

# 4

## Relating to God God's Shared Characteristics



### Introduction

While there are some characteristics of God that are uniquely His, there are other attributes which He desires that we also possess. The intent of this study is to explore those Godly characteristics that He desires us to possess. The very heart of God's plan and purpose for our lives is centered in these qualities taking root in our life. No disciple should leave home without them.

### Holiness

There are three dimensions to God's Holiness:

- ❑ **Perfection** – He is without fault or defect
- ❑ **Purity** – He is free from contamination or pollutants
- ❑ **Separateness** – He is distinct and totally separated from His creation

*<sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

**Isaiah 6:2-3**

*And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."*

**Revelation 4:8**

- In each verse circle who it is that is speaking
- Underline the phrases that describe the characteristic of one about whom they are talking.

When words are ascribed to the character of God in scripture, only the quality of Holiness is thrice repeated. You will not find heavenly beings saying "Merciful, Merciful, Merciful" or "Gracious, Gracious, Gracious" though those things are true. It is the Holiness of God that warrants repeating.

*<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup> But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup> for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

**1 Pet 1:14-16**

- In the above passage circle the action we are to take as a demonstration of holiness.
- Underline the word that describes how much of our behavior is to be holy.

#### Perfection:

Deut 32:4  
Matt 5:48



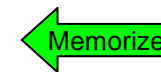
#### Purity

Job 15:15  
Ps 19:8

#### Separateness

Ex 8:22  
Ps 4:3

The Hebrew word **qadash** is translated "to sanctify, be holy". So a synonym for the word **holy** is the word **sanctify**



## His Righteousness and Justice

Righteousness and Justice go together like hand and glove. His righteousness is the basis upon which all moral law is founded. His justice is the means of determining rewards or punishment based upon His Righteousness

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.*

**Ps 89:14**

- Circle the phrase which describes the position of Justice and Righteousness in God's kingdom
- *The throne is the symbol of rule and authority.*
- *Foundation means the basis upon which something stands or is supported*

*To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD rather than sacrifice.*

**Proverbs 21:3**

- Underline the phrase describing that which God desires.
- *Sacrifice, to Solomon, was an animal and/or grain offerings as atonement for sin or as thanksgiving for unusual blessing.*
- Circle the activity which pleases God more

### Righteousness

Righteousness is simply doing what is right. Sin and righteousness are therefore opposites. God is Himself righteous. He imputes righteousness to those who seek the righteousness of His Son. And he calls each believer to live righteous lives in a world of sin.

*For the LORD is righteous; He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face.*

**Psalms 11:7**

- Circle the word that describes God's attitude toward righteousness
- *Upright is a synonym for those who do right, for those who are righteous.*
- Underline the reward for those who are righteous

*Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you?*

**Ps 71:19**

- Underline the phrases describing the extent of God's Righteousness
- The question asked has an implied answer. Write the appropriate answer after the question above.

*And the heavens declare His righteousness, for God himself is judge. Selah.*

**Ps 50:6**

- Circle one way that God reveals His righteousness.

Often scripture will combine characteristics of God together in a verse. That is because God is not sometimes one and sometimes another. He is always all of His characteristics combined.



### Consider:

Compared to God we all fall short. He says "there is none that is righteous, no not one."

Psalms 14:3

### Our righteousness



Romans 3:10-12  
Romans 6:12-18  
Philippians 3:9-10  
2 Timothy 4:8

### Righteousness Revealed



Psalms 33:5  
Psalms 35:28  
Psalms 40:10  
Psalms 65:5  
Romans 1:16-17

*For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*

**Romans 5:19**

- The disobedient man in the passage is Adam.
- The obedient man in the passage is Jesus.
- Circle the result of the one man's disobedience.
- Underline the result of One man's obedience.

### His Justice

Justice is God giving to a person what he or she deserves for their deeds. See how God describes the way that he will judge the earth.

*Before the LORD, for He is coming; for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in His faithfulness.*

**Psalms 96:13**

*Before the LORD; for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.*

**Psalms 98:9**

- Circle the words which describe the standard by which God will judge the earth
- **Equity** means freedom from bias or favoritism.

*Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him.*

**Isaiah 30:18**

- Circle the phrase that indicates why God waits in his judgment of the earth.
- **Gracious** is a concept to be discussed in the next section of this study.
- God who is obligated to honor his righteousness in judgment, longs to show compassion to His children.

*"Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."*

**Ezek 33:20**

- The people were complaining about God's ways not being right when it was their own ways that were corrupt.
- Underline the phrase that describes the activity that God will judge.

The New Testament makes it clear that we have a choice. We can either be a slave to sin which leads to death, or be a slave to righteousness.

- Righteousness is given to us through faith in the Lord Jesus
- Righteousness will be a crown awarded to those who love His appearing. (2 Tim 4:8)

### The enabling of Justice

Because He is all-knowing, no detail or fact is hidden from him.

Because he is ever present he sees all deeds and hears all conversations.

Because he is all-powerful, he is able to bring all persons to judgment

### God desires that we be Just



Matthew 23:23  
Colossians 4:1

## His Compassion, Grace and Loving Kindness

When God described Himself to Moses, He could have used words that described His Power, or words that described His blamelessness, words which might strike fear into the heart of Moses. Instead, He said...

<sup>6</sup>... "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

Exodus 34:6-7

- Circle each word describing a characteristic of God.

### His Compassion or Mercy

The Hebrew word *rachuw*m is translated compassion or mercy. Compassion implies a consciousness of another's distress, with a desire to alleviate it. God is merciful. He delights in showing mercy. The place of His dwelling in the tabernacle is called the mercy seat.

<sup>13</sup>Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. <sup>14</sup>For He himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.

Ps 103:13-14

- Circle the word describing the relationship that inspires God's compassion in the above verse.
- Underline the reason(s) that God is merciful toward us.
- Draw a box around those who enjoy the compassion of God

*But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now.*

II Kings 13:23

- Underline the phrase that explains why God had compassion.
- God had promised Abraham and his children the land of milk and honey. It was with Abraham in mind that God relented from executing judgment upon the children of Israel. Yet even God's compassion knows a limit.

*It is the weak who are cruel.  
Gentleness can only be expected from the strong.*

Leo Roskin

David, when confronted with his sin concerning Bathsheba, prayed to the God who was gracious, full of loving-kindness and compassion. (Psalms 51:1)

Those who are guilty of sin seek not God's justice but His mercy.



### Compare:

**Justice** is God giving to us what we deserve. **Mercy** is God withholding what we deserve.

### Jesus and Mercy

Those who were in need were unashamed to ask Jesus for Mercy:

Matt 9:27  
Matt 20:31  
Matt 20:34  
Mark 1:41  
Luke 10:33  
Luke 17:13



### Meditate

In His parable on forgiveness in Matt 18:23-35, Jesus makes it clear that forgiveness and mercy are bound together. Why is compassion a prerequisite to forgiveness?

## His Graciousness

Grace is quite different from mercy. Where **mercy** withholds that which is deserved, **grace** gives something good that is **not** deserved. When used in conjunction with God, grace always means that God gives us undeserved blessing.

*And rend your heart and not your garments. "Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness, and relenting of evil.*

**Joel 2:13**

- According to the above verse, circle the phrase that indicates why someone should return to the Lord?
- The word "**rend**" means "to split or tear apart". In this case we are urged to take inward rather than outward action.

*<sup>7</sup>In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, <sup>8</sup>which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight*

**Eph 1:7-8**

- Underline the phrase that describes the result of God's grace.
- Circle the word that describes how God's grace was applied to us.
- **Lavish** means to give in great abundance.

## His Love

Perhaps no characteristic of God is more well known than His Love. Over and over, the message of the Old and New Testament is that God is Love.

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Romans 5:8**

*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

**I John 4:10**

- Circle the phrases that describe how God shows His love for us.
- **Propitiate** means to gain favor or good will. So when the Son is the propitiation, He is the means of gaining favor.

*O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.*

**1 Chronicles 16:34**

- Circle the phrases that describe why we should give thanks to God.
- Underline the word that describes the duration of God's love

### Consider:

The reason for returning is God's grace (he'll give me something good I don't deserve) and His compassion or mercy (He'll withhold the punishment I do deserve)



The Hebrew word for loving-kindness is **cheded**. The word combines three thoughts into the one word: strength, steadfastness and love. The English word devotion comes closest to meeting the Hebrew meaning.

### What Do You Think?

Place a check in the column(s) indicating the attribute of God's Character that makes the statement possible (more than one may apply).

Holiness	Righteousness	Justice	Mercy	Grace	Love	God can ...
						Set up laws
						Evaluate the behavior of men
						Not tolerate sin
						Forgive sin
						Withhold blessings
						Grant favors and blessing
						Answer prayer
						Overrule natural law
						Be faithful to His promises
						Oppose the proud but give grace to the humble
						Heal diseases
						Feed every creature
						Raise the dead

These characteristics of God seem to be opposites of each other. One might say that God cannot be Just and Merciful at the same time. Yet in His wisdom God worked out a way to satisfy His justice and His mercy when it comes to dealing with our sin. Can you describe how He accomplished this feat?

### Application

The following verses indicate scriptures that direct us to display these qualities of God. Place a check mark next to the ones that you need to work at in your walk with God.

✓	Verse
	<b>Leviticus 11:45</b> `For I am the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; thus <b>you shall be holy</b> for I am holy."
	<b>Romans 6:17-18</b> But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became <b>slaves of righteousness</b> .
	<b>Proverbs 21:3</b> To <b>do righteousness and justice</b> is desired by the LORD rather than sacrifice.
	<b>Colossians 3:12</b> And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, <b>put on a heart of compassion</b> , kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;
	<b>Proverbs 19:17</b> He who is <b>gracious to a poor man</b> lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.
	<b>John 13:34-35</b> "A new commandment I give to you, that you <b>love one another</b> , even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

It is not enough just to know what God is like. He commands that we share the very qualities that He possesses.