

THEOLOGY MATTERS

SESSION 5

KNOWING GOD'S TRUTH -PART 2



“Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life’s problems fall into place of their own accord.”

-J.I. Packer, Knowing God

Big idea: God has made Himself known to us through His Word and we are made in His image to become like Him in some ways.

Aim: Look at God's communicable attributes and evaluate their presence in our lives.

Discussion: If you had to describe God to a friend who did not know Him, how would you describe God's character? Not what He does... but who He is.

Content:

How is God's image made in us?

What can (communicable) we know/share about God's likeness?



Last Week: Incommunicable attributes of God - i.e. how is God different than us?

The “omni’s”

1. Omniscient - God is all knowing
2. Omnipresent - God is always everywhere
3. Omnipotent - God is all powerful

Other Incommunicable Attributes:

1. God is **independent**. – ***Acts 17:24-25***
2. God is **immutable**. – ***Ps 102:25-27***
3. God is **eternal**. – ***Ps. 90:8***



This Week: Communicable attributes of God - i.e.
How is God like us? How are we made in his
image?

Genesis 1:26-27 *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*



Humanity, as part of God's creation, is like our Creator in a *different* way than any other part of creation (pets, plants. etc.)



The apostle Paul applies this teaching to our moral lives in **Ephesians 5:1**, “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children.”

When we speak of God's communicable attributes, we are referring primarily to His moral attributes such as:

- Love
- Goodness
- Kindness
- Holiness
- Justice
- Mercy
- Patience
- Faithfulness
- Wisdom

In one sense, we must not forget that there is a basic incommunicability of even these attributes, in that as much as the love and goodness of God are infinite, we cannot imitate them. Nevertheless, because we bear God's image, there is a manner in which we exhibit these attributes by way of analogy.

For example, the kind of love we have as creatures is not identical to the kind of love our Creator possesses. However, at the same time, our love is not entirely dissimilar, so that there is no point of contact whatsoever with the love of God. Our Creator truly loves that which is lovely. As saved people, we possess the capacity to do the same.



Wisdom: Our Creator is the “*only wise God*” (Romans 16:27) and yet we are invited to ask Him for the wisdom we need for our daily lives (James 1:5).



Proverbs 1:7, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

In other words, the Bible does not primarily talk about wisdom as a decision-making aid, but a key to right relationship with and worship of God.

Holiness:

One of the great ironies in Scripture is that holiness points at the essential moral distance between God and fallen humanity in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament, God the Spirit, who bridges this moral chasm and sets up residence in the human heart is known as the Holy Spirit. God's holiness both separates but also bridges this enormous moral gulf between the Creator and the creature.



Isaiah 6:1-5 (ESV), *1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 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!”*

Revelation 4:6-11

1 Peter 1:16, “Be holy as I am holy.”

When God calls us to be holy, He's not just calling us to be good, moral people. He is calling us into a set apart life that mirrors his own nature to a fallen world. And the incredible news of the Gospel is that it's even possible for us to be holy as God is holy. HIS holiness is both the end of our lives and the means by which we're able to arrive safely on heaven's shores one day.





Goodness:

Psalm 119:68, “*You are good and do good. Teach me your statutes (ways).*”

God is good and he gives good to others. In the context of *Psalm 119*, we see that God's Word is what He gives as an expression of His goodness to others. His Law, the Law of the LORD is good.

“God’s goodness can be understood as the intrinsic disposition of God by which he seeks to show kindness and want the well-being of others.” - Dr. Bruce Ware

God’s goodness is an intrinsic disposition - in other words, nobody has to tell God in heaven to sit over there and “Be good” like we do with kids or one another.

Whatever else we might find in the world that is good, it's only a derivative goodness, meaning it is a shadow of God's own goodness. If we share it with others, it's only because God has first shared it with us.

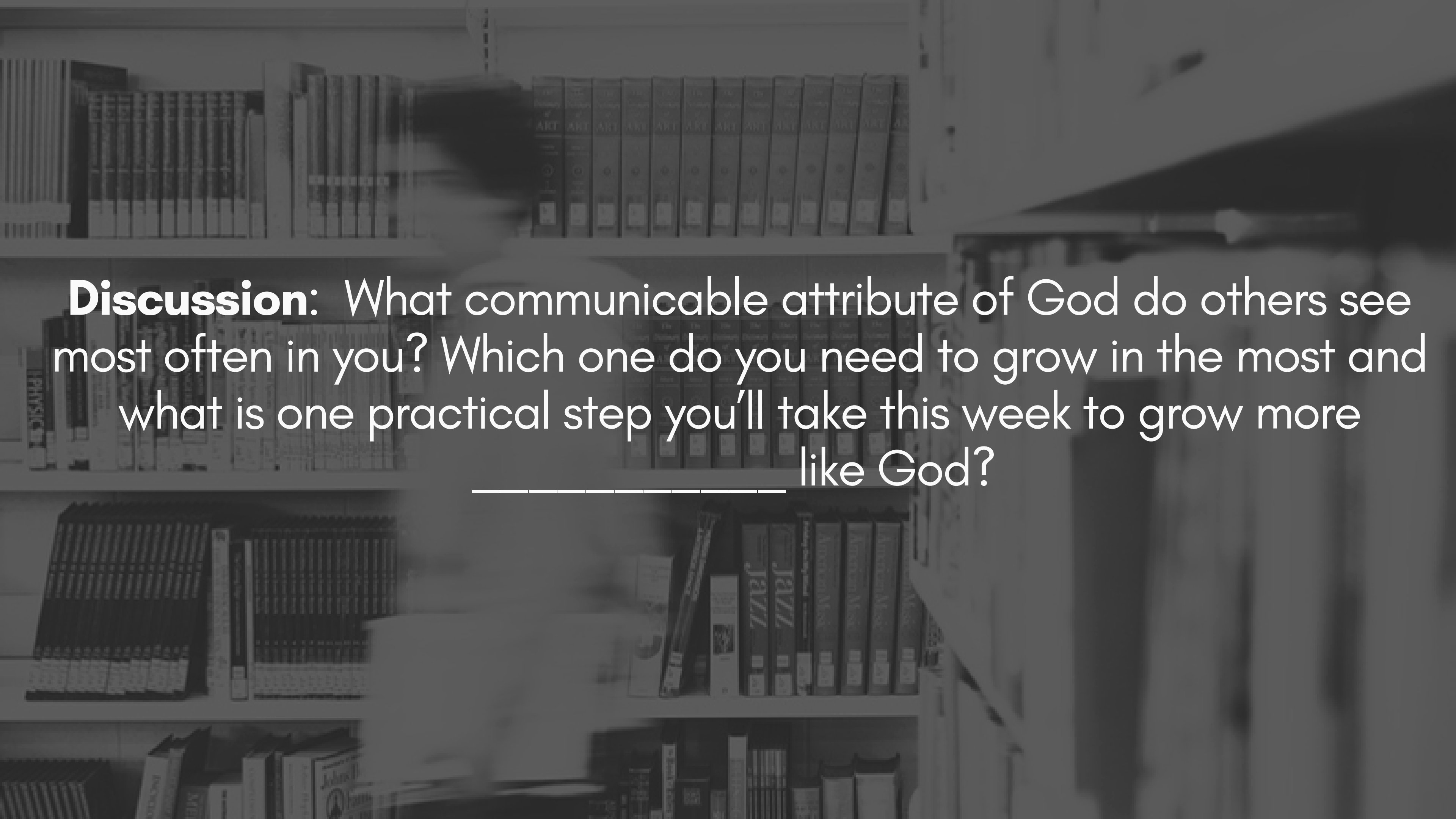
God's goodness is for our good: **Deuteronomy 10:12-13**, "*Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways and love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments and his statutes which I am commanding you today* **for your good?**

Implication: If God is intrinsically good, and His Word is good, and what it commands is for our good, obeying isn't just about behavior modification but about living the GOOD life as God designed.

Love: 1 John 4:8, “*God is love.*”

God’s love is inseparable from these other attributes. It is not the case that sometimes God is holy and at other times God is love. It is not true that sometimes God is just but at other times God is merciful. God’s love runs through all that God is and does. His love is not merely an emotion.

“The love of God is the enduring commitment of God to his unholy people manifest most clearly in the offering his Son as a sacrificial substitute who died on their behalf in order that they might be declared innocent and gain adoption as children of God.” - Dr. Richard Lints



Discussion: What communicable attribute of God do others see most often in you? Which one do you need to grow in the most and what is one practical step you'll take this week to grow more like God?
