of God
 - Based on postmodernism's denial of absolute knowledge
 - Teaches “the hermeneutic of humility”—we cannot know what Scripture is saying

Spectrum of the Comprehensibility of GOD



Biblical Truth



Incomprehensibility

Knowability



Postmodernity/
Emerging Church



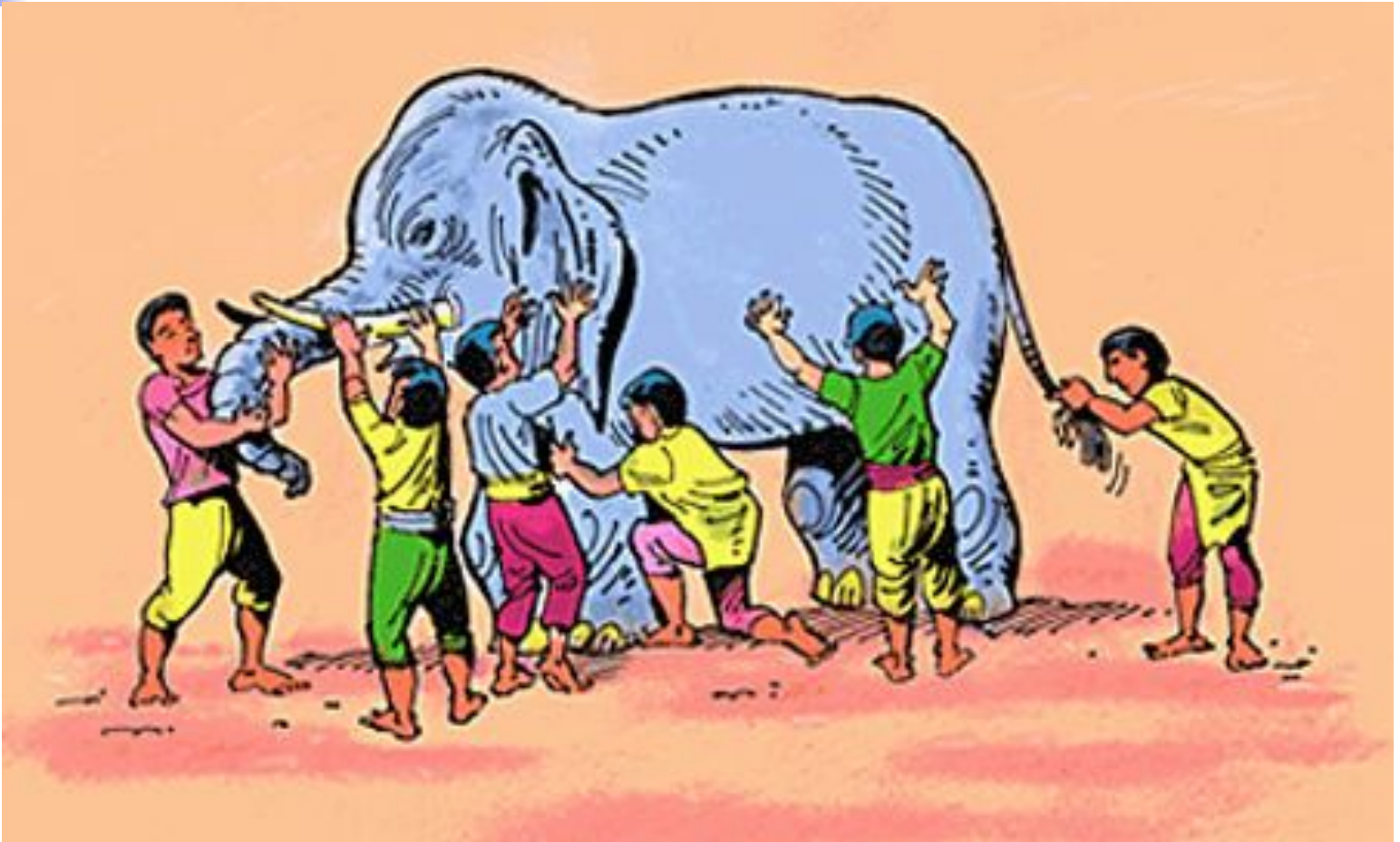
Hegel/Speculative
School/Ancient
Philosophy



The Incomprehensibility of GOD

- The Emerging Church
 - Believes God is incomprehensible and unknowable
 - Supports an ecumenical approach to truth

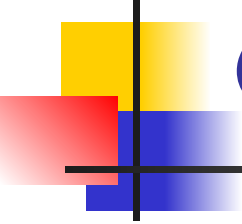
The Incomprehensibility of GOD





The Incomprehensibility of GOD

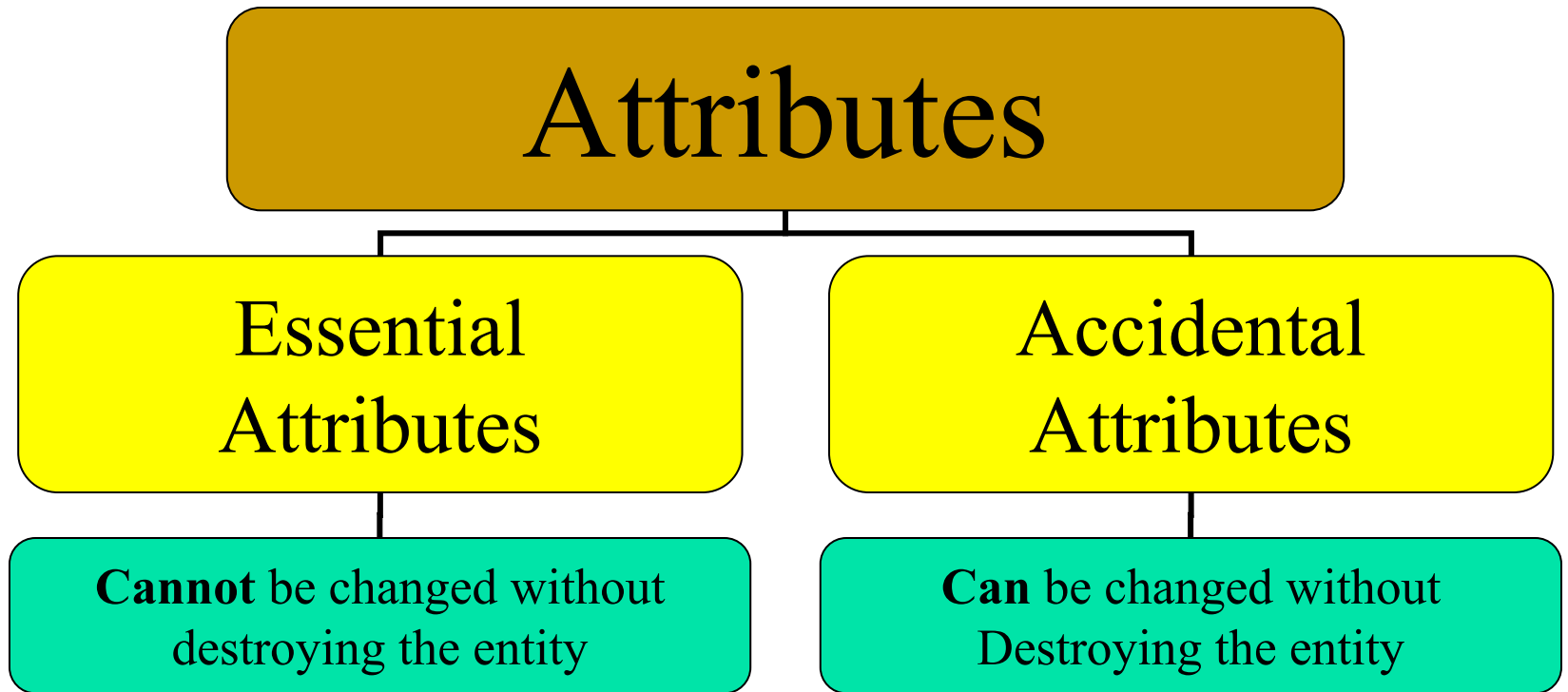
- **John 17:17:** “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”
- It is possible to know truth even though we may not know it exhaustively



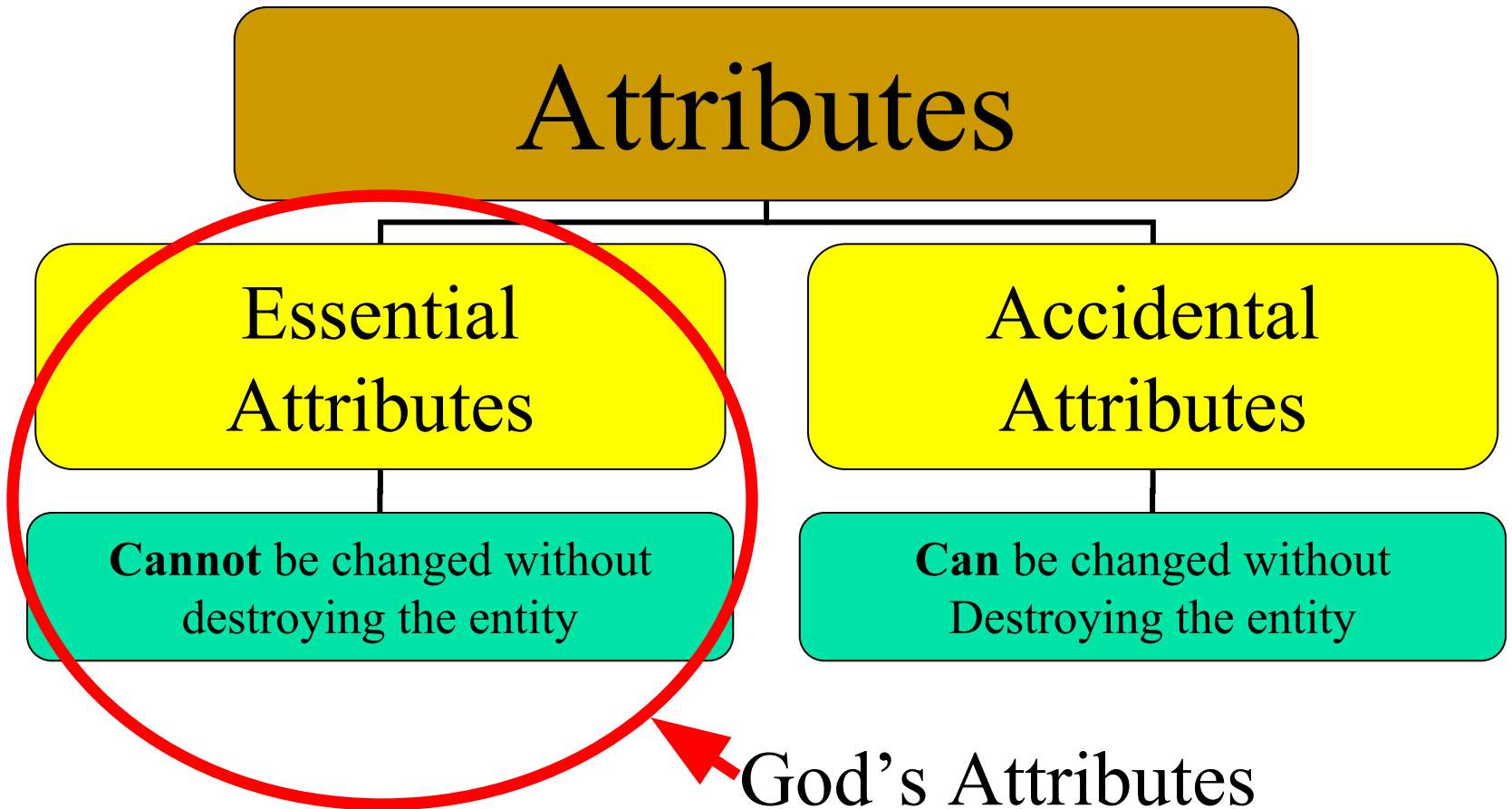
Introduction to the Attributes of God

- **What is an attribute?**
 - **C.C. Ryrie:** “Attributes are qualities that are inherent to a subject. They identify, distinguish, or analyze the subject.”

Introduction to the Attributes of God



Introduction to the Attributes of God





The Attributes of God

- **1689 London Baptist Confession: Chapter 2, Paragraph 1:** “The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.”



Classifying the Divine Attributes

- No perfect way to classify, but many different ways:
 - Lutheran: Positive vs. Negative
 - Arminian: Absolute vs. Relative
 - Erickson (Baptist), McClain: Greatness vs. Goodness
 - Roman Catholic: Being vs. Activity
 - Frame: Goodness vs. Knowledge vs. Power
 - Historic Reformed: Incommunicable vs. Communicable (Berkhof, Bavinck, Shedd, Grudem, Culver)



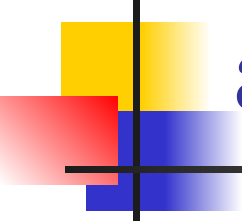
Classifying the Divine Attributes

- **Incommunicable Attributes** are attributes which God does not share or communicate to others, such as human beings, i.e.
 - God's Independence (Aseity)
 - God's Eternity,
 - God's Immutability,
 - God's Omnipresence



Classifying the Divine Attributes

- **Communicable Attributes**, those attributes which God shares or communicates with us, i.e.
 - God's love,
 - God's kindness,
 - God's wrath



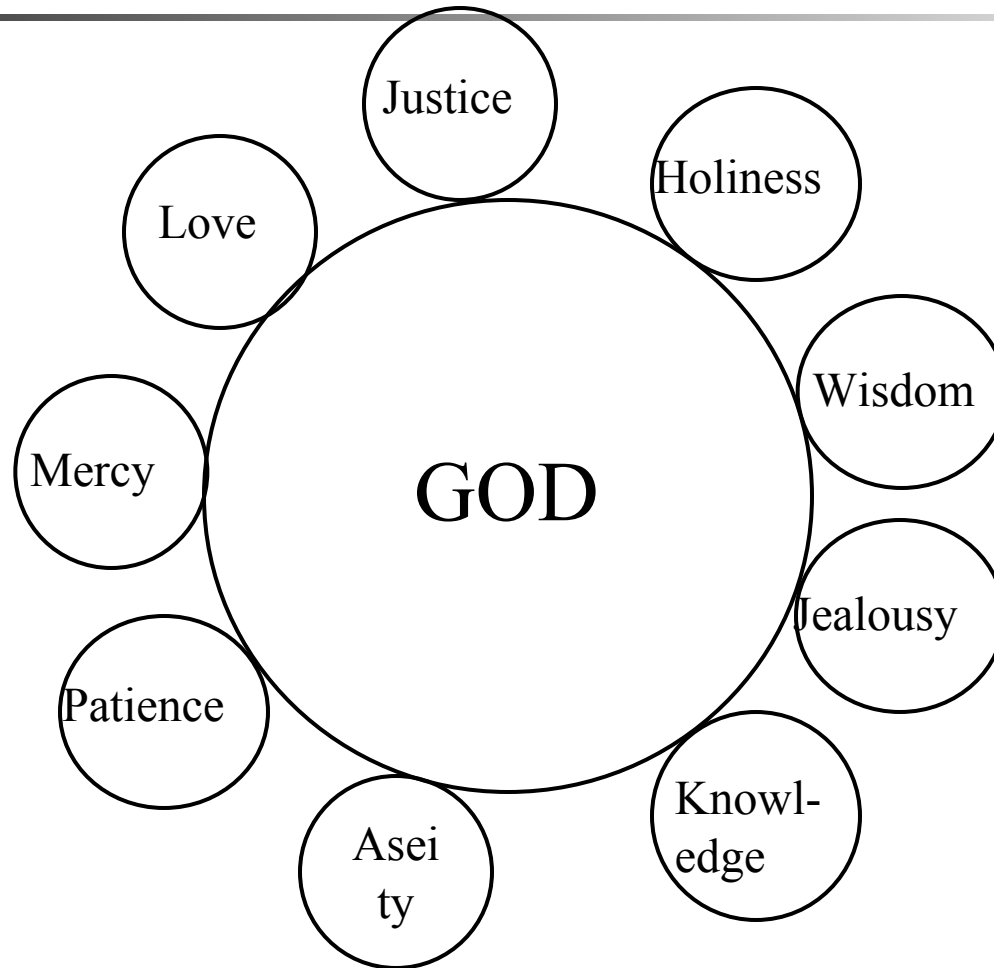
God is **NOT** a collection of attributes added together

Love + Justice + Holiness

Mercy + Wisdom + Wrath + Jealousy

Patience + Aseity + Knowledge

God's attributes are **NOT** additions to Himself





The Unity of God's Attributes

“There is no suggestion that part of God is light and part of God is love, or that God is partly light and partly love. It should be clear that each attribute is simply a way of describing one aspect of God's total character or being. God himself is a *unity*, a unified and completely integrated whole person who is infinitely perfect in *all* of these attributes.”

--Wayne Grudem

God is a Being/Person with Attributes

Omnipresence

Love Justice Holiness

Mercy Wrath Knowledge

Wisom Omnipotence

Freedom Eternity

Independence Jealousy



Why study the attributes of God?



Why study the attributes of God?

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. Man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God...there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.”

--A.W. Tozer



Why study the attributes of God?

- **Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones said, “99.99% of our troubles as Christians is because we do not know God.”**
- You will never grow higher than your view of God



Why study the attributes of God?

Omnipresence

Love Justice Holiness

Mercy Wrath Knowledge

Wisom Omnipotence

Freedom Eternity

Independence Jealousy



Why study the attributes of God?

Omnipresence

Love Justice Holiness

Wrath

Mercy

Knowledge

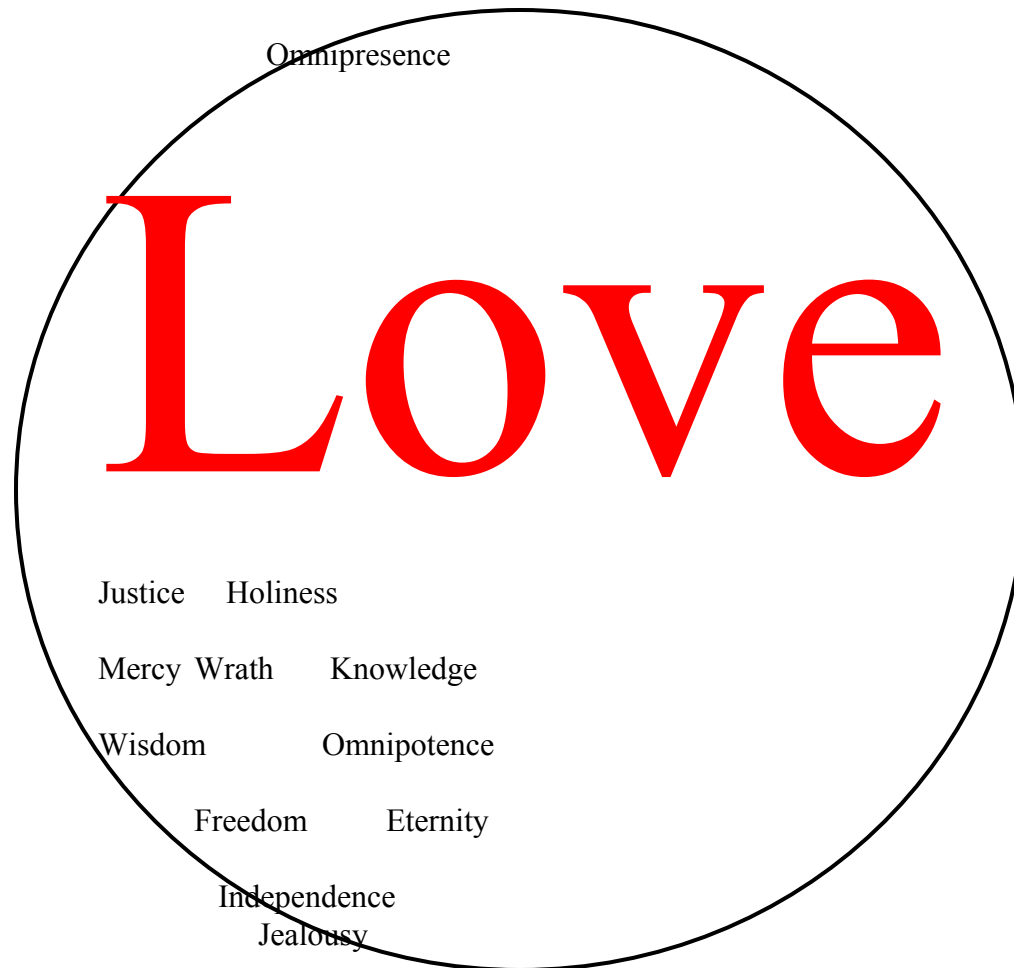
Wisdom Omnipotence

Freedom Eternity

Independence Jealousy



Why study the attributes of God?





Why study the attributes of God?

“The fairest face on earth, with the most comely features, would soon become ugly and unsightly, if one member continued growing while others remained undeveloped. Beauty is, primarily, a matter of proportion. Thus it is with the Word of God: its beauty and blessedness are best perceived when its manifold wisdom is exhibited in its true proportions. Here is where so many have failed in the past. A single phase of God’s Truth has so impressed this man or that, that he has concentrated his attention upon it, almost to the exclusion of everything else.”

--A.W. Pink

The Attributes of God

