

God is Independent

The God who is Eternally Self-Existing and Self-Sufficient

I. Our Great Problem: “Your thoughts of God are too human.”¹

A. Why Study the Attributes of God? (review)

1. We can't know the infinite God fully, but we can know him truly (accurately and personally).
2. The transcendence and immanence of God.

B. Today, we will see that God is *independent*.

II. Defining God's Independence

A. Illustration – Contrasting the way a farmer provides with how God provides.

B. Explanation

1. *Self-existing* – his nature is to exist.
 - (i) He does not derive life from some other source.
 - (ii) He has no beginning and will have no end.
2. *Self-sufficient* – he is not dependent on anyone or anything
 - (i) He has no needs or wants, but is fully satisfied in himself
 - (ii) In his own person, he has all joy, satisfaction, life, love, etc.

C. Definition

“He is perfectly self-sufficient, not depending on anything outside himself for anything, and is therefore the eternal, foundational being, the source of life and sustenance for all other beings.”²

D. Key Verse – Acts 17:24-25

III. Biblical Evidence of God's Independence

A. God is perfectly self-sufficient

1. Aseity - “God derives his existence entirely from himself.”³
2. The God who is (Ex. 3:13-15)
 - a. God is calling Moses (from a burning bush) to go to the Israelites in Egypt, and Moses asks about God's name.
 - b. God doesn't initially give a name; he gives a verb “I am”
 - (i) He exists; it is his essence to exist.
 - (ii) He does not gain existence from any source.
 - (iii) He is transcendent.
 - c. But he is immanent,
 - (i) Having created all and made a covenant with Israel, he is LORD (Yahweh)
 - (ii) LORD is his covenant name.
3. His self-sufficient existence is eternal (Ps. 90:2)

¹ Martin Luther to Erasmus, quoted in J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 88.

² John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 168.

³ Mark Jones, *God Is: A Devotional Guide to the Attributes of God*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 65.

- B. God depends on nothing and no one else
 1. God is not dependent on the *service* of others (Acts 17:24-28)
 2. God is not *indebted* to anyone (Rom. 11:34-36)
 3. Creation *adds nothing* to him (Is. 40:15-17, cf. idols in Is. 40:18-20)

- C. God is the source of everything that exists (Gen. 1:1, 1 Cor. 8:6)

“The difference between God’s being and ours is more than the difference between the sun and a candle, more than the difference between the ocean and a raindrop, more than the difference between the arctic ice cap and a snowflake, more than the difference between the universe and the room we are sitting in: God’s being is *qualitatively different*. . . . He is the Creator; all else is creaturely. All else can pass away in an instant; he *necessarily exists* forever.”⁴

IV. Questions (Avoiding Misunderstandings).

- A. Did God make us because he needed us?
 1. He didn’t make us because he needs us for his glory or to experience love (Jn. 17:5, 24).
 2. He made us to give to us, not to get something he lacked.

- B. Does this mean he is stoic or does not delight in us?
 1. No. He rejoices in his people. (see Zeph. 3:17).
 2. We do not *add* to his delight, but he is truly delighted in us.

- C. Does this mean we can’t glorify or honor God?
 1. No. He made us to be able to glorify him, and he commands us to do that (1 Cor. 10:31)
 2. We do not *add* glory to him, but we do glorify him (showing his value in our worship).

- D. Can we serve God?
 1. Yes, but not “as though he needed anything” (Acts 17:25).
 2. He has given us gifts which we then have the joy of using to accomplish his works.

- E. Grudem summarizes: “*God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify him and bring him joy*”⁵

V. How does this help you sleep? (application)

- A. Serve the Lord with gladness and thanksgiving (not weariness and pity for him)
 1. How many Christians think of serving God as a burden because they feel sorry for him. So they are always fretful and weary. Or they give up since they can’t do all God’s work.
 2. God’s independence means that in creating us, he gives us the joy of serving him in the strength he supplies.
 3. We receive His Spirit, his power, his gifts, and employ them in his work.
 4. It’s not something we have the pressure of doing in order to add to God, but something we get to do in dependence on God.

- B. Live in confident dependence on God’s strength at work in you (Is. 40:28-31).

⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 162.

⁵ Ibid, 160.