

God's Communicable Attributes

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

- [Ephesians 5:1-2](#)

Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, infinity, self-existence (aseity)—these are some of the incommunicable attributes of God, those attributes of our Creator that He does not share with His creatures. However, the Lord also has communicable attributes, or attributes that He does share with human beings to at least some degree. Passages such as [Genesis 1:26-27](#), which teaches that we are made in God's image, presuppose that there are some things that human beings hold in common with the Creator that other creatures do not. We are like God in ways that nothing else in creation is like God, although we are not so like Him that there is no distinction between Creator and creature. Furthermore, Paul's exhortation to imitate God in today's passage also indicates that human beings, particularly Christians, have the capacity to reflect the character of the Lord and His attributes in who they are and what they do ([Eph. 5:1](#)).

When we speak of God's communicable attributes, we are referring primarily to His moral attributes such as love, goodness, and kindness. In one sense, we must not forget that there is a basic incommunicability of even these attributes, for insofar as such things 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 wholly dissimilar, such that there is no point of contact whatsoever with the love of God. Our Creator loves truly that which is lovely. As regenerate people, we possess the capacity to do the same.

Consider also God's attribute of holiness. The holiness of God encompasses several concepts, including the fact that He is inherently set apart from creation and that He is morally pure, without any hint of darkness or sin. We cannot possess holiness in the sense of being inherently set apart from creation;

however, by the renewing work of God's Spirit, Christians are continually purified over the course of our lives ([1 John 3:3](#)).

Space prohibits us from studying all the Lord's communicable attributes. We close today with a brief look at wisdom. Our Creator is the "only wise God" ([Rom. 16:27](#)), but in His grace, He shares His wisdom with us. In our fallenness, we are foolish creatures, but our Lord has given us His Word, by which He grants us wisdom by His Spirit ([Prov. 1:1-7](#)).

Application for God

The standard for true love, wisdom, kindness, justice, and so on is the character of God Himself. This means that we cannot define these moral qualities without reference to the Lord and that we cannot base our understanding of these qualities on the way the world understands them. As we seek to image and reflect God, let us continually turn to His Word so that we can understand what it means to be what He calls us to be.

Passages for Further Study

[Leviticus 19:2](#)

[Daniel 1:17](#)

[Colossians 3:16](#)

[2 Thessalonians 3:5](#)

