

Our Epic God - Master Notes

Introduction

Complete the sentence: God is...

What was the first thing that came into your mind regarding God? What thought, word, feeling, or mental picture did you get?

Quote: A. W. Tozer, author of the book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, suggests, "What comes into our minds when we think of God is the *most important* thing about us."

How GREAT is God to You?

In a word, God is... **EPIC!**

"Epic" is a current buzz word, especially in the movie industry. But it is also a good descriptive of God!

"Epic" comes from the Greek adjective *epikos* which can be translated as WORD.

- ▣ *Epikos* refers to a word, story, or poem extending beyond the usual or ordinary especially in size or scope. *This certainly is true of God as the living WORD!*
- ▣ *Epikos* also refers to a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation. *Also true of God and His written WORD!*

Study #1. The Greatness of God

God's Greatness Exclaimed!

Psalm 48:1 states, "**GREAT** is the Lord... and most worthy of praise."

Finish the sentence: God is great and praiseworthy because....

He is "The Great I am" (Mercy Me song)

In 1 Chronicles 29:11 during the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, David declares... "Yours, O Lord, is the *greatness* and the power and the *glory* and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours... "Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."

Psalm 96:4-6 & 8 exclaims, "For *great* is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and *glory* are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord the *glory* due his name."

*Point: God's Greatness Shines Brightly in His Creation!

God's Greatness Explored!

Psalm 145 explores what David says about God's greatness as it relates to His attributes and actions.

Small Group Activity: Read the assigned portion of Psalm 145 and fill in chart:

Group 1 – verses 4-8

Group 2 – verses 9-13

Group 3 – verses 14-19

God' Greatness - Psalm 145:4-8

ATTRIBUTES - How is God described to us?

- | | | |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mighty | Glorious | Splendor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Majesty | Wonderful | Powerful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awesome | Great | Abundant goodness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Righteousness | Gracious | Compassionate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow to anger | Rich in love | |

ACTIONS - What Does God do for us?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mighty acts | Wonderful works |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awesome works | Great deeds |

God' Greatness - Psalm 145:9-13

ATTRIBUTES - How is God described to us?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | Compassion | Creator (implied) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glory | Mighty | Splendor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Everlasting | Dominion | Endures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful | Loving | Glorious |

ACTIONS - What Does God do for us?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good to all | Compassion on all he has made |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mighty acts | Faithful to all his promises |

God' Greatness - Psalm 145:14-19

ATTRIBUTES - How is God described to us?

- ▣ Caring (implied vs. 14-15) Open
- ▣ Generous (implied vs. 16) Righteous
- ▣ Loving Near Truth

ACTIONS - What Does God do for us?

- ▣ Upholds all who fall Lifts up all bowed down
- ▣ Gives food Satisfy the desires of everything
- ▣ Hears our cries Saves us Watches over us
- ▣ A Truth to Remember!

God's Greatness Explained!

What is an attribute of God anyway?

An attribute is...

- ▣ A divine characteristic of His unchanging nature!
- ▣ A unique quality of His sovereign deity!
- ▣ A revealed truth about His eternal being!
- ▣ A principal element of His perfect character!

Quotes: A. W. Tozer, in his outstanding book, adds... "An attribute of God is whatever God has in any way *revealed* as being *true* of Himself."

J. I. Packer, exclaims in his book, Knowing God, "We shall have to deal with the...*qualities of Deity* which set God *apart* from men and mark the difference and distance between the Creator and His creatures."

God's greatness can be seen both in...

His **natural** revelation (Psalm 19:1) "The heavens declare the *glory* (greatness) of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

His **written** revelation (Psalm 145:3) "*Great* is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his *greatness* no one can fathom."

Isaiah 40:28 says, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and...His **understanding** no one can fathom.”

Why do you think it is impossible for us to “*fathom*” and fully understand the greatness of God?

God is *transcendent*! Which means... He is above and beyond our comprehension. He is *incomparable, unreachable* and *incomprehensible*!

The Hebrew word for “fathom” is *heqer* which can be translated as “seek, inquire, unsearchable, mysteries, recesses.”

*Note: We’re called to search out the *unsearchable*, to seek to understand the *unfathomable*, and to pursue knowing the *unknowable*!

And yet, trying to fully discover all the *unsearchable mysteries* and *recesses* of God’s infinite being is like trying to analyze every inch of the Grand Canyon with a small magnifying glass!

Quotable Quote! “Learning of the character of God is an experience that cannot be exhausted in a single lifetime in this world...“Even with the new eyes of faith we grope at times as blind men and squint with myopic eyes through a glass darkly... (*even so*) the more we interact with God’s unveiling of Himself in sacred Scriptures, the more light we are able to apprehend.”

R.C. Sproul, *The Character of God - Discovering the God Who Is*

As believers, why is it important for us to have an *accurate*, though incomplete, understanding of the greatness of God?

- Hosea 6:3 commands us to, “Press on to know the Lord.”
- Daniel 11:32 declares, “The people that do know their God shall be strong.”

Quote: A. W. Tozer, in his fine book, *The Attributes of God, Volume 2*, declares, “The church has lost her lofty concept of God and no longer knows what God is like, her religion is thin and anemic, frivolous, worldly and cheap...We have lost the vision of the Majesty on high...what we need desperately is an elevated concept of God.”

God’s Greatness Experienced!

Which of **God’s Attributes** described in Psalm 145 is most *comforting* to you personally? Why?

“The Lord is gracious and compassionate; slow to anger and rich in love.” (vs. 8)

Which of **God’s Actions** done for us is most meaningful to you? Why?

“The Lord is faithful to all his promises” (vs. 13)

God's Greatness Experienced!

Read Psalm 145:1-2. What is David's response to the greatness of God?

What does vs. 21 say should be *our* response to God's greatness?

The Hebrew word for "praise" (*barak*) is used **6x's** in the psalm and is also translated... "to bless, extol, commend, or worship."

David also encourages us in the psalm to "exalt, extol, speak of, meditate on, tell of, proclaim, celebrate, and sing" about God's greatness and glory.

A Command to Follow!

"Let them praise your great and awesome name." Psalm 99:3

Quote: "Knowing God properly means experiencing Him with your *mind* and your *will* and your *emotions*." Warren & Ruth Myers, *Experiencing God's Attributes*

Paul wrote to the Colossians: "How I long for you to grow more certain in your *knowledge* and more sure in your *grasp* of God himself. May your spiritual experience become richer as you see more and more fully God's great secret, Christ himself." (Col. 2:2-3)

Making it Personal

In what way(s) do you hope to experience God more fully as a result of studying his great attributes? Share your thoughts with another person.

Quote: It is not enough for the Christian to know *that* God is; we must be driven by a holy passion to know *who* He is...The pursuit of the knowledge of God must never be undertaken as a casual exercise. It must be the chief business of our lives." R.C. Sproul, *The Character of God - Discovering the God Who Is*

Poi t: Let's Make it our Daily Goal to Better Know & Praise our Great & Epic God!

Extra Credit Assignment:

What Does Psalm 111 say about the greatness of God? What are some of God's attributes?

Read Psalm 111 and list below the different words used to describe God and His works:

great *glorious* *majestic* *righteousness* *endures*
wise *forever* *wonders* *gracious* *compassionate* *power*
faithful *just* *trustworthy* *steadfast* *holy* *awesome* *eternal*

Which of God's attributes above is most comforting to you?

Study 2. The Love & Goodness of God

What is something you really “love” to eat, wear, or do? List it below:

For me it is eating good Coffee Ice Cream!

The English word for love is...used very loosely and often quite shallow!

Case in point: Lyrics to a popular Door’s song...“Hello, I love you, won’t you tell me your name!”

The Greek words for love... are much more expressive and descriptive!

God’s Love Explained

Biblical Definitions: Greek words

1. “**Phileo**” the idea of tender affections, fondness or feelings of sentiment for someone or a personal attachment to something.”

In Matthew 10:37 Jesus explains, “Anyone who loves (*phileo*) his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”

2. “**Philadelphia**” refers to a fraternal affection between a brother or sister or to express kindness towards another.

Romans 12:10 – “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love (*philadelphia*).”

3. “**Agape**” literally means to love much; it’s the idea of a deliberate choice, to be inclined, to be willing to offer benevolence to another.

Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates his own love (*agape*) for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

God’s Love is Always **agape** Love!

Practical definitions:

1. The “**IF**” kind of love! – says “I will love you if...you please me and do what I want.”

It’s a conditional love based on personal *approval*.

2. The “**BECAUSE OF**” kind of love! – says, “I will love because of... how you do things for me, meet my needs and satisfy me.”

It’s a conditional love based on personal *performance*.

God's Love Explained (cont.)

3. The "**IN SPITE OF**" kind of love! – says, "I will love you in spite of or regardless of your approval rating or personal performance.

It's an *unconditional* love based on *choice*.

God loves us **ONLY** with the **IN SPITE OF** kind of love!

The Qualities of God's love

I John 4:8 says, "God is **AGAPE**! His love is always *agape*!

Look up the descriptions of God's "*agape*" love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and fill in the chart below:

God's love is ALSO ...

- ▣ **Unconquerable** and **Inseparable**! (Rom. 8:38-39)
- ▣ **Unfailing** and **Enduring**! (Psalm 118:1)
- ▣ **Unprompted** and **Undeserved**! (1 John 4:10)

In other words, God's love is...**Uncommon**!

Quote: "The love of God is uninfluenced. By this we mean there was nothing whatever in the objects of his love to call it to exercise, nothing in the creature to attract or prompt it... the love of God is free, spontaneous, uncaused. The only reason why God loves any is found in his own sovereign will." A. Pink, *The Attributes of God*

God's Love Exclaimed!

God's *Universal* Love

John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the **world** that he gave...."

The Greek word *kosmos* is used **4x's** in these two verses and means...earth, people, universe

God's *Personal* Love

In Isaiah 43:4 God exclaims, "**YOU** are precious and honored in my sight, and... I love **YOU**."

Small Group Activity

Group 1. Look up Psalms 103:8, 107:8, 108:4 & 145:8 and list below the different *adjectives* used to describe God's love.

God's love is...

- abounding
- unfailing
- great
- higher than the heavens
- Rich

God's love is infinite both in **quantity** & **quality**!

God's love is offered to us freely & unconditionally!

Group 2. List and underline all the personal pronouns used in the following **Old Testament** passages regarding God's love.

Isaiah 54:10 – "My unfailing love for you will not be shaken."

Jeremiah 31:3 – "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

Psalms 86:13 – "Great is your love towards me."

Group 3. List and underline all the personal pronouns used in the following **New Testament** passages regarding God's love.

Ephesians 2:4 – "But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ."

1 John 3:1 – "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God."

1 John 4:16 – "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us."

God loves **US personally** not just the **WORLD universally**.

God's Love is Personal!

The Implications of God's love

Knowing that God loves us unconditionally, perfectly & permanently sets us free from...

Fearing **God Himself!** (1 John 4:18) "There is *no fear* in love. But *perfect* love drives out fear."

Fearing **others!** (Psalm 56:3-4 & 57:3) "In God I trust; I will *not be afraid*...He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; God sends his love and his faithfulness."

Fearing **circumstances!** (Zephaniah 3:17) "The Lord God is with you, he is mighty to *save*. He will take great *delight* in you, he will *quiet* you with his love."

What does 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 say should be our response to God's great love for us?

"For Christ's love compels us...And he died for all that those who **live** should no longer live for themselves but **for him** who died for them."

Write a *love letter* from God to **you** by personalizing and paraphrasing one of the love passages listed in this study.

Are you willing to share your "Love Letter" with us?

Part 2. The Goodness of God

When you think of the word “good” in the Bible, who or what comes to mind?

- Good Samaritan Good shepherd Good teacher
- “Good Lord above” is a common phrase used to express thankfulness or surprise.

Read Mark 10:17-18. Why do you think Jesus responded the way he did to this man’s comment?

What does verse 18 say? **Only God** is good!

What does Psalm 14:2-3 say? **No one, not one** is good!

Quote: “*Only God* is originally good, good Himself, which nothing else is...He is eternally and immutably good, for He cannot be less good than He is; as there can be no addition made to Him, so *there can be* no subtraction from Him.” Thomas Manton

God’s Goodness Explained

The **Hebrew** word for “good” is *tob* which means...to do well, be pleasing, right, correct, beautiful, gracious, excellent, righteous or lovely.

The **Greek** word for “good” is *agathos* which means...kind, benevolent, virtuous, right...it signifies an inherent goodness, quality of character

God’s Goodness Exclaimed

Psalm 119:68 states, “You are good and what you do is good!

What do the following psalms say about the goodness of God and what does he *do* for us out of His love and goodness?

Psalm 25:8-10 - “Good and *upright* is the Lord; therefore he *instructs...He guides...and teaches* them his way. All the ways of the Lord are *loving* and *faithful*.”

Psalm 86:5 - “You are *forgiving* and good, O Lord, *abounding* in love to all who call to you.”

Psalm 100:5 - “For the Lord is good and his love *endures forever*, his *faithfulness continues* through all generations.”

Making it Personal

Psalm 116:7 states, “Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.”

In what way(s) have you seen God’s goodness expressed towards you?

In addition to all the spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1), he has given me many good gifts:

- Faithful wife
- Children who know and serve Him
- Grandchildren who are lots of fun
- Nice home/place to live
- Family and friends who care, etc. etc. etc.

What does the psalmist say will be his response to God’s love and goodness?

Psalm 13:5-6 “But I *trust* in your unfailing love, my heart *rejoices* in your salvation. I will *sing* to the Lord, for he has been good to me.”

Psalm 116:12-14 “How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me? I will...*call* on the name of the Lord. I will *fulfill* my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.”

Quote: “There is unspeakable comfort in knowing that God is constantly taking knowledge of me in love, and watching over me for my good... “There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion him about me...and quench His determination to bless me...“There is certainly, great cause for humility... There is, however, equally great incentive to worship and love God.” J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*

What response do **you** plan to make to express your gratefulness to God for His goodness to you?

“Extra Credit” - On the sheet provided, write a short letter to God thanking Him for His unconditional love and unreserved goodness.

See *Because God Loves Me* sheet

Because God is Good, we can know, without any *shadow of doubt*, that God Loves You and Me!