

Here is our outline from last week's study of God's unique nature.

**PSALM 139:1-16 – God's Unique Nature**

Vs. 1-6	OMNISCIENT	(All knowing – Lord over thought)
Vs. 7-10	OMNIPRESENT	(All-consuming - Lord over space)
Vs. 11-12	IMMUTABLE	(All-consistent – Lord over circumstance)
Vs. 13-14	OMNIPOTENT	(All-powerful – Lord over matter)
Vs. 15-16	ETERNAL	(Self-existing – Lord over time)

Today we continue in Psalm 139, discovering 3 attributes of God's shared nature – that is, those Divine qualities that he shares with his human adopted children of faith. We can't possess these attributes in perfection, as God does. But through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God we can access these qualities in order to exemplify God's nature through human hearts and hands.

It could be argued that there are many of God's character attributes that He shares with us – including, for example, the fruit of the Spirit; joy, patience, kindness, etc. Others that could be mentioned are grace, mercy and justice. However there are only 3 shared qualities of God that the apostle John shared in his first epistle (1 John) where John declares God IS ..., and we are called to share these attributes of His very nature. And I find in the final verses of Psalm 139 that these same 3 attributes are implied, if not specifically mentioned.

**PSALM 139:17-24 – God's Shared Nature**

1. **GOD IS LIGHT** 1 John 1:5-10, Psalm 139:23-24
2. **GOD IS RIGHTEOUS** 1 John 2:26-29, Psalm 139:19-22
3. **GOD IS LOVE** 1 John 4:7-12, Psalm 139:17-18

Let's examine these as they are revealed to us in 1 John – the 3 great shared attributes of God: LIGHT, RIGHTEOUSNESS and LOVE.

**GOD IS LIGHT**

✓ In 1 John 1:5 it is boldly stated that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." That this light is without darkness, speaks of the **PURITY**, or perfection of the light. The word "holy" or "righteous" is not used, but it is implied in the light being without any darkness.

✓ In vs. 7 we see that the LIGHT is specifically the **HEAVENLY FATHER**, the first person of the blessed Trinity. For, it goes on to say that this LIGHT has a Son who cleanses us from all sin.

✓ We also see that this LIGHT **PENETRATES** – meaning that it exposes and cleanses the darkness of sin. Verse 8 says we deceive ourselves if we say we have no SIN (singular), meaning an active sin nature. Verse 9 says we make God a liar if we say we have not SINNED (past tense of sins, plural), meaning individual acts of rebellion. LIGHT exposes both our SIN (nature) and SINS (ungodly choices). Then the well-known verse 9 gives us the Divine remedy for our SINS – confession (agreeing with God) and the resultant forgiveness and cleansing. Note that confession is not the remedy for our SIN nature, but seeing Jesus face to face in glory is the remedy (as 1 John 3:1-4 teaches).

✓ Thus “walking in the LIGHT” (verses 6-7) is allowing the **Heavenly Father** in His perfect purity to search and penetrate my heart – exposing the dark places of sin that I might confess and be forgiven and cleansed. This must be a continual act vulnerability on my part.

✓ When I do “walk in the LIGHT,” fellowship with God happens – blessed relationship!

This squares beautifully with David’s reflection on God’s character in Psalm 139:23-24. “Light” is never mentioned, but the truth of God being the LIGHT is evident.

**Psalm 139:23-24** *Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.*

The Heavenly Father’s part: PURIFYING PENETRATION

My part: honest INTROSPECTION and CONFESSION.

From a **FAITH ENGAGE** standpoint – we can help our friends to know that they must recognize SIN in their life, which keeps them from a relationship with God. God, who is LIGHT, will reveal that sin as we let Him do so, and we respond by accepting God’s forgiveness and cleansing, confessing our sin and need of Him.

We understand that this is a SHARED attribute of God, for He calls us to be light in our world. Jesus told us in Matthew 5:14 and following,

**Matthew 5:14, 16** *"You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

Praise God that He allows us to share this amazing attribute of His. We then, His followers, can help expose the problem of sin and point our friends to God’s forgiveness, cleansing and relationship.

## **GOD IS RIGHTEOUS**

✓ In 1 John 2:26-28 John boldly states that “He [God] is RIGHTEOUS” (v. 29). This speaks of God’s HOLINESS or PERFECTION. “Righteous” means that everything that He does is done rightly or perfectly.

✓ In verse 27 it speaks of “the anointing which you received” and “His anointing.” John tells us that this “anointing” which you received from Him [God] “abides in you. This speaks of the specific role of the HOLY SPIRIT who comes to reside in every believer at the moment of salvation. This is the RIGHTEOUSNESS that we are allowed to share with God. His perfect righteousness dwells IN US, and so we are able to perform acts of RIGHTEOUSNESS and show fruit of righteousness as we yield to Him who dwells in us. So just as God’s LIGHT is connected with our Heavenly Father, God’s RIGHTEOUSNESS is connected with God the Holy Spirit. (And I’ll be you can guess who is connected to the third shared characteristic!)

✓ We are able to SHARE his righteousness with we ‘abide in Him.” This is stated both at the end of verse 27 and again in the beginning of verse 28. “Abiding” means to “hang out” or “dwell.” It isn’t an “on and off” thing, but a continual choice of staying close to God.

✓ Note the results of this “abiding in Him”:

- a. Helping with spiritual perception of right from wrong (v. 26-27)
- b. Confidence in your Christian walk and in His coming for you (v. 28)
- c. Practicing acts of righteousness in His strength (v. 29)

When we are “abiding in Him” and letting his holy perfection flow through us, there is one more important result that David talks about in Psalm 139.

**Psalm 139:19-22** *O that You would slay the wicked, O God. Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. For they speak against You wickedly, and Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies.*

Yes, this passage is a bit discomfoting and “negative.” Yes, this passage doesn’t sound like the “love your enemies” of Jesus’ teaching. But it truly reflects the way we must hate what God hates in sinfulness and also those who bring that sin to bear upon others. It is not that God doesn’t love them in the sense that he “loves the whole world,” but that He hates the bloodshed, the taking of His name in vain, the hating of His children and the rising up against the Almighty. In their opposition to God, they have become the enemies of those who love and serve God. This is a true depiction of how God’s perfect righteousness cannot tolerate unrighteousness. Just as light and darkness cannot cohabitate, neither can righteousness and unrighteousness. Jesus said it this way: “He who is not with me is against me.” - i.e. my enemy. (Matthew 12:30)

From a **FAITH ENGAGE** standpoint – we must hate what God hates as well as love what God loves. And we must help our friends to know that God is not only merciful, but also just (righteous). He cannot tolerate rebellion to what is true and right. And as we share His righteousness, we also must choose to reject anything that is not true and right.

This shared attribute of God is commanded in **1 Peter 1:16**: “*You shall be holy, for I am holy.*”

## **GOD IS LOVE**

If light exposes darkness and righteousness hates unrighteousness, then love is the attribute of God that is most amazing, for He loves even those in darkness and those practicing unrighteousness. **Romans 5:8** *But God demonstrates His own love for you in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

✓ 1 John 4:7-12 is where we find the passage stating that “God is LOVE.” By “love” we mean that quality of God which reaches to man UNCONDITIONALLY and SACRIFICIALLY to provide for and nurture a healthy and ongoing relationship.

✓ We can never love perfectly as God does. But as his love is like the sun which shines its own light, our love is like the moon which reflects His love to others. In that way, truly “we love, because He first loved us” (v. 19).

✓ Showing God’s unconditional love to others is the number one way that we demonstrate our faith relationship with God, for “*The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*” (v. 8) When we fail to demonstrate God’s love to another we show our lack of relationship to the source of love.

✓ Just as the Heavenly Father is best associated with LIGHT, and the Holy Spirit is best associated with RIGHTEOUSNESS, so Jesus, the Son of God is best associated with LOVE. It was the LOVE of God, shown in the person of a God/man that revealed this attribute. Creation shows God’s power, but not necessarily His love. Jesus showed us God’s character of love.

✓ It was Jesus Himself who said in the upper room the night before He was crucified:

**John 13:34** *A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, 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.*”

And this is our clear **FAITH ENGAGE** mandate – that we love others as He loved us – unconditionally and sacrificially to provide for and nurture a healthy and ongoing relationship.

**Psalms 139:23-24** How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.

## SUMMARY

I believe that these are the 3 great shared attributes of God, best revealed in the letter of 1 John, and referenced in the closing verses of Psalm 139. Just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are 3 in 1 – one God in 3 distinct persons, so these 3 attributes are also 3 in 1 – 3 distinct attributes best shown to us by each of the 3 persons of the Trinity, and yet really one – God reaching out to man to enable RELATIONSHIP.

I will close with this: One minister described the love of God for man by putting the following words into God's mouth:

*"I know you. I created you. I have loved you from your mother's womb. You have fled - as you now know - from my love, but I love you nevertheless and not-the-less however far you flee. It is I who sustains your very power of fleeing, and I will never finally let you go. I accept you as you are. You are forgiven. I know all your sufferings. I have always known them. Far beyond your understanding, when you suffer, I suffer. I also know all the little tricks by which you try to hide the ugliness you have made of your life from yourself and others. But you are beautiful. You are beautiful more deeply within than you can see. You are beautiful because you yourself, in the unique person that only you are, reflect already something of the beauty of my holiness in a way which shall never end. You are beautiful also because I, and I alone, see the beauty you shall become. Through the transforming power of my love which is made perfect in weakness you shall become perfectly beautiful. You shall become perfectly beautiful in a uniquely irreplaceable way, which neither you nor I will work out alone, for we shall work it out together."*

From "Known: by the Reverend Dr. Charles K. Robinson, Nov. 4, 1973