

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

**God is Omnipresent** (adapted from Wayne Grudem's *Bible Doctrines*)

God is present everywhere. He is present at every point in space and time with His whole being. Yet He acts differently in different places at the same time.

**1. God is everywhere.**

There is nowhere in heaven or earth where God is not always present.

"Am I a God Who is near," declares Yahweh,  
"And not a God far off?  
Can a man hide himself in hiding places,  
So I do not see him?" declares Yahweh.  
"Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the Lord (Jer 23:23-24).

More than this, when He is present everywhere, it is God Himself (not just a part of Him) Who is fully present in each place. All of Who God is is present in every place at the same time. His entire attention and fullness is everywhere.

God is infinite Spirit. He does not have a physical being or any physical properties. We must not think of God's omnipresence in a physical way, supposing that He is so big that a part of Him is everywhere. (One of the wrong conclusions to which this can lead is Pantheism, which supposes that everything is God or that God is everything that exists). God's whole being is everywhere in His creation. He is fully present everywhere, but is always distinct from creation.

Note: It is important to distinguish between God, Who is infinite Spirit, and angels, who are created finite spirits. Angels are like God in that they do not have physical properties, but they are very different from Him, because they can only be present in one place at a time.

**2. God is present in different ways to do different things.**

While God is present everywhere all the time, he acts differently according to His wise and good purposes. So our experience of His presence may vary.

**a. God is present to sustain.**

This is a function of God's presence on which all creation depends constantly. God is always acting everywhere in His Universe as the One Who sustains it. It is His presence that keeps the universe and everything in it functioning in the way that he intends. If God would remove His presence for one millisecond, then that from which He removed His presence would disintegrate.

"In Him all things hold together" (Col 1:17).

"He upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb 1:3). Christ is present upholding every atom and molecule in the universe by the word of His power. The ability of a stone to hold together is not in a power its molecular structure possesses independently; it is because Christ enables it to be.

How much more this is evident in living creatures, which are so vulnerable and so dependent on breath and complex inner physical processes for every second of their existence.

Thou dost take away their breath, they expire,  
And return to their dust.  
Thou dost send forth Thy breath, they are created;  
And Thou dost renew the face of the ground (Ps 104:29-30).

“He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:27-28).

He is always ensuring that all things are working toward the purposes of His will.

**b.** God may be present to punish.

We sometimes think of hell as the opposite of God's presence, or as the absence of God. But God is everywhere; it is just that sometimes God is present to punish rather than to bless. God's presence in hell is only as an expression of His wrath.

Though they dig into Sheol,  
From there shall My hand take them;  
And though they ascend to heaven,  
From there I will bring them down.  
And though they hide on the summit of Carmel,  
I will search them out and take them from there;  
And though they conceal themselves from My sight on the floor of the sea,  
From there I will command the serpent and it will bite them.  
And though they go into captivity before their enemies,  
From there I will command the sword that it slay them,  
And I will set My eyes against them for evil and not for good (Amos 9:1-4).

God responds to each person according to that person's heart and life. In His pursuit of man, His presence is sometimes a presence to judge and to punish. It is not the time to bless.

**c.** God may be present to bless.

Most frequently when the Bible speaks of God being present, especially when His presence is something of which we are aware, it is His blessing that we experience.

Two of the symbols of His presence in the Old Testament were the Tabernacle and then, later, the Temple.

“Let them construct a sanctuary for Me. . . . And there I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel” (Ex 25:22).

Because God is present everywhere, we know that God was present throughout the entire camp and in all the nations and peoples. But He provided the tabernacle as a special focal point of His presence to make men aware of His intent to be present and of the way for them to respond to His presence.

**d.** We have different experiences in relation to His presence.

God's omnipresence is a fact. It is an unchanging, constant reality. But our experience of His present varies.

There are times when we do not feel like God is present. In fact, there are times when the Bible speaks of God as being "far away."

Behold, Yahweh's hand is not so short  
That it cannot save;  
Neither is His ear dull  
That it cannot hear.  
But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,  
And your sins have hid His face from you, so that He does not hear (Is 59:2).

The Lord is far from the wicked,  
But He hears the prayer of the righteous (Prov 15:29).

Such verses do not mean that God is not there, but that He is not there to bless or to give any evidence or enjoyment of His presence. At times our consciousness of His presence is withdrawn. The Bible refers to this as God "hiding His face" from us.

He will do this in His wise and loving dealings in our lives. Sometimes it is a result of our sin, but not always. There are times He will hide because He wants us to move on from the way we have known Him to become aware of Him in a new way. There are times when He hides because He wants us to seek. There are instances when He is calling us to hold on to the truth of His Word without any immediate confirmation. He is refining and strengthening our faith, so that when a crisis comes we will not waver or be overwhelmed by our circumstances. Though we will not be able to see Him we will have learned to know He is there, keeping, watching, and helping us.

This is Who God is. He fills all things. He cannot not be present. Even when we cannot feel His presence, He is nonetheless there, knowing us, holding us securely, and responding to our hearts according to His great love and infinite wisdom.