



attributes of *God*

WEEK 7 — GOD IS OMNISCIENT (ALL KNOWING)



PSALM 139 : 1 - 6

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
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.
You ahem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

PSALM 147 : 5

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

A. W. Pink

“Each of his glorious attributes should render him honorable in our esteem.
The apprehension of his omniscience ought to bow us in adoration before him.
Yet how little do we meditate upon this Divine perfection!”

Review

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

"... Those qualities or characteristics of the divine being by virtue of which he is distinguished from all created beings and without which he would not be worthy of the worship and service of man"

(W. T. Conner)

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

1. Unity
2. Eternality
3. Spirituality
4. Omnipresence
5. Immutability

COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Attributes that God shares ("communicates") with us *in part*

Ephesians 5:1 – "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."

God Is Omniscient

TERM: Omni - Science -

DEFINED

Timothy George – "His comprehensive knowledge of all that was, is, and ever shall be"

A. W. Pink – "He knows everything: everything possible, everything actual; all events and all creatures, of the past, the present, and the future. He is perfectly acquainted with every detail in the life of every being in heaven, in earth, and in hell."

Wayne Grudem – "God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act"

God fully knows everything all of the time.

GOD HAS REVEALED THIS TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF TO US IN SCRIPTURE:

Job 37:16 - "Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge"

Psalms 147:5 - "Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure."

Proverbs 15:3 - "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good"

Matthew 6:4 - "...And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

John 21:17 - "'He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'"

Hebrews 4:13 - "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."

1 John 3:19-20 - "By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything."

Clarifications about God's Knowledge

1. God does not know in the way that we know

How do we know?

God just knows.



"There is in him nothing corresponding to observation, comparison, generalization, deduction, processes of reasoning, by which we pass from one step to another, or the contemplation or conjecture of suppositions or theories by which we account for facts.... His knowledge is his essence or nature knowing. It is not something acquired, but something belonging to that nature itself and identical with it." (James P. Boyce)

2. God's knowledge can never increase

Remember, God is eternal. He sees all time equally vividly.

"God, in one effortless act, knows instantly (not a little at a time, but instantly and perfectly) all things that can be known. That's why I say that God cannot learn." (A. W. Tozer)

What Does God Know?

1. God Fully Knows Himself

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 – “These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 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.”

2. God Fully Knows Every Aspect of His Creation

2 Chronicles 16:9 - “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth...”

Job 28:24 – “For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.”

Matthew 10:29-30 – “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.”

Hebrews 4:13 – “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.”

3. God Fully Knows Us (and all other people as well!)

1 Chronicles 28:9 – “And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought.”

Psalms 139:2-4 – “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.”

Ezekiel 11:5 – “And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and he said to me, “Say, Thus says the LORD: So you think, O house of Israel. For I know the things that come into your mind.”

John 21:17 – “Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you...”

4. God Fully Knows the Future

“God’s knowledge of the future is as complete as is his knowledge of the past and the present, and that, because the future depends entirely upon himself. Were it in anywise possible for something to occur apart from either the direct agency or permission of God, then that something would be independent of him, and he would at once cease to be Supreme.” (A. W. Pink)

Psalm 139:4 – “Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.”

Isaiah 42:9 – “Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

Matthew 6:7-8 – “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

5. God Fully Knows Every Possibility

This type of knowledge is described by theologian and philosophers as “middle knowledge.”

“He knows all events that could possibly come to pass. This is based upon his infinite knowledge of himself and of all his creatures.” (James P. Boyce)

“God’s knowledge of what every possible free creature would do under any possible set of circumstances and, hence, knowledge of those possible worlds which God can make actual.” (William Lane Craig)

1 Samuel 23:12-13 – “Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will surrender you.” Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition.”

2 Kings 13:19 – “Then the man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck down Syria until you had made an end of it, but now you will strike down Syria only three times.”

Matthew 11:21-24 - “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

BUT WAIT! Does God Remember our Sins?

Isaiah 43:25 – “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”

God “not remembering” sins does not mean that God does not know of our sins.

God knows every sinful thought, feeling, word, and action of ours and always will.

Rather, it is an image to show that He forgives us of our sins. Hence, there is no longer a separation.

This is a “communicable” attribute

God has made us rational creatures who can “know.”

Remember, He shares this attribute with us *IN PART*. Our knowledge is limited:

1. Our knowledge is dependent upon God.
2. Our knowledge does not include the future.
3. We can’t know other’s thoughts, motivations, or intentions.
4. Our knowledge is very, very limited in scope

“I remind myself of a little boy walking along the seashore picking up shells. The boy has a handful of shells in his little hand, but all around him is the vast seashore stretching all directions as far as the eye can see. All that I know is simply a handful of seashells, but the vast universe of God is filled with knowledge that I do not possess.” (Sir Issac Newton)



This attribute should lead us to pursue holiness and worship

“Yet how little do we meditate upon this Divine perfection! Is it because the very thought of it fills us with uneasiness? How solemn is this fact: nothing can be concealed from God.... Though he be invisible to us, we are not so to him. Neither the darkness of night, the closest curtains, nor the deepest dungeon can hide any sinner from the eyes of Omniscience.” (A. W. Pink)

“The apprehension of God’s infinite knowledge should fill the Christian with adoration. The whole of my life stood open to his view from the beginning. He foresaw my every fall, my every sin, my every backsliding; yet, nevertheless, fixed his heart upon me. Oh, how the realization of this should bow me in wonder and worship before him!” (A. W. Pink)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. “When did God learn that you would be at the location you are now in, reading this sentence, at this time on this day? How is the realization of your answer to this question a blessing to your life?” *(From Wayne Grudem)*
2. How should God’s omniscience give us comfort and hope?
3. How should God’s omniscience encourage us to pray?
4. Review the Scriptures at the bottom of page 4 (under “God Fully Knows Us”).
Can we hide any thought or feeling from God?
How should that truth help us strive for holiness in our lives?
5. God’s omniscience is a communicable attribute.
 - a. How should it shape our attitude about learning in general?
 - b. How should it shape our attitude toward the Word of God and Bible study?
6. How should God’s omniscience, and our lack of it, impact how we relate to one another in community, especially if we are having a disagreement?
7. What songs do you know that include God’s omniscience?

