



attributes of *God*

WEEK 5 — GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE



A. W. TOZER:

"God is infinite! That's the hardest thought I will ask you to grasp.
You cannot understand what infinite means, but don't let it bother you –
I don't understand it and I'm trying to explain it!
'Infinite' means so much that nobody can grasp it,
but reason nevertheless kneels and acknowledges that God is infinite.
We mean by infinite that God knows no limits, no bounds, and no end.
What God is, He is without boundaries.
All that God is, He is without bounds or limits."

PSALM 139 : 6 - 12

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.
⁷ Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, 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.
¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"
¹² even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

God Is Omnipresent

GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE DEFINED

In regards to space, God is unlimited. He is present everywhere.

James P. Boyce – “God is not confined to space any more than he is measured by time.... He is present everywhere. He is present at one and the same time everywhere.”

John Todd – “God is everywhere present at all times, and in all places”

John Frame – “This does not mean merely that God is omnipresent in space, but that he transcends space altogether.”

A. W. Tozer – “God is close to everywhere. He is near to everything and everyone. He is here.”

Wayne Grudem – “God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with His whole being, yet God acts differently in different places.”

It is sometimes described in terms of God's “immanence and transcendence” or His immensity.

What Does This Attribute Mean?

1. God created space. Thus, all space belongs to Him.

Genesis 1:1 --- “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

“God is a being who exists without size or dimensions in space. In fact, before God created the universe, there was no matter or material so there was no space either. Yet God still existed. Where was God? He was not in a place that we could call a ‘where,’ for there was no ‘where’ or space. But God still was!” (Wayne Grudem)

Deuteronomy 10:14 --- “Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.”

Colossians 1:17 --- “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

God is sovereign over all spatial realities.

*“The point is not that God is excluded from space, but rather that he sovereignly controls it.”
(John Frame)*

2. God in His fullness is everywhere.

Jeremiah 23:23-24 --- "Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD."

God in His totality is everywhere all the time.

"He fills it with his essence. He fills it, not as part to part, but the whole infinite deity is entirely, undividedly present, at each point of creation, in each moment of time." (James P. Boyce)

3. God cannot be contained by any space

God has no size.

1 Kings 8:27 --- "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!"

Isaiah 66:1-2 --- "Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD...."

God not only fills all of space, He transcends it all.

"God's being does not dwell in space; He swallows up space." (A. W. Tozer)



If God could be contained in one place, He would not be God.

4. Yet, God acts in different ways at different places and time.

"As to essence and knowledge, his presence is the same everywhere and always. As to his self-manifestation and the exercise of his power, his presence differs endlessly in different cases, in degree and mode. Thus God is present to the church as he is not to the world." (A. A. Hodge)

God can be present to bless

Psalm 16:11 --- "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

God can be present to judge

Micah 3:9-12 --- "Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who detest justice and make crooked all that is straight, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. Its heads give judgment for a bribe; its priests teach for a price; its prophets practice divination for money; yet they lean on the LORD and say, 'Is not the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us.' Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height."

Amos 9:1-3--- "I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and he said: 'Strike the capitals until the thresholds shake, and shatter them on the heads of all the people; and those who are left of them I will kill with the sword; not one of them shall flee away; not one of them shall escape.' If they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them; if they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down. If they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, from there I will search them out and take them; and if they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them."

5. Understanding this truth avoids the errors of deism and pantheism

BUT WAIT! If God is everywhere...

1. If God is everywhere, what is so special about heaven?

Deuteronomy 26:15 --- "Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel..."

Psalm 11:4 --- "The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man."

"He is present in heaven in the manifestation and communication of gracious love and glory." (A. A. Hodge)

2. If God is everywhere, is He in hell?

Hell is not the absence of God. Rather, the presence of God is there pouring out His wrath with no mediator available between those souls and Him.

“Thus he is present in hell in the manifestation and execution of righteous wrath.” (A. A. Hodge)

Psalm 139:7-8 --- “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!”

Job 26:6 --- “Sheol is naked before God...”

Deuteronomy 32:22 --- “For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains”

3. If God is everywhere, why does the Bible say He can be near or far?

Psalm 73:27-28 --- “For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.”

Proverbs 15:29 --- “The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.”

James 4:8 --- “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you...”

WE CANNOT ESCAPE GOD

Psalm 139:7-10 and Jeremiah 23:23-24

“God is always nearer than you may imagine Him to be. God is so near that your thoughts are not as near as God; your breath is not as near as God; your very soul is not as near to you as God is.” (A. W. Tozer)

“The doctrine of God’s omnipresence is one of the most comforting truths in all the Bible. It reminds us that we can never outrun the power and providence of our great Lord.... God is equidistance to his people wherever they are; he hears their prayers and receives their worship whether it is offered in giant cathedrals or tiny country churches, in the great urban centers of Europe and North America, in the steamy jungles near the equator, or at the frigid isolation of the North Pole. Every place is full of his glory.” (Timothy George)

“Lord, forgive me when I think that I am alone. You are always near wherever I am, but I forget that. You also care for all people and are with all your children in any place. I ignore that often also, thinking that I must be there to help others when you can manage their lives perfectly well. Forgive my arrogance.” (Rosemary Jensen)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When we pray and ask God to be with us, since God already is everywhere, for what are we really asking?
2. If God is always present with us, why does our sense of His presence fluctuate? What hinders us from realizing He always is present with us?
3. Should the fact that God is omnipresent, meaning there is nowhere we can go to escape Him, give us hope or fear?
 - a. How should the truth of God's omnipresence help us fight sin?
 - b. How should the truth of God's omnipresence help us during trials?
4. How should the truth of God's omnipresence affect how we approach our corporate worship gatherings? Do we gather expectantly knowing that God is with us? Is there anything we would do different if we thought more about the fact God is present with us?
5. Since no one place can contain God, and since God is everywhere, are there places where we should look to try and experience God more fully?

