

Getting Acquainted with God

The Attributes of God – Session One

“Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you.”
—Job 22:21

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”
—John 17:3

- I. Introduction
 - a. What are we doing?
Theology “Proper”
 - b. Why are we doing it?
- II. The Reality of God
 - i. His Being
 - 1. Fundamentally and Eternally One
 - 2. Fundamentally and Eternally Three
 - ii. His Existence
 - 1. Traditional Arguments for God’s Existence
 - a. Cosmological Argument: From Contingency
 - b. Teleological Argument: From Design
 - c. Moral Argument: From Moral Gradation
 - 2. “The Impossibility of the Contrary”
 - 3. *Sensus Divinitatis* (Lat. “sense of the divine”)
- III. The Study of God
 - a. The Knowledge of God
 - i. General Knowledge of God
“Although they *knew* God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful” (Romans 1:21).
 - ii. Saving Knowledge of God
Saving knowledge of God *presupposes* knowing *about* God.
 - b. The Knowability of God
 - i. Immanuel Kant and the *Phenomena* and *Noumena*
Phenomena: that which we can sense
Noumena: the essence of things
 - ii. God’s Incomprehensibility
“Can you fathom the depths of God or discover the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than Sheol—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.” (Job 11:7-9 CSB).
 - iii. God’s Apprehensibility

1. Geerhardus Vos: “We only know Him insofar as He reveals Himself, that is, has turned His being outwardly for us.”¹
- IV. The Attributes of God in Theological Studies
- a. Definition of “Attribute”
 - i. A Quality Which Something Possesses
 - ii. A Better Term: *Perfection*
 - b. Division of Attributes
 - i. Natural and Moral Attributes
 - ii. Absolute and Relative Attributes
 - iii. Immanent and Emanant Attributes
 - iv. Incommunicable and Communicable
 1. Incommunicable: Having no analogue (resemblance) in the creature
 2. Communicable: Having an analogue in the creature
- V. Conclusion
- a. Encouragements and Cautions

“Let us, I say, allow the Christian to unlock his mind and ears to all the words of God which are addressed to him, provided he do it with this moderation, viz., that whenever the Lord shuts his sacred mouth, he also desists from inquiry. The best rule of sobriety is, not only in learning to follow where-ever God leads, but also when he makes an end of teaching, to cease also from wishing to be wise.”²

Recommended Resources

- Beeke, Joel R., and Mark Jones. *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012; pp. 59-85 (a good summary of Charnock).
- Beeke, Joel R. *Reformed Systematic Theology: Revelation and God*. Vol. 1, *Reformed Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019; pp. 483-953.
- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1938; pp. 17-99 (original); pp. 3-89 (new combined Banner Edition).
- Charnock, Stephen. *Discourses Upon the Existence and Attributes of God*. New York, NY: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853.
- Pink, Arthur W. *The Attributes of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1975.

¹ Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. Richard B. Gaffin, 5 vols. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014–2016), 1:2.

² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1843), III.xxi.3.