

Attributes of God – God is Omniscient

I. Intro – Wilkin’s story about little miss know-it-all

Just as children can seek to be godlike in their little-miss/mister-know-it-all-ness, we adults can do the same...

Yet God is the only one who is and can be truly all knowing. Incommunicable Att.

II. So what is that? What does it mean that God is omniscient or all knowing?

- a. Jones quotes Bavinck – “[God] knows all things in and of and by himself. For that reason his knowledge is undivided, simple, unchangeable, eternal. He knows all things instantaneously, simultaneously, from eternity; all things are eternally present to his mind’s eye.” (p. 79)
- b. Wilkin – “God is not merely knowledgeable; he is omniscient—limitless in his knowing. He knows all things, not because he has learned them, but because he is their origin. God does not learn...He has not learned one new thing ever. Unbound by time, God knows all things past, present, and future, as well as all things existing outside of time.” (p. 109)
- c. How do we understand that? God sees all things at once – like an author or movie director, or like having already read/watched before someone else.

III. Scripture:

- a. Psalm 145:5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power;
his understanding has no limit.
- b. Job 37:16 Do you know how the clouds hang poised,
those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge?
- c. Isa. 41:22 – God speaking of other gods:
“Tell us, you idols,
what is going to happen.
Tell us what the former things were,
so that we may consider them
and know their final outcome.

Or declare to us the things to come,

IV. God’s omniscience in the person of Jesus Christ

- a. God reveals knowledge of himself to us through Jesus
Luke 10:21-22

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

- b. We see God’s knowledge of us through Jesus – The comfort of Christ

- i. Inner workings of people hearts: The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. (John 21:17)
 - ii. Hidden facts of people’s lives: “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” (John 4:17-18)
 - iii. Future Events: “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” (Matt. 26:34)
 - iv. Jesus knows all our weaknesses and knows the reality of the cross – and yet goes there out of love for us.
- V. What God’s omniscience means for us - Incommunicable Att.
 - a. Careful your pursuit of knowledge
 - i. Realities of the information age – “Every minute, email users send 204 million messages, Pinterest users pin 3,472 images, Google receives over 4 million search queries, and Facebook users share 2.5 million pieces of content.” (p. 111)
 - ii. Are we pursuing healthy learning or information gluttony? “There is a difference between healthy learning and information gluttony: one is about being fully human, and the other is about craving limitlessness.” (p. 111)
 - iii. Nothing new – the fall came when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - b. Careful your use of knowledge – judging and meddling
 - i. “As Christians we can, sometimes unwittingly but nonetheless sinfully, act as if we were God by making judgements about others without the requisite knowledge that enables us to make a sound judgment...Christians must sometimes judge (Matt. 7:15-20; 18:15-20; 24:23-26). But judging others can be dangerous, in part because we often lack the information to do so. Christ judged appropriately because he had perfect knowledge—given to him from above—for correct judgments (John 8:44).” Jones p. 83-84
 - ii. “We often exhibit an unhealthy interest in the affairs of others. The Bible terms this ‘meddling.’ It is significant that Peter places meddling in the midst of a list of sins that includes murder and theft (1 Peter 4:15). It is a form of violation of another person made in the image of God. Meddlers believe they are entitled to knowledge of other peoples’ situations. While they would no doubt fiercely defend their own right to privacy, they extend no such grace to others. If information is accessible, they view it as fair game. They are the consumers of tabloid journalism, the whisperers of gossip, the curators of secret details of other people’s lives (eavesdroppers and listeners of police radios, readers of DUI paper sections, and those who need be in places of leadership). They are the

reason we have passwords on our phones and our computers. Meddling can be tricky to catch because it often masquerades as loving concern.” Wilkin p. 115

iii. Recognize how selfish we are with what we know and learn and notice how selfless Jesus was and is with all he knows of us.

c. You cannot outsmart God

i. “You cannot teach him a lesson of any kind. He holds all the facts. You cannot circumvent his logic or come up with an alternative or better place. But you don’t need to. Because he knows all potential outcomes and consequences, his ways are best. They are trustworthy and safe.” Wilkin p. 116

d. You cannot bargain with God

i. “Because he knows exactly how you will act in every if-then scenario, you cannot convince him to act a certain way by presenting him an offer of conditional obedience or reward. Any argument you present cannot offer any new insight to him...But you don’t need to bargain with God. He has already covenanted to do and allow only what is best for you.” Wilkin p. 117

e. You cannot fool God

i. All acting, from the smallest posturing to the greatest pretense is obvious to him. To God we are all bad actors...We are completely transparent in every attempt to represent ourselves as something we are not...But you don’t need to fool God. He accepts you as you are, all attempts at artifice removed. The cross effectively removes our need to overplay our strengths or our weaknesses.” Wilkin p. 117

f. You cannot rely on God to forget

i. Nor should you want him to forget. If God holds all knowledge, it follows that he is incapable of forgetting. We often wrongly believe that we need a forgetful God when it comes to the record of our sins. Learning that God does not forget can cause alarm. If he can’t forget our sins, how can he fully forgive us? But you don’t need God to forget. You need him to be a God who never forgets a single thing. The Bible promises that God ‘remembers our sins no more,’ which is a figurative way to say that he does not count them against us. God’s inability to forget is for our good. It means we can trust his covenant. He will never forget his promises. He will never forget us.” Wilkin p. 117-118

VI. How to Topple the Myth of Human Omniscience

a. Ask yourself:

- i. Will the time and attention I give to this make me more like Christ?
- ii. Will it make me better able to serve God and serve others?
- iii. Am I feeding my intellect in a way that enables me to love the Lord my God with all of my mind, or in a way that causes information overload?

- iv. Does what I'm learning cause me to worship myself, or cause me to marvel at "the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)?

Verses for Meditation

Job 37:16

Psalm 139:1-4

Psalm 94:9-11

Isaiah 40:27-28

Questions for Reflection

1. What kind of knowledge do you crave the most? How can you discern whether your hunger for it is healthy or unhealthy?
2. How is having information at our fingertips a blessing? How might we make better use of it to glorify God and bring about his will on earth?
3. What boundaries do you need to set with regard to information consumption? Where are you most thoughtless in your consumption patterns?
4. How does the fact of God's omniscience comfort you personally? How does it expand your amazement at divine grace?

Pray

Take time to give God praise and thanks for his omniscience. Confess the ways you have sought god-like knowledge, and thank him for his amazing love and grace given in Jesus Christ.