

**The Self-Sufficiency of God**  
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This month we are doing a brief study, looking at some of the attributes of God. Here's why:

You and I face decisions every day. Every hour. Countless time through the day we are presented with decisions.

Will I join in the gossip about the woman at work, or will I defend her?

Will I build relationships with my neighbors and talk to them about Jesus or just separate and only be friends with other Christians?

Will I click on the incredibly alluring banner ad, or turn off my computer?

Will I get up early to read my bible or hit snooze?

When I get some unexpected money will I spend it on another toy or give the money to an organization that fights for social justice?

Everyday, all day we are making decisions and every time we do we are guided by our desires. We can't do otherwise. Every decision you make, every decision you ever had made is driven by what you think will make you happy.

Person to person that looks different. Heck, even minute to minute within that same person that looks different, but the same calculation is always being run. Which will make me happier? A donut, or better abs?

Not bad, just the way it is. Our will follows our desires and we desire to be happy.

This month I hope to offer you something that you can put in that balance so that when you are making decisions about which outcome will bring you the greatest joy, you'll be able to choose well. Not just so you'd theoretically know what somebody says you ought to choose, but so that you'd actually desire and want to choose the *better*, more *glorious*, more *satisfying* and joy producing option.

There is only one thing that I think can genuinely deliver on that promise- a high and exalted, and therefore accurate, view of God. If you and I could see God as he is, and see what a treasure he offers us in himself, I think that we would want him and desire him above all things and all those decision would get a lot easier.

The problem is that on a lot of days, all days maybe, we don't have a clear picture of him. He doesn't seem that great. I mean, sure he made the universe and that's all very impressive. But do you really believe that is all-satisfying? Really?

Do you really think that to be known and loved by him is better than being known and loved by the man of your dreams?

Do you really think that neighbor that you just can't stand has infinite dignity and worth, because he is made in the image of God?

Do you really think that God has every right and is right to condemn millions around the globe, thousands in State College to an eternity in Hell because they won't bend their knee to his greatness?

Or, do you think that this is all a bit inflated we'd all be better off if he lightened up a little bit?

If the Bible is true then you and I have too low a view of God. That low view of God cripples our ability to consistently make the right choices, it leaves us choosing the lesser instead of the greater. We seldom feel his weight tipping the scale. We don't know, believe or experience how great he really is.

So this month we are going to studying together what God is like in the hope that we can move towards seeing him as glorious as he is.

That's not to say I'm going to dress him up and make him look pretty for you so that you'll find him more attractive. He doesn't need to be dressed up. Here's what I do think needs to happen:

Ever hear of the Hearst Castle in California? William Randolph Hearst was this super rich guy and in 1919 he inherited a huge piece of land and began to build on it. Incredibly lavish. Among other things he build a private zoo. . .

We tend to do the same thing in our minds to God. To keep him safe we try to diminish him, cage him up. Skip over and don't really allow into our minds what he's revealed about himself that we think is embarrassing or threatening.

For instance, when I mentioned how he condemns people to hell because they won't bow the knee to his greatness, some of you cringed didn't you? I cringed when I wrote it. But it's true. He will vindicate the worth of his name because he is that magnificent. When we excise that and other things from our view of

him, the image of God we are left with is safe, comfortable, but it's not real interesting, not real glorious. It doesn't weigh much in the scale.

So what I hope to do is break down the cage and help us see him as He really is.

It's hard to talk about what God is like because, strictly speaking he's not exactly like anything. He is utterly different from everything you've ever experienced.

But he has revealed things about himself in terms that are meaningful to us. So while the finite is never going to really grasp the infinite we can at least begin by taking a hard look at what he has made known.

Hopefully by the end of the month we'll all have an expanded view of Him, and a greater thirst to know him, and will enjoy therefore the benefits of making better, wiser decisions that will generate life for us, and for those around us, as we orient our lives toward him.

The aspect of his greatness that I want you to ponder is his self sufficiency. Have you ever thought about what it means that he is the one being in existence that doesn't need anything? He has no needs.

In a simple summary of what the bible teaches on this, Paul said this in Acts 17:24-25:

Acts 17:24

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

He doesn't need anything.

Help me think about what that means. What do you need that God doesn't?

We have needs, hundreds of different needs. We have this narrow little band of necessary temperatures and pressure, all these things outside of which we're dead. But God hasn't inhaled or exhaled in 12 billion years. He's impervious to it all, needs none of the things without which you and I couldn't live for minutes.. He's different, better, not like us. He's utterly self-sufficient. Doesn't need a top kill to work, boyfriend, fill his gas tank, notes when he speaks, time to decide, rest.

Can I tell you something else he doesn't need: ready? God does not need you. He doesn't need me. He doesn't need any of us. At all. Sometimes we flatter ourselves that he's lonely or incomplete, that he needs us in some way, but he doesn't.

He doesn't need us to take of the planet.

He doesn't need us to do evangelism.

He's not wringing his hands, crossing his fingers, I hope I hope I hope I hope, we'll believe in him when it's all said and done. He doesn't need us.

Even the highest purpose of our lives is unnecessary to him. Stay with me on this because it's really important.

Any of you ever hear of the Westminster catechism? A catechism is a teaching device comprised of questions and answers, in this case about God and his relationship with people. 400 years old, super clutch. First question is this:

What is the chief and highest end of man? It means what's the first, greatest, most important purpose of life? Anybody know the answer?

To glorify God and enjoy him forever.

If those guys got it right, and I think they did, your highest purpose is to glorify God. That means your highest purpose is to shine a light on the greatness of God. To look at and praise and point out how fantastic he is to anyone who will listen.

Glorifying God, praising him, pointing out his excellence to others is a noble, worthy expenditure of your life. It's the reason you were made. That you would point at, and delight in the greatness of God.

But here's where it starts to go awry. You might think that we are to do that because God needs that. Like he's an insecure prince who needs his courtiers fawning over him and extolling his brilliance because deep down inside he fears he's not really that bright. And so he orders that pleasant fictions about his majesty be devised and repeated to him and all who will listen. Which makes the whole thing pathetic and annoying. It might look that way to some of you. But that's not our situation at all.

First, off, he is great, that's not a fiction, but second, think about the doctrine of the Trinity. That the one God is really three people, three persons who have always known and loved each other.

They don't just know and love each other, they adore each other, they praise each other. The father hears all day from the Spirit how great he is. The omniscient, brilliant, powerful son of God constantly pours forth adoration and love, praise, honor and delight to his father. The Spirit receives from his perfect father an endless stream of affection and praise. Jesus has heard an infinite number of times, you are my son, whom I love, in you I am well pleased." God experiences an endless stream of praise from the only one qualified to give it.

Okay. So, here's the question: What can we add to that? Nothing. There's no empty cup that we need to fill. He's not lacking praise. He doesn't need you. CS Lewis said this:

"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word, 'darkness' on the walls of his cell."

He doesn't need us at all. That may be disconcerting to some of you and if so stay with me a minute longer because it's really incredibly wonderfully, fabulous news. Because if God does not need you, he has no motive to use you. And when he says that he loves you, it means something different from anything you've ever experienced.

See we give to get because we need. So when you tell your girlfriend you love her a pretty big part of what you mean is that you love the benefits that you receive from her.

Maybe when she laughs at your jokes it makes you feel good. She meets your need to be (or at least to think you are) funny.

Or maybe she's pretty and it just makes you happy to look at her. She meets your need to see beauty.

Or when she holds your hand in public, especially when she's looking hot and laughing at something you just said, she validates you and is a proof to you and everyone else that you are desirable. She meets your need to be respected or envied, thought valuable.

So when she stops laughing at your jokes, or she stops looking pretty or you find out your friends don't think she makes you look all that good, what happens? Well what might happen is that you move on. You find someone who will meet your needs.

That's not to say you don't love her, but a lot of the time when we say, "I love you" what we mean is "I like the way you meet my needs." When those needs stop being met what passed as love dries up too.

So catch this. If God doesn't have any needs, that can't be what he means when he says, "I love you."

We give to get because we need. He gives to give because he needs nothing.

He is different. He does not need you. He has no motive to use you. He just loves you.

So when he tells you to glorify him it's not for him it's for you. His cup isn't empty, yours is. It's because he loves you that he commands you to ditch these worthless things and instead enjoy in Him delicious, satisfying splendor.

That's why he says this in Isaiah

Is 55:1-9

Isaiah 55:1

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

He's not looking for anything in exchange. Doesn't need anything.

2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David

6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. 8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Whatever you've done, whatever lame source you've been drinking from, drop it, come to me. I'll forgive whatever rebellion you've committed in a vain attempt to find joy outside of me. Just come.

That's the invitation. Just come. Stop looking for life in all these worthless things. You can trust me. I don't need you, no motive to use you, just love you. Want the best very best, absolute best things for you. The best, very best, absolute best thing for you, is me. So come to me. So I can give to you the thing you most of all need. May feel weird, insecure, reason insecure you're used to when you stop meeting someone's needs, they leave, don't need me you leave, but not way it works with him. His love to you is really to you, not just to him. Whatever you've done, come to me.

One of the things that I find most extraordinary about Jesus is that he didn't need anything. When the crowds were big and cheering his name he didn't play to them. In fact generally that's when he'd say something weird that would raise the standard and drive away the false admirers. He didn't need an adoring crowd. And when the crowds were angry and hostile, he stayed the course. He was never trying to find life from the approval of the crowd.

He didn't need any money. Not cause he had so much, he didn't have any, just didn't need it. He just wasn't for sale. Didn't need a house or a wife. When he died, all he owned was the garment he was wearing. He was never looking to get anything from anyone. Read a through the gospels and tell me if you don't see that. He's just above it all. Doesn't need anything so he's never manipulating people to get stuff. Rules you learned to survive by, to manipulate to get the things you need He's totally outside the system. Doesn't need anything.

Instead, he constantly gave himself away. All the time he is loving people who can't pay him back.

In fact, he even gave away at great cost, the one thing that you and I need most in all the world that he uniquely had. Do you know what it is? It's intangible. He gave away his righteousness.

The day will come when you will stand before a holy God. When you do, if you are dressed in all your guilt and shame you will be destroyed. I would too. It would be, and will be for many, a wretched, terrible day.

Jesus faced that day when he was crucified. He not only stood before a Roman court who could crucify him but he stood before his father who could do worse.

Only when he did, he wasn't dressed in his righteousness, he was dressed in our sin.

Knowing how deep your need will be he gave away his righteousness and took your blame. 2Co 5 says, "He who knew no sin became sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." The one who was holy, who needed nothing, put it all down and took his place on a criminal's cross to suffer the wrath of God. He did it so we who desperately need righteousness could have it.

The one who needs nothing gives to give because he loves you.

I hope you'll see in him all that you need, and you'll go to him for life.

Pray: Incredible, need nothing. Possess all within self. Didn't remain there, invited us, act of mercy, makes no sense, create, rebel, redeem,

Rich, poor, poverty wealth.

IN process: true? Could it be love purely? Through one means or another, open eyes to see their need and your sufficiency to meet the need.