

# LESSON ESSENTIALS

## OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

### LESSON 5: SHARED ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Measuring up to God's standard of holiness, righteousness, and love might be difficult, but we've got a great role model before us to emulate. What's more, God wants us to be like Him. There are areas of our lives that we need to change in order to glorify God and become more Christ-like. Let this lesson convict you as you read through it and show you what you need to do to exhibit God's moral attributes.

God is holy, just, righteous, and loving. He's the epitome of perfection, yet He relates with us imperfect beings. This lesson will give you a clearer understanding of God's moral attributes.

It is very important to get to know God's moral attributes, so as to understand Him better. These moral attributes are nothing but rules that govern your behaviour and define your character. We're all unique, but at the same time, we carry God's seal because we are made in His image.

It is natural for us to feel inadequate and sinful in God's presence. Yet, that doesn't take away our responsibility to work towards holiness. Lev 20:26 (ESV) says, "You shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine." You might feel like a certified sinner, but don't let that stop you from pursuing holiness, because that's what God wants you to do.

Many Christians carry a very unrealistic picture of God. They see Him as a tyrant figure up above who has the power to punish them if they make the smallest mistake and bless them for every tiny act of charity. They try not to get on the wrong side of Him for fear that He might harm them. Many Christians miss out on experiencing a beautiful relationship with God because of this distorted and warped perception of Him.

It is very important to get to know God's moral attributes, so as to understand Him better. These moral attributes are nothing but rules that govern your behaviour and define your character. We're all unique, but at the same time, we carry God's seal because we are made in His image. And He's the epitome of perfection. Our God is holy – that is, He is morally pure and absolutely free from any kind of evil. Isaiah 6:3-5 (ESV) tells us, "And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!' And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of Him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!'"

Isaiah couldn't help but feel humbled in God's presence when he saw Him in all His glory. He realised that he was a 'man of unclean lips' who could never match up to God's standard of holiness. It is natural for us to feel inadequate and sinful in God's presence. Yet, that doesn't take away our responsibility to work towards holiness. Lev 20:26 (ESV) says, "You shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine." You might feel like a certified sinner, but don't let that stop you from pursuing holiness, because that's what God wants you to do.

He also wants you to be righteous, because He is a righteous and just God. To be righteous is to always demand justice and to make sure that there is no wrong committed. In that way, our God is so righteous, that He never does any wrong. And in the same way, He cannot stand to see any wrong committed. He demands justice for every wrong that He sees. Compared to God's righteousness, our righteousness is nothing – it is like 'filthy rags', as His Word puts it. But in spite of this, God loves us passionately because He is love. There is nothing in the world we can compare to God's love! Actually, our hearts are too small to grasp the extent of His love for us. As humans, we love conditionally. For example, if a friend whom you love wrongs you, you are tempted to reject that

friendship and move on. But God never stops loving us, no matter what we do. His Word says, "Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ." What's more, He does not even punish us every time we hurt Him by sinning. He continues to love us and show us mercy, no matter how evil we are to each other and to Him.

While God is holy, righteous, and loving, we're at the other end of the spectrum - unholy, sinful, and dirty. How then can we relate to this awesome, majestic God? Well, the humbling truth is that there is nothing we can do to relate to our awesome God. But because our God is so awesome, He relates with us! God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins because He wanted to relate to us and show us that we could draw closer to Him in spite of our failings and flaws. Because Jesus has taken our punishment, our sins are now wiped clean, and we are made holy and righteous in Jesus Christ. And guess what: because God has made us holy and righteous, we can relate to Him. Isn't this realisation just amazing!

We do serve an awesome God, don't we? But in the same way that God showed us His love, we are also commanded to love our neighbour with God's love. And just like God, in all His righteousness was able to forgive us our grave sins, we too are called to forgive our own friends and neighbours when they wrong us. Are you ready to exhibit God's moral attributes in your dealings with people?

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## IN REVIEW

- Our God is holy, meaning that He is so pure, that it is impossible to measure up to Him.
- He is just, meaning, He can do no wrong; and what's more, He cannot see any wrongdoing being committed, without acting in justice.
- Our God is love, meaning, His love is so great, that nothing can stand between God's love for us.
- God took the first step to relate with us sinful people, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us, and cleansed us from our sin, so that we can have fellowship with Him!
- God loves us unconditionally and forgives us freely. He expects us to do the same for others. He has commanded us to love our neighbours and to forgive those who sin against us.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

- What practical steps can you take to make God's moral attributes more evident in your own life?
- How can you give others a glimpse of God's love and forgiveness, just like He commands you to do?
- Given that God commands you to be holy, what are some of the areas in your life that you would want to change?

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