

OMNIPOTENT GOD, PSALM 139:13-18

What is God Really Like? #3

◆Intro: Imagine a 150 foot Douglas Fir tree standing right here. Do you think you could push it over? Could your truck push it over? May 18, 1980, 8:32 am. The Cascade Range of state of Washington exploded. The blast ripped 1300 feet of the mountain with the force of 10 million tons of TNT, or the equivalent force of five Hiroshima explosions of the atomic bomb. A three-hundred degree heat wave traveling at two-hundred miles per hour killed life as far away as sixteen miles. It leveled 150' douglas firs like scattering toothpicks at seventeen miles away. The explosion of Mt. St. Helen changed the face of the majestic old growth forest from an emerald paradise, to an ash-covered, lunar landscape. The blast was heard over seven hundred miles away! The force took the 9677 foot mountain down to 8363 feet. Over two hundred square miles of trees were turned into a river of logs in Spirit Lake. The once scenic Harmony Falls no longer exists!

◆Maybe you are up against a hundred and fifty feet of something somewhere in your life. Maybe there's a shadow of a volcanic cloud looming somewhere in your life right now. I think you're gonna like what you hear today about the power of God.

◆1. In our study of what God is really like we will look today at what is called the omnipotence of God. Omnipotence means all powerful and it describes the ability of God to do anything. Sometimes we use the term "Almighty" to mean the same thing as Omnipotence. Omnipotence means that God can do anything but fail. It is a favorite theme of the biblical authors. For example:

◇ Gen. 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. (read)

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- ◇ Gen. 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."
- ◇ Job 42:2 "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.
- ◇ Jer. 32:17 "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. (read)
- ◇ Matt. 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
- ◇ Luke 1:37 For nothing is impossible with God."

◆ Obviously when we say God can do anything, we mean anything consistent with his perfect character. God cannot deny himself, turn on himself. He cannot lie or cheat or plan evil. He cannot tempt us to sin and he cannot die. Scripture is clear on all these points. However these are not limitations on his omnipotence. I remember a philosophy class years ago where the debate rages over whether God could create a rock greater than that which he himself could lift. If he could then wasn't he limited? If he couldn't then wasn't he limited. I think that discussion was foolishness.

◆ There is a title for God that I believe most captures the essence of omnipotence; one that most clearly displays what is meant when we say God is able. That term is the "creator of heaven and earth." Consider for a moment the power that creates a human person in the womb of another. The Christian view is that this same power that makes a baby, is that which holds matter together; that designed atoms with protons and neutrons; that causes a liquid to exist when two hydrogen molecules touch one oxygen molecule; the power

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behind flood waters, forest fires, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. God is creator and that quality is enough to summarize omnipotence, power. No one can create or cause to exist but God.

◆ The tale is told of modern scientists debating with God about the ability to fashion life. They claimed they had arrived at the understanding that would allow them to create a man merely from the soil, a kind of reverse process of decomposition. God said, "Ok, your on. We'll both do it and then compare." So the scientists bent down and picked up a handful of dirt and God said, "Uh-uh! Get your own dirt!" You see, no being can create. We can manipulate chemicals. We can cause reactions. We can explode, and explore, and expose, but we cannot create. We can mend, and stitch the body, but we cannot bake the flesh grow back together.

◆ In chemistry class you learn all about the periodic table of elements. These are all things that we can not break down in parts of anything else. We can find them in nature, but we can't make them or bake them. There is only so much AU in the world ("gold"). There is only so much "He' (helium) in the world. The elements don't reproduce. We can't reproduce them. But they are here? Science itself tells us for every effect there must be a cause. What is the cause? Oh, well maybe it's the big bang. Yeah, but then who pulled the trigger? We call that power God.

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◆v13 *you created my inmost being.* Not “you combined my parts.” No, “you created” my parts. The hebrew term means “possessed” or “owned”. I came from you! Am your idea.

◆v16 *my days were ordained.* *It's a pottery term.* To “form”, to squeeze the clay into a shape that wasn't before. The writer says “You shaped my days, my existence, before there was one!” To ordain is to determine that something is. It's something a creator does. He dictates what something is.

◆That reminds me of the Baptist Christian who became a catholic Christian. At his baptism in the Catholic church the priest declared, “You may have been born and raised a Baptist, but I declare you a Catholic.” The next weekend the new catholic was grilling steak when 3 friends dropped in. “Oh buddy, catholics don't eat any meat but fish on Fridays.” they said. No worries, he replied and grabbing a cup of water he turned to the grill, “You may have been born and raised a cow, but I declare you are a fish!”

◆If you have the power to ordain, to create something that is not..., well, that would make you God by definition. Only God has *that* power!

◆Ok, so what does it mean for me that God is omnipotent? I'm glad you asked.

◆2. Because God is omnipotent I do not have to live in fear. Did you know that fear is not of God?

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◆“For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7, MKJV.

◆The more we live in an awareness of God’s omnipotence, the less we live in fear. Guess what, as a follower of Jesus, as a child of God we can’t lose! If God is for us, who can possibly be against us? asks Paul in Romans 8. When you can’t sleep because of the things going over and over in your head might I suggest that you verbally turn them over to God, he’ll be up all night anyway! “God, where is my son right now? Is my daughter making good choices. I can’t do a thing to affect it at this point. I give him/her to you. God I don’t know if you want me in that job. I’m full of anxiety God because I’ve decided I want it and if I don’t get what I want I’ll be unhappy. God what do *you* want? If this road is not what you’ve chosen in my life, ok fine. Show me what is. You do the leading.” You know there is great peace when you let God be in charge of you life. Not that you’re really letting him. He’s already. But when in faith you agree with him being in charge, and that’s what this kind of praying is doing, there is greater inner peace.

◆Here’s something else about mediating on the truth of God’s omnipotence. It doesn’t mean you won’t have any problems. Because God can do anything means his will for your life is secure. He will accomplish his plans. Now you may not like all of them. And some of them will be hard. Omnipotence doesn’t mean that God doesn’t allow anything difficult or painful. It does mean that difficult and painful things cannot throw him off course. People who believe their God really is omnipotent can endure far more than we can imagine.

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◆ At the age of 35 Christian psychologist and researcher Dr. Jamie Aten was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer that had spread to his pelvis. Aten also lived through Hurricane Katrina in south MS. Aten learned that the key to both traumatic situations involved what he calls "spiritual surrender." Aten writes: Spiritual surrender helps us understand what we have control over and what we don't. In a research study I led after Katrina, we found that people who showed higher levels of spiritual surrender tended to do better. This finding didn't make sense to me at the time. It seemed like a passive faith response." Aten goes on to speak of dealing with stage 4 cancer... "Wondering if God even heard my prayers for healing, I kept praying as I walked back inside my home. Then all of a sudden I dropped to my knees and prayed the most challenging prayer of my life. Instead of continuing to pray for God's healing, I asked that God would take care of my wife and children if I didn't make it. This was the hardest prayer I had ever prayed. For the first time in my life, I truly experienced spiritual surrender. I finally understood. True spiritual surrender is far from passive—it is a willful act of obedience."

◆ Aten is advising, it would seem, the act of surrendering to the omnipotent God. The act of leaving potency to him. Remember his findings: those who can, do better! They endure better, not worse.

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◆ 3. Because God is omnipotent, anything that aligns with his will is possible for me. Think about it.

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◆1) Is it possible to make your marriage work out beautifully? Sure it is. We know it is God's best will that marriages last, and partners adapt and sacrificially love one another. It is possible. God is both able (omnipotent), and willing that this should be. Now, I will have to cooperate with his directives but I don't ever have to pretend that it's just not an option. God's omnipotence means that with him there is no such thing as a lost cause. Don't let the evil one tell you that you're one. Or that your child is one. Or that your friend is one.

◆2) What about habitual sins? One of satan's favorite lines is "You'll never beat this. You may as well quit trying and give in. This is your lot in life." Don't you believe it. I know you feel it. But that's when you pray on faith not feelings. That's when you call out and say "God I believe in you. I don't FEEL like there's any hope here. But in faith I take you at your word that there is. Help me find the way."

◆"But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it." 1 Corinthians 10:13, NLT.

◆God's omnipotence tells you that with every choice you make in line with his will, you are on the winning side!! The omnipotent nature of God leads us to conclude that if I am struggling, and I am his, then it is part of his good, ordained plan for me. Whether I can decipher it or not, he is in fact making me into the creature he has ordained. And he will even use my flaws, my mis-cooperation, my rebellions, and bend these to his good purposes. Align yourself with God. Surrender to his directions for your life.

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- ◆ Paul says that he who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it!
- ◆ Isaiah says those that wait on the Lord will renew their strength and mount up on wings. But we do have to wait on the Lord, go with his direction.
- ◆ Solomon wrote “in all your paths acknowledge him, and he will make you path straight.”
- ◆ **Conclusion:** You know, another closely related concept to God’s omnipotence is what we call God’s providence. You see the english word “provide” in there. Providence is what God does with his omnipotence. He is almighty and with his might he provides! I love the catechism on this topic. Listen.

◆Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. Providence is
the almighty and ever present power of God
by which he upholds, as with his hand,
heaven
and earth
and all creatures,
and so rules them that
leaf and blade,
rain and drought,
fruitful and lean years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
prosperity and poverty--
all things, in fact, come to us
not by chance
but from his fatherly hand.

Q. How does the knowledge
of God's creation and providence
help us?

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- A. We can be patient when things go against us,
thankful when things go well,
and for the future we can have
good confidence in our faithful God and Father
that nothing will separate us from his love.
All creatures are so completely in his hand
that without his will
they can neither move nor be moved.

◆ One final thought on this Right To Life Sunday: There is nothing more special to God, in all the created reality than the human person. Nothing bears his image like the human being. Nothing was created to be his personal possession and family like the human race. God has made each person with the intent of loving them. God sent his son to bear the eternal punishment due our sins, so we could go on living in his love into eternity with him. His love was before time and our death in time doesn't stop it from getting to us!

◆ “[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,” 2 Timothy 1:9, NIV.

◆ As our Psalm today demonstrates, God's love for a person begins even before they are formed in the womb!