

# UNIT 1: The Attributes of God

## Section 6: God's Independence

*Assigned Reading:*  
*A. W. Pink – The Attributes of God*  
*The Solitariness of God*

### Introduction:

**Q1:** Does God need anything?

**Q2:** Why did God create?

**In Exodus 15:11** Moses and the sons of Israel sang a song unto the Lord which exclaimed, “Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?” There is none like the Lord! He alone reigns supreme! He alone is infinite in perfections!

Even God's existence is utterly unlike the existence of all other things! His existence is in no way dependent upon anything else. His existence alone is “necessary” while all other things exist utterly dependent upon God. All of creation is contingent, while from all eternity God has always been. The Bible begins, Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God...” God existed before time began... Pink, “There was nothing, no one, but God; and that, not for a day, a year, or an age, but ‘from everlasting.’ During a past eternity, God was alone: self-contained, self-sufficient, self-satisfied; in need of nothing.”

God was under no obligation to create. He did not bring things into existence to fill some need in Himself. Today, there are many today who teach that the creation of man in particular was accomplished because God was “in need” of fellowship or of our praise. God is not lonely or suffering from lack of “self-esteem.” God's work of creation and redemption was done “after the counsel of His will, according to the good pleasure of His will” as Ephesians 1 so clearly states. Even our “greatest obedience” in no way “profits God” – Luke 17:10 explains “when you will have done all those things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants...’”

As a result we are right to understand that God is in no way obligated to us, His creatures. Rom 11:34 - 35 explains “Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, that it might be paid back to him again?” In other words, God never has and never will be indebted to His creation. God is utterly free of any need outside of Himself!

Pink also explains, “It is perfectly true that God is both honored and dishonored by men; not in His essential being, but in His official character. It is equally true that God has been “glorified” by creation, by providence, and by redemption... But all of this has to do with His manifestative glory and the recognition of it by us. Yet had God so pleased He might have continued alone for all eternity, without making known His glory unto creatures. Whether He should do so or not was determined solely by His own will. He was perfectly blessed in Himself before the first creature was called into being ... He sustains all, but is Himself independent of all. He gives to all, but is enriched by none.”

Pink, “How vastly different is the God of Scripture from the “god” of the average pulpit!”

### Outline:

# I. Self-Existence: Aseity

## A. Definition

1. "God depends *a se*" – on Himself... Denotes "self-existence"
2. God has NO ORIGIN – distinguishing factor between God and everything else!
3. Nothing is self-caused besides God Himself!
4. **Reminder of Cosmological Argument...**
  - a. *Everything we observe is caused by something else...*
  - b. *This sequence of cause-effect cannot be infinite in regression...*
  - c. *Therefore, there is an uncaused Cause, an unmoved Mover, and uncreated Creator, an independent existence*
  - d. **Culver**, "God is the ground of His own existence! His only necessity is the necessity of His own being. It is God's nature to be."
  - e. **Augustine**, "God alone is the one of whom it can be unequivocally and unconditionally said, 'He is'."
5. This is difficult for the human mind (being created) to understand...
6. But simply put, God's existence is the basis of all other existence!
7. **Tozer**, "Man is a created being, a derived and contingent self, who of himself possesses nothing but is dependent each moment for his existence upon the One who created him after His own likeness. The fact of God is necessary to the fact of man. Think God away and man has no ground of existence."
8. **Erickson**, "God is characterized by life... Thus, existence is considered a most basic aspect of his nature."
9. Also, **Grudem** rightly notes, "God's being is also something totally unique. It is not just that God does not need the creation for anything; God could not need the creation for anything... God's being is qualitatively different than ours. He is the Creator, all else is creaturely. All else can pass away in an instant; he necessarily exists forever."

## B. Scriptures

1. **Gen 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2. **John 1:1-3** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.
3. **1 Cor 8:6** yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.
4. **John 5:26** "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;
5. **Jeremiah 10:10-15** But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation. <sup>11</sup> Thus you shall say to them, "The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens." <sup>12</sup> *It is* He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens. <sup>13</sup> When He utters His voice, *there is* a tumult of waters in the heavens, And He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain, And brings out the wind from His storehouses. <sup>14</sup> Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge; Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols;

- For his molten images are deceitful, And there is no breath in them. <sup>15</sup> They are worthless, a work of mockery; In the time of their punishment they will perish.
6. **Exodus 3:13** Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"
  7. **1 Timothy 6:13-16** I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, <sup>14</sup> that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> which He will bring about at the proper time-- He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup> who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.
  8. **Revelation 4:11** "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."
  9. **Psalms 90:2** Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

## II. Self-Sufficiency: Independence

### A. Definition

1. God is utterly independent, wholly self-sufficient
2. **Tozer**, "An elementary but correct way to think of God is as the One who contains all, who gives all that is given, but who Himself can receive nothing that He has not first given. To admit the existence of a need in God is to admit incompleteness in the divine Being. Need is a creature-word and cannot be spoken of the Creator.
3. In John 17 we get a glimpse into Jesus' prayer to the Father... He speaks of the glory He had with the Father since before the world was made, and the Father's love for Him before the foundation of the world. – there is no "lack of fellowship" in God!
4. **Grudem**, "Among the persons of the Trinity there has been perfect love and fellowship and communication for all eternity. In fact, the love and interpersonal fellowship, and the sharing of glory, have always been and will always be far more perfect than any communion we as finite human beings will ever have with God."

### B. Scriptures

1. **Isaiah 40:15-23** Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. <sup>16</sup> Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. <sup>17</sup> All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless. <sup>18</sup> To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? <sup>19</sup> *As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold, And a silversmith fashions chains of silver.* <sup>20</sup> He who is too impoverished for *such* an offering Selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman To prepare an idol that will not totter. <sup>21</sup> Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? <sup>22</sup> It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who

- stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. <sup>23</sup> He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.
2. **Job 41:11** "Who has given to Me that I should repay *him*? *Whatever* is under the whole heaven is Mine.
  3. **Psalm 50:6-12** And the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is judge. Selah. <sup>7</sup> "Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you; I am God, your God. <sup>8</sup> "I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, And your burnt offerings are continually before Me. <sup>9</sup> "I shall take no young bull out of your house Nor male goats out of your folds. <sup>10</sup> "For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. <sup>11</sup> "I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. <sup>12</sup> "If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains.
  4. **Acts 17:25** nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things;
  5. **Matt 6:25-33** God is source of all of creation's provision.

### III. Application

#### A. *Eliminating the "poor God" syndrome...*

1. Many in our day have proposed that God acts out of need, as if he was needy...
2. Many present God as if He were "fortunate" to have us...
3. **Tozer**, "So lofty is our opinion of ourselves that we find it quite easy, not to say enjoyable, to believe that we are necessary to God. But the truth is that God is not greater for our being, nor would He be less if we did not exist."
  - We see the impact of this perspective on lyrics in "worship songs"
  - We see the impact of this perspective on our "approach in evangelism"

#### B. *Providing the proper view of God's actions...*

1. God acts not out of need, but out of want – He loves... **Rom 5:8**
2. **Tozer**, "God has a voluntary relation to everything He has made, but He has no necessary relation to anything outside of Himself. His interest in His creatures arises from His sovereign good pleasure, not from any need those creatures can supply nor from completeness they can bring to Him who is complete in Himself."
3. God has chosen to use us to accomplish His purposes, and in that sense "needs" us, but He could have chosen to do things differently, and He surely can use someone else...
4. God is not "fortunate" to have us, we are "blessed" to have Him!
5. God exists by and for Himself, and man exists by and for God!

#### C. *Hope and Security*

1. In a world full of contingencies, we are well acquainted with "ifs"
2. All of our circumstances and very lives are continually liable to change...
3. What a joy to know there are things we can be sure of... God exists, period! God has been, is, and always will be! To "believe God exists" adds nothing to Him, and to "deny His existence" does not detract from Him!
4. Those who live as though God does not exist fail to give thanks to the God who sustains their existence... **Rom 1**
5. One who does live for the Lord does so knowing the Lord does not need them, but graciously works through them, bringing glory to Himself!