

King's Online Bible School
Doctrine 101: Learning about God

Self-Existent (adapted from Wayne Grudem's *Bible Doctrines*)

1. God's existence does not depend on anything or anyone. God exists by virtue of His very Own nature.

This is in contrast with all other existence. We ourselves are entirely dependent on others for our existence. We are dependent, first of all, on God, Who created us as well as all the existence in the universe and the world that provides the context for our lives. By His choice and His power of procreation He made each of us dependent on our parents for existence.

We are dependent on His sustaining power that enables us to go on living and we need the care and provision He brings into our lives through others.

We are also dependent on Him and on the influences around us for all that we are becoming. Each of our lives has been shaped by many others.

I do not have the option of being independent. We are entirely dependent beings. This is in complete contrast to the nature of God.

a. God always was and is.

Before mountains were brought forth
Or You had given birth to earth and world
Even from everlasting to everlasting You are God (Ps 90:2).

He was never created and He never came into being. His being has always been and will always be exactly what it is.

We, in contrast, are created by causes outside ourselves and we are changing as we are impacted by outside forces. We are always reacting to and being influenced by situations, circumstances, and the people around us. God is unaffected by all that is outside of Him. Before anything else was He existed eternally. His creating does not change that. He creates to reveal the glory and wonder of Who He is. Nothing He creates alters anything about Him. Who He is is not affected by it.

He obviously has no need of outside sources to continue to exist. He is eternally self-sufficient. He is the source and sustaining necessity for all other existence.

b. All else that exists is dependent on His existence.

"Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created" (Rev 4:11).

All that exists exists because of Him. It is an expression of His existence.

Science recognizes that in the natural world every effect must have a cause. There is always some explanation how it came about. There is always something that preceded each occurrence and that caused it.

Only God is not an effect. There is nothing that existed before Him that explains His existence. He never came into being. He always is. He is the ultimate Cause of all that there is. This is the

essential difference between creation (and creatures), on the one hand, and the Creator, on the other. "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

2. God does not need anyone or anything.

God does not need any part of creation in order to exist; but neither does He need any part of creation for any other reason. He is absolutely independent and self-sufficient.

a. God does not need anything from mankind.

The God Who made the world and all things in it, since He is the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things (Acts 17:24-25).

He does not need our help. Any way our lives could be of an advantage to Him would only be because of what He has imparted into our lives in the first place.

God did not need our help in creation. He did not need our help in bringing us to birth. He did not need our help in giving us new birth. The future of His plan and will is not dependent on our service. He chooses to use us, but He is not dependent on us for bringing about His plan or for its success.

b. God does not need relationship with mankind to cure any sense of loneliness.

The night before His death, Jesus spoke these words to the Father: "Now, glorify Me together with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

Some people have suggested that God created human beings because He was lonely and wanted fellowship in order to be completely happy in His existence. But there has eternally been love and fellowship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit which Jesus describes as "glory."

In fact, Jesus is eager for those of us who belong to Him to be there with Him so we can behold that glory.

Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world (John 17:24).

It is so much more than any relationship or love man knows or experiences. There was nothing lacking in God which required that He create mankind.

3. God's utter self-sufficiency sets Him apart from all creation.

Since God is a self-existent being and we are creatures who are dependent on others for our being, His being is a fundamentally different kind of being to ours.

It is not just that He has existed for longer (a quantitative difference in being); He exists with an entirely different being (a qualitative difference). It is more than the difference between a raindrop and an ocean or between the sun and a candle. If we are trying to explain God by comparing between a small amount of water and a great quantity of water, we do not understand how different He is than we are.

None of our littleness or the limitations of our existence as created beings can lead us on to a full an accurate perception of Who He is and what He is like. There are similarities between God and man, who is created in the image of God. But there are also vast differences.

4. While God does not need us, He chooses to delight in us.

The fact that God does not need us does not make us insignificant. We are meaningful because God chose to create us to be meaningful to Him. It is not for us to satisfy any need He has. No created being could possibly contribute anything to the Creator that did not already come from Him in the first place. Our significance is in the fact that He wants us. We are His desire and His delight.

a. We are created for His glory.

Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the ends of the earth,
Everyone who is called by My name,
And whom I have created for My glory,
Whom I have formed, even whom I have made (Isa 43:6-7).

We, along with nature and the whole of creation, exist for the glory of God. All was created that it and we might glorify Him. As His redeemed creatures, that privilege is extended to the point that, while He does not need us, we are still invited into the glory of the relationships that have eternally existed in the Godhead (John 17:21-24).

b. He delights in us.

The Lord your God is in your midst,
A victorious Warrior.
He will exult over you with joy.
He will be quiet in His love,
He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy (Zeph 3:17-18).

He does not need us, but He chose to delight in us and for that reason He gave us the privilege of participating in His plans and actions. He could have fulfilled His purpose in other ways. But He chose to do it in a way that He would be doing it with us. There can be no greater basis for personal significance than this.

How freeing and how wonderful it is to realize that we are not created for what we are able to do, but for who we are to God. He wanted each of us to be. That is what is most important to Him. He loves and delights in us. Everything He brings into our lives and everything He asks of us is for this purpose. It is for being in relationship with Him.