

the attributes of god aw tozer

the attributes of god aw tozer laid the groundwork for a profound understanding of the Divine, a subject he explored with unparalleled depth and clarity. This article delves into the core tenets of his teachings, examining the essential characteristics that define God's being and His relationship with humanity. We will explore Tozer's insights into God's sovereignty, His omnipresence, His immutability, and the profound implications of these attributes for Christian faith and practice. Understanding these divine perfections, as Tozer presented them, is crucial for fostering a reverent awe and a more intimate knowledge of the Creator.

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The Incomprehensible Nature of God's Attributes

A.W. Tozer, a spiritual giant of the 20th century, consistently emphasized the radical incomprehensibility of God. While the Bible reveals much about the Divine nature, Tozer argued that our finite minds can only grasp fragments of God's infinite being. The attributes of God, though presented in Scripture, transcend human capacity for complete understanding. To attempt to fully define God is to diminish Him, reducing the Infinite to the finite. Tozer's approach was not to demystify God but to cultivate a healthy, reverent awe in the face of His majesty. He warned against a casual or superficial understanding of God, urging believers to approach divine truths with humility and wonder. The attributes are not mere theological points but gateways to a deeper relationship with the Creator.

God's Absolute Sovereignty: The Ultimate Authority

One of the most central themes in A.W. Tozer's theological landscape is the absolute sovereignty of God. Tozer asserted that God's sovereignty is not a limited dominion but a total and unchallengeable authority over all of creation and every event within it. This means that God is not merely a spectator but the active and purposeful ruler of the universe. Every breath taken, every decision made, every rise and fall of nations ultimately operates within the scope of God's divine plan and permissive will. This doctrine, often challenging for human intellects, underscores God's ultimate control and His unfettered ability to accomplish His purposes. Tozer stressed that true faith arises from accepting this truth, even when it seems contrary to human reason or experience. God's sovereign will is the bedrock upon which all reality is established.

The Implications of Divine Sovereignty

The implications of God's absolute sovereignty are far-reaching for the believer's life. It fosters a profound sense of trust and reliance, assuring believers that their lives are not subject to random chance but are held secure in the hands of a loving and all-powerful God.

This understanding liberates individuals from the anxieties of an unpredictable world, allowing them to surrender their wills with greater confidence. For Tozer, accepting God's sovereignty meant embracing a life of radical obedience, recognizing that every aspect of existence is subject to His decree. It also cultivates humility, reminding humanity of its creaturely status before the Almighty. The weight of God's ultimate authority inspires a deeper reverence and a more determined pursuit of His will.

God's Omnipresence: Everywhere at Once

A.W. Tozer vividly described God's omnipresence as His boundless presence, existing in every place simultaneously. This is not to say that God is merely diffused throughout the universe, but rather that His being is fully present everywhere. Whether in the grandest galaxies or the smallest atom, in the most populated city or the most desolate wilderness, God is wholly and completely there. This attribute has profound implications for prayer and personal devotion, meaning that no one is ever beyond God's awareness or reach. The omnipresent God sees all, hears all, and is intimately acquainted with every aspect of His creation and His people. This truth offers both comfort and a sobering reminder of accountability.

Dispelling Misconceptions of Omnipresence

Tozer often sought to correct common misconceptions about divine attributes. Regarding omnipresence, he cautioned against viewing it as a pantheistic notion where God is indistinguishable from His creation. Instead, God's presence is distinct from, yet encompassing of, all that He has made. It is the presence of an infinite, personal God who transcends the physical universe while simultaneously pervading it. Another misconception is the idea that God is only present where He is actively working or where worship is occurring. Tozer maintained that God's presence is intrinsic to His being, always and everywhere, irrespective of human acknowledgment or circumstances. Understanding this correct view of omnipresence deepens our appreciation for God's constant engagement with us.

God's Immutability: Unchanging in His Being

The immutability of God, as articulated by A.W. Tozer, is the doctrine that God is unchanging in His essential nature, His character, His purposes, and His promises. This attribute is a cornerstone of theological stability, providing a solid foundation for faith in a constantly shifting world. God does not evolve, grow, or diminish. His love, justice, and holiness are eternally the same. This unchangeableness means that God's character is reliable and predictable in the most positive sense. We can know Him today as He was yesterday and as He will be tomorrow. This steadfastness offers immense comfort and security to believers, assuring them that God's commitments are eternal and will never falter.

The Steadfastness of God's Promises

The immutability of God directly underpins the trustworthiness of His promises. Because God Himself does not change, His word and the covenants He has made with humanity are absolutely dependable. Tozer emphasized that the promises found in Scripture are not subject to God's whims or changing moods. They are expressions of His eternal nature and purposes. This allows believers to anchor their hope in God's faithfulness, knowing that whatever trials or circumstances they may face, God's promises remain a sure and steadfast refuge. The unchanging nature of God is the very reason why His people can have unwavering confidence in His redemptive plan and His eternal care.

The Awe-Inspiring Nature of God's Holiness

A.W. Tozer considered God's holiness to be perhaps His most awe-inspiring attribute, the very essence of His perfect separateness from all that is sinful and imperfect. This attribute speaks of God's absolute purity, His moral perfection, and His utter abhorrence of sin. Tozer argued that a true apprehension of God's holiness often leads to a deep sense of human sinfulness and a profound longing for redemption. God's holiness is not merely a moral attribute but a fundamental aspect of His being, radiating throughout His creation and His law. It is a holy fire that consumes all impurity and demands perfection.

Holiness as Separation and Purity

Tozer explained God's holiness as a dual concept: separation and purity. God is separate from sin, distinct from all unholiness, and stands in stark contrast to the fallenness of the world. Simultaneously, God is perfectly pure, possessing an intrinsic moral perfection that allows no blemish or corruption. This perfect purity means God can neither tolerate nor participate in sin. For believers, understanding God's holiness is a call to pursue holiness themselves, reflecting the character of their Creator. It underscores the need for the atoning work of Christ, as only through His sacrifice can sinful humanity be brought into the presence of a holy God.

God's Infinite Love and Mercy

While emphasizing God's majesty and holiness, A.W. Tozer also powerfully articulated the boundless depth of God's love and mercy. These attributes are not in contradiction to His justice and holiness but are inextricably linked. God's love, as Tozer presented it, is an active, volitional force that drove His redemptive plan for humanity. It is a sacrificial love, willing to pay the ultimate price for the salvation of sinners. Likewise, God's mercy is His compassion and kindness toward the undeserving, a willingness to forgive and offer grace where justice would demand condemnation. These divine perfections reveal God as not only powerful and perfect but also intimately concerned with the well-being of His creation.

Love as the Driving Force of Redemption

Tozer saw God's infinite love as the primary impetus behind His redemptive actions. It was His love that moved Him to create, His love that sustained His covenant with Israel, and ultimately, His love that compelled Him to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the world. This divine love is not passive emotion but an active, self-giving act of will. The mercy that flows from this love is the means by which fallen humanity can be reconciled to God. Tozer's writings consistently highlight that the cross is the ultimate demonstration of God's love and mercy, a profound expression of His desire to restore relationship with His people, despite their sinfulness.

The Power of God's Omniscience

A.W. Tozer frequently spoke of God's omniscience, His all-knowing nature. This attribute signifies that God possesses complete and perfect knowledge of all things, past, present, and future. There are no hidden depths to God's understanding; He comprehends every thought, every action, and every potentiality. This perfect knowledge is not acquired through experience as human knowledge is; rather, it is inherent to His being. Tozer highlighted that God's omniscience provides assurance of His perfect wisdom in governing the universe and His perfect understanding of our individual needs and struggles. It also means that God is intimately aware of our inner lives, our desires, and our shortcomings.

Knowing God Through His Word

While God's omniscience is beyond full human comprehension, Tozer encouraged believers to seek to know God more deeply through His revealed Word. Scripture, in Tozer's view, is the primary means by which God has chosen to make Himself known to humanity. By studying the Bible, believers can gain insights into God's character, His will, and His actions. The stories, commands, and promises within its pages offer glimpses into the Divine mind and heart. Through diligent study and prayerful contemplation of the Scriptures, individuals can grow in their understanding of God's attributes, fostering a more intimate and obedient relationship with Him. This engagement with the Word is essential for developing a God-centered perspective.

The Essence of God's Simplicity

A significant aspect of A.W. Tozer's theology is the doctrine of God's simplicity. This does not mean that God is simplistic or unintelligent, but rather that He is not composed of parts. Unlike created beings, who are made up of various components (body, soul, spirit; essence, accidents), God is a simple, undivided, and indivisible being. All of His attributes—His power, love, justice, knowledge—are not separate qualities that He possesses, but are identical with His very being. Tozer emphasized that this simplicity means God is wholly Himself in every aspect of His being. There is no internal division or potential for conflict

within God. He is perfectly unified and complete in Himself, existing as pure, unadulterated being.

Understanding God as Undivided

Understanding God's simplicity is crucial for grasping the unity of His nature. Because God is not made of parts, His attributes cannot be compartmentalized or pitted against each other. His love is perfectly just, and His justice is perfectly loving. His power is exercised in perfect accordance with His will, and His will is perfectly good. This undivided nature of God means that His essence is wholly present in each of His attributes. Tozer believed that this concept, though difficult to grasp fully, leads to a more profound appreciation of God's self-sufficiency and His complete perfection. It underscores that God is not a collection of qualities but a singular, unified, and infinite reality.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is A.W. Tozer's most prominent attribute of God that he emphasized?

A.W. Tozer most prominently emphasized God's absolute sovereignty and holiness. He believed these attributes were foundational to a correct understanding of God and were often neglected in modern Christianity.

How did Tozer view God's omnipresence?

Tozer viewed God's omnipresence not just as being everywhere, but as God being fully present everywhere simultaneously. This meant God's presence was not diluted, but complete in every atom and every soul.

What was Tozer's understanding of God's omniscience?

Tozer understood God's omniscience as God knowing all things, past, present, and future, with perfect clarity and completeness. This included not only facts but also thoughts and intentions, without any shadow of ignorance.

How did Tozer describe God's immutability?

Tozer believed God's immutability meant God is unchanging in His essence, character, and purposes. He is not subject to mood swings or alterations in His divine nature, providing a stable foundation for faith.

What did Tozer mean by God's transcendence?

Tozer described God's transcendence as God's absolute 'otherness' and loftiness above creation. He is radically different from humankind and all earthly things, existing in a realm

beyond our full comprehension.

How did Tozer reconcile God's omniscience with human free will?

While a complex theological issue, Tozer, like many theologians, generally upheld both. He stressed God's foreknowledge doesn't negate human responsibility, suggesting God's knowledge of future choices doesn't force those choices. However, he often leaned into the mystery of this.

What attribute of God did Tozer argue was crucial for spiritual revival?

Tozer believed that a deep and reverent understanding of God's holiness was the most critical attribute for genuine spiritual revival. He argued that a dulled sense of God's holiness led to a casual and ineffective approach to faith.

How did Tozer's emphasis on God's self-sufficiency influence his theology?

Tozer's emphasis on God's self-sufficiency (aseity) meant that God has no needs and relies on nothing outside Himself for His existence or happiness. This underlines God's perfect completeness and independence, making Him the ultimate object of worship.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to the attributes of God, inspired by A.W. Tozer, with short descriptions:

1. The Unapproachable Majesty: Understanding God's Supreme Sovereignty

This book delves into the concept of God's absolute control and ultimate authority over all creation. It explores how His sovereignty is not a tyrannical force but a benevolent foundation for order and purpose in the universe. Readers will discover the comfort and awe found in acknowledging God as the ultimate ruler of all things, both seen and unseen.

2. The Unchanging Heart: The Steadfast Love of the Eternal God

Focusing on God's immutability, this title explores the unchanging nature of His love, promises, and character. It examines how this constancy provides a secure anchor in a world of flux and uncertainty. The book aims to instill confidence and peace by revealing the dependable and unwavering affection of the Divine.

3. The Unsearchable Wisdom: God's Profound and Mysterious Counsel

This work investigates the infinite wisdom of God, acknowledging its depth and complexity beyond human comprehension. It highlights how God's plans and purposes, though often mysterious, are always perfect and ultimately for the good of His people. The book encourages a posture of trust and humility in the face of divine wisdom.

4. The Unveiled Glory: Experiencing the Presence of the Holy God

This exploration centers on the holiness of God, emphasizing its radiant purity and separateness. It calls readers to a deeper reverence and a more authentic pursuit of righteousness in their own lives. The book aims to awaken a spiritual hunger for God's presence, characterized by His awe-inspiring holiness.

5. The Boundless Mercy: The Abundant and Unearned Grace of God

This title focuses on the inexhaustible mercy and overflowing grace that God extends to humanity. It unpacks the radical nature of His forgiveness and His willingness to rescue and restore even the most undeserving. The book seeks to cultivate a profound sense of gratitude and wonder at God's unmerited favor.

6. The All-Consuming Fire: The Passionate Love of the Living God

This book examines the intense and fervent love that God possesses for His creation, particularly for humanity. It presents God's love not as a passive emotion but as a powerful, active force that seeks and redeems. Readers will be challenged to respond to this passionate love with a corresponding devotion.

7. The Omniscient Gaze: God's Perfect Knowledge and Understanding

This work delves into the attribute of God's omniscience, His perfect and complete knowledge of all things past, present, and future. It explores the implications of this knowledge for human accountability and the comfort it provides in knowing God understands our every situation. The book encourages a life lived with intentionality, knowing one is perpetually seen and understood.

8. The Unyielding Power: The Almighty Force of the Creator God

This title focuses on the omnipotence of God, His infinite and limitless ability to do all things according to His will. It illustrates how His power is both the source of creation and the sustainer of the universe. The book aims to inspire faith and courage by reminding believers of the vast, unchallengeable strength at their disposal through God.

9. The Ever-Present Companion: The Indwelling Presence of God

This book explores the immanence of God, His constant presence and active involvement in the lives of believers. It goes beyond simply acknowledging God's existence to experiencing His intimate fellowship and guiding influence. The work encourages a deeper walk of faith, recognizing that God is not distant but intimately near.

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