

God, Our Intimate Friend

The Transferable Divine Nature of God

The funny thing is how we are so bent on trying to be like God when it comes to being all-knowing, all-controlling, and everywhere at once in our own little worlds. We race past the true God-likeness waiting for us every day! At any moment we can enter into His divine nature, whenever we settle down and let Him be God in our place. As we abide in Him, the amazing transfer happens. When John writes that in heaven we will be like Him, this is what he means.

**Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Genesis 1:26
ESV**

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." Exodus 33:18 ESV

His Glorious Image

After the Red Sea crossing, while still at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses asked the Lord if He would show him His glory. What God chose to reveal about Himself is surprising, even shocking. He showed Moses, not the ever-expanding glory the cosmic "heavens declare," not the glory-drenched cloud—the shekinah — that would one day fill Tabernacle and Temple, not the glory of His unique, mind-numbing traits of absolute deity, but the "more human" glory of His personal nature.



This glory seems more human to us, because these are qualities of being that He shares freely with us and which (in minor, debased doses) we take for granted. Taken in "full strength" it would have killed Moses to view them. So, hidden in a "cleft of the rock," Moses watches in awe as...

**The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. Exodus 34:6-8
ESV**

This divine "Self-portrait" is particularly appealing because it stands in stark contrast to the harsh, judgmental, angry God that so many people (mistakenly) believe stalks and storms His way through the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet, right here at the beginning—in the second book of the Bible—God hastens to show us what He is really like. It's as if He said to Moses, "I'm glad you asked that question. I know I'm going to get a lot of bad press in the future, so let me set the record straight before we get started."



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This is the image we have been created to bear. This is the likeness we are meant to display. Whenever we fall short of the glory of God, it is this glorious Nature we have failed to reflect. By supernatural design, whenever we “behold” these qualities in our God (by an active faith), our own hearts transform, lifting us closer to Him as we carry or “bear” His image within us. As we see abundance of mercy in Him, we become more merciful. As we see overflowing love in Him, we become more loving. This in turn “births” the out-flowing of our new creation nature, enabling us to walk in His Spirit. [Beholding, bearing, becoming](#). We call it “[Getting the Look](#)” that gives the shift. This life-transforming pattern began with Moses; let it continue with you!

There are other transferable qualities (knowledge, rationality, speech, truthfulness, wisdom...), but for now let’s go with these...

7 Transferable Attributes

1. Merciful

Merciful means that God shows mercy to those who don’t deserve His mercy. Do you have sins? God will always want to forgive you. That’s why He can make the promise that if you confess your sins (no matter what they are), He will forgive you and cleanse you of all unrighteousness (no matter how little you might deserve it). His mercy is grace-based. God loves to give His mercy away! Nevertheless, granting forgiveness is almost the end product of the Lord’s work of mercy in us and for us. His mercy has been with us from the beginning.

Mercy has always played a huge part in God’s plans for His creation. In mercy God chose to love us even when He foresaw that we would sin against Him. In mercy God “tasked” Jesus with being the Lamb who would be slain “from the foundation of the world.” In mercy God chose us to receive His salvation long before we were born. In mercy God inspired countless people before us to make the sacrifices that enabled Him to bring the gospel our way. In mercy God has been working with us since our birth to help us realize our need for Him and believe the good news of His salvation. That’s when we “woke up” to praise Him for the timeless flow of His mercy!

The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. Psalms 145:9
ESV

2. Gracious

Grace means that God helps those who don’t deserve His help. Do you have problems? God will always want to help you with them. That’s why He can make the promise that He will come to the rescue (no matter what the problem is) of anyone who calls on Him (whether they deserve His help or not). His help is grace-based. God loves to give His help away! Just as it is with His mercy, seeing a problem and asking for help is almost the end product of God’s grace for us. His grace has been with us from the beginning.

Grace is like the air that surrounds us upon which all life depends. Yet, breathing is so all-pervasive that we hardly ever notice we are doing it. Our focus goes to other things we need and don’t yet have—unless our boundless supply of air comes up short. Then we may instantly realize what a gift fresh air and good lungs truly are! In the same way our gracious God has



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been supplying all kinds of things to us, including life and person-hood, family and friends, talents and abilities, along with right desires and opportunities to explore them. When things go wrong, he works with us to help us overcome. All without ever “tipping His Hand” by making it obvious that we have Someone to thank.

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Matthew 5:44-45 ESV

3. Slow to Anger

For an infinite Being to say that He is slow to anger is not a small statement. Think how patiently the Lord worked over the eons to carve out the Grand Canyon using the Colorado River as His chisel, or—going back even further—to create the earth out of gathered dust from exploded stars. That’s patience! He worked with Israel for centuries, seeking to cure their backsliding, before finally sending the chastisement of Jerusalem’s destruction and the Babylonian captivity. Even then, He “quickly” reversed the effect of His own judgment and restored a faithful remnant of Israel to their land just 70 years later. That’s a winsome combination: slow to anger, quick to mercy. Would that we were more like Him in this.

As it is, we easily confuse our impatience with that of God, mistakenly imagining that the Lord must surely be running out of patience with ourselves or some excuseless reprobate we can’t stand. Having worked with addicts for years, I can testify to the Lord’s seemingly endless patience. Although He clearly allows increased consequences to fall upon those who keep backsliding, He never reproaches them when they turn back to Him. By their report He is just as loving and patient with them as when they first believed. This should encourage us all—not to backslide! —but to take heart that His patient love for us will be just as enduring.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3:9 ESV

4. Steadfast Love

“He loves me, he loves me not” is a game only humans can play. God set His heart on loving us from before He created the worlds and He insists that He isn’t like us in changing His mind. He has been showing us steadfast love from the Big Beginning. The creation of the universe itself is a love-gift making our lives possible and dignifying our days with surroundings of exquisite beauty. That we were even brought to birth is the unsought love-gift which launched us all on this stupendous journey we call life. That He has prepared an eternal home in heaven for each one of us who seeks Him is an ever-lasting love-gift.

Perhaps greatest of all, however, is the love-gift of Jesus’ sacrifice for us, for without it all of the other gifts would have been robbed from us by our sins. There is an irony in this: Although it is through the forgiveness of our sins that God’s love for us is most fully demonstrated, it is also because of our on-going sinfulness that we most question His willingness to remain steadfast at loving us. Fortunately, His love is truly steadfast. No matter how much we doubt, no matter how many times we fall, or drift away or turn against Him, His love never fails. As long as we stay



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steadfast at seeking His love and mercy (we are being schooled in His likeness after all), He will keep showering it upon us. Eventually, we will surely get the hang of it!

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!
1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

5. Faithful

There is a lovely Hebrew word that describes the faithfulness of the Lord: *chesed*. It means “covenant loyalty” and it describes both God’s ways of being faithful to Israel and Israel’s expected ways of being faithful to God. The mutual faithfulness intended includes the qualities of mercy and loving kindness, terms by which *chesed* is often translated. This aspect of the Lord’s beautiful nature almost always bowls us over. As surprising as His mercy can be, even more surprising is how He continues to be merciful to us even when we are unfaithful to Him. Even more surprising still is how He seems to “store up” loving kindness, which He (apparently) delights in suddenly revealing to us long after we had given up actively hoping that He would intervene on our behalf.

Because He is infinitely faithful and patient, He can plan for how He is going to bless us, or rescue us, long years in advance. His grace and mercy to us have nothing to do, really, with our faithfulness, but with His. He knows that He is still going to be “in the mood” to show loving-kindness to us even after we have behaved abominably, so He makes His plans accordingly. Naturally, this takes us by surprise, because no one else we know could put up with so much and still hang in there with us as He does. But then, He has already “hung in there” for us when it hurt the most. Bearing with us now must almost seem easy by comparison. Still, it is a marvel and a praise to Him that He does!

Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever. Psalms 136:3-4 ESV

6. Forgiving

What a wonderful thing it is that our God is infinitely forgiving. You and I may set limits on our mercy, but God always holds His heart open to anyone who turns to Him, no matter how many times they turn. Think about it: at the cross Father forgave ALL sins that would ever be committed by you, me, or anyone else. We know that it was unimaginably painful for Jesus to bear the punishment; it may have been immensely difficult for the Father to carry it out. But it is done! There is absolutely nothing left for God to forgive: He has foreseen all sin, been wounded by all sin; and has forgiven all sin.

The Father’s unbending desire was to make a way for us to be restored to Him. Now, out of what is called “Christ’s merits,” He has an endless treasure trove of mercy available for everyone. The only problem left is getting us to believe it. No doubt we stagger at trusting in God’s forgiving heart for many reasons, but one in particular has to do with the issue of our likeness: we also can and do forgive others. However, the great difference between our forgiveness and God’s—apart from the scale of it—is that His is mercy-based, while ours is usually justice-based. We forgive because a person apologized, we forgive because someone changed, we forgive because they made amends. But if a person in any way deserves to be



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forgiven, that's not God's kind of forgiveness! He has forgiven all of us long before we apologized, repented, changed or made amends. Aren't you glad?

It was God [personally present] in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself, not counting up and holding against [men] their trespasses [but cancelling them], and committing to us the message of reconciliation (of the restoration to favor). 2 Corinthians 5:19 AMP

7. Just

This one gets us into the most trouble. Ironically, the trouble doesn't come from God being just, but from our desire to imitate Him. Our graceless efforts to correct others, our predilection to judge and condemn them, our headstrong attempts to change the world by enforcing our own vision of justice—these have caused unimaginable sorrow to individuals and nations. Seeking justice against injustice easily turns into vengeance. Seeking justice against social oppression easily turns into coercion and new forms of oppression. Seeking just or right behavior, even if only from ourselves, easily turns into pride and self-righteousness. Does this mean we should cease our efforts to “do justice”? Certainly not. But we should also walk humbly and love mercy, as He does.

Sometimes Christians will say that it is a good thing God is merciful with us, rather than just. There is a truth in this—we desperately need mercy—but it paints a dark picture of God's justice, as if justice were a thing we should never want to receive from God. In fact all of creation is dependent upon the justice of God; otherwise, chaos and spiritual darkness would rule supreme. Not only that, but because God is just He gives to everyone as they deserve, making it possible for us to be confident that everything we do for Him will be rewarded (in this life or the next). By a wonderful quirk of salvation blessing, we can also be confident that if we repent from what we do wrong, God will be “faithful and just” to forgive us.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. Psalms 89:14 ESV

More Divine Discoveries

The God of Grace It is a good thing that our God is a God of grace. We need grace more than the air we breathe! Our need for God to supply us everything necessary for life and right living is endless, because we will certainly need Him to go on supplying all things to us throughout the endless reaches of eternity. Yet, this is apparently what God loves to do: give freely. He gives without measure, without reserve, apparently without our qualification and often without our cooperation. He gives until there is no need left to fill, and then He overfills—just to make sure that our joy begins to match His.

The Three In One Get ready for Enigma, Riddle and Paradox. These aren't exactly Biblical names for God, but they might as well be. Solomon wrote that it is the glory of God to conceal things and the glory of kings to search them out. In seeking to know our God better we all hope to be “crowned” with true understanding of all the “hidden” things about Him. Be forewarned: just as often as you may feel that crown upon your head, you will want to throw it down at His



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feet in humble submission to Someone you really don't know as well as you think you do. Now multiply that Mystery by Three...

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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