

God's Attributes

BY JILL NELSON



P U B L I S H I N G

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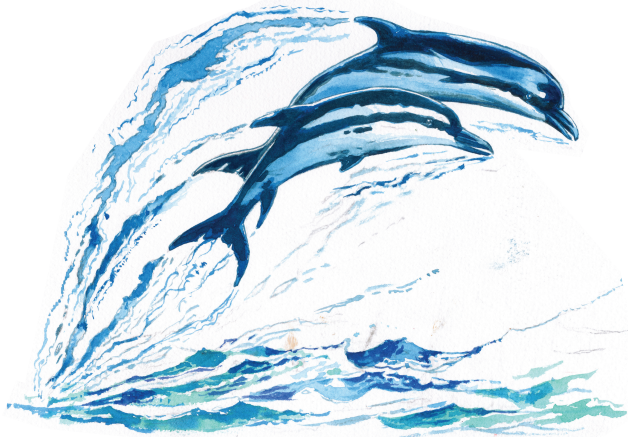
I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.

—Psalm 145:1–3

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Preface

Every day, children are full of a myriad of questions. They have a God-given curiosity to know the “who, what, where, when, and why” of everything around them. Discovering answers is how they grow in knowledge and understanding. But some questions tower above all others in importance. As adults, we have the sacred responsibility to direct them to the most essential questions of all: Who is God? What is He like? How should I act toward God?

God’s Attributes has been written to address these questions. In looking at God’s Word, children will be led to discover the incomparable beauty and grandeur of the greatness and worth of God. It’s important to note that there is a strategic flow to the chapters that is meant to lead to a clear presentation of the gospel. Through this structure, children can better understand the essence, means, and goal of the gospel within the larger context of God’s character.

May this book serve as a tool by which the Holy Spirit would be pleased to awaken hearts and cause children to grow in their capacity to be absolutely stunned beyond measure by the one true God. May our children, like Paul, come to say with wholehearted conviction,

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. (Philippians 3:8)

Introduction

How to Use This Book

This book was written to give parents an opportunity to present solid truth to their children and to encourage real-life application of that truth.

Relational

Children receive more encouragement to learn when truth is presented by a trusted individual. Your positive, relational parent-child commitment will be a real benefit when you sit down together to read this book. Your time together over the Word should be positive, affirming, and loving.

Interactive

There is a greater impact when an individual *discovers* truth instead of just hearing it presented. Many questions have been incorporated into the text of this book to encourage your child to wonder and think critically. The process of discovery will be circumvented if you don't give your child adequate time to think and respond. After asking a question, wait for a response. If your child has difficulty, ask the question in a different way or give a few hints.

Questions and responses can be springboards for more questions and discovery as you interact with your child's mind and heart. The Holy Spirit is the real teacher, so depend on Him to give both you and your child thoughts and truths to explore together, and to bring the necessary understanding. Take the time to work through each story at a leisurely pace—giving time for interaction and further dialogue. The goal should be to get the material into the child, not just to get the child through the material.

Understandable

These stories have been written with attention given to explaining difficult or potentially new concepts. Some of these concepts may take time for your child to digest. Allow your child to ponder new truths. Read the story more than once, allowing the truth to be better understood and integrated into your child's theological framework. At times, have your child read parts of the lesson, giving an opportunity for visual learning.

Because vocabulary can be child-specific, define the particular words foreign to your child. Retell difficult sections in familiar wording, and ask questions to be sure your child understands the truth being taught. Note that most chapters focus on a particular attribute of God. Each is highlighted in ALL CAPS and followed by a child-friendly definition. For example, "God is INCOMPREHENSIBLE—God is more than we can fully understand."

Theological

More than just acquainting your child with an understanding of some distinct attributes of God, this book is building a foundation of biblical theology for your child. As your child begins to correctly understand who God is and how He interacts with the world, he or she won't have just a vague notion of God, but will be able to relate to the God of the Bible.

Because the Word of God has convicting and converting power, Bible texts are quoted word for word in some parts. Some of these verses may be beyond the child's understanding, so you may want to explain unfamiliar words or thoughts. Even though clear comprehension may be difficult, hearing the Word itself is a means that the Holy Spirit often uses to encourage faith in your child (Romans 10:17). Do not minimize the effectual influence of God's Word in the tender souls of children.

Since the Word of God is living and active, allow the child to read the actual Bible verses as much as possible. Also, encourage your child to memorize some of the verses so he or she can meditate on them at other times.

The gospel is presented numerous times throughout the book. Use this as an opportunity to share God’s work of grace in your life, and to converse with your child about his or her spiritual condition. Be careful not to confuse spiritual interest with converting faith, and take care to avoid giving premature assurances. Fan the flames of gospel-inspired conviction and tenderness toward the sacrificial love of Jesus without prematurely encouraging your child to pray “the sinner’s prayer.”¹

Application

Understanding the truth is essential, but understanding alone is insufficient. Truth must also be embraced in the heart and acted upon in daily life. Often, children cannot make the connection between a biblical truth and real-life application, so you, the parent, must help bridge the gap.

Consider the following quotation by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

We must always put things in the right order, and it is Truth first. . . . The heart is always to be influenced through the understanding—the mind, then the heart, then the will. . . . But God forbid that anyone should think that it ends with the intellect. It starts there, but it goes on. It then moves the heart and finally the man yields his will. He obeys, not grudgingly or unwillingly, but with the whole heart. The Christian life is a glorious perfect life that takes up and captivates the entire personality.²

Spend a few days or even a week on each story. Reread the story, discuss the truths, and follow the suggestions in the Learning to Trust God section. Most importantly, help your child to see that God is who He says He is, and help him

1. Some excellent resources for parents regarding the salvation of children can be found at www.truth78.org, including a booklet titled *Helping Children to Understand the Gospel*.

2. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), 61–62.

or her to act in response to the truth. Point out God's involvement in daily life and thank Him for being true to His Word.

Prayer

Ultimately, our efforts are effective only if the Holy Spirit breathes on our teaching and quickens it to the heart. Pray not only before going through the stories, but also in the succeeding days, that your child would see the incomparable greatness and worth of God and experience Him as his or her greatest treasure through faith in Christ.

The Most Important Questions

Have you ever thought about how many questions we ask every day? Questions like, “When are we going to the park? Where did I leave my book? How long until dinner? Why do I have to clean my room? What happened to the television? Who is our new neighbor?” . . . and on and on. Why so many questions? Because we are curious and want to know things—especially things that matter to us.

Of course, some questions are more important than others. For instance, “Can the doctor help Grandma get well?” is much more important than “What can I have for a snack?” But did you know that there are certain questions that are more important than *any* others? They are the MOST important questions in the whole world—the most important questions for every person, no matter how young or old they are or where they live. Questions like . . .

Who is God, but the LORD? (2 Samuel 22:32)

Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11)

What are these questions asking? We could say that they ask two main things: *Who is God?* and *What is God like?*

These two short questions are the MOST important questions of all! How can that be? They are most important because their answers matter more than anything else.

Where would you find the answers to these two most important questions? God Himself tells us:

The unfolding of [God's] words gives light;
it imparts understanding. (Psalm 119:130)

Every word of God proves true. (Proverbs 30:5)

All Scripture is breathed out by God. (2 Timothy 3:16)

Where can you find the answers to these most important questions? In the Bible! God has given us the Bible so that we can know and understand who God is and what He is like. Yes, your dad and mom and others have probably taught you true answers about who God is and what God is like, but those true answers came from the Bible. There is no other book like the Bible. Because it is God's own words, it tells the absolute TRUTH—and it tells us the truth about God. For example, in the Bible, God says,



I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like me. (Isaiah 46:9)

Who is God? He tells us the answer: “I am God, and there is no other.” The God of the Bible is the one and only God. *What is God like?* “There is none like me.” That means that no one and nothing else can compare to God. He is one of a kind. God is so different and special; He is like nothing else.

But do you think that this one Bible verse *completely* answers the two most important questions? Does it answer *everything* that God wants us to know about who He is and what He is like? Of course not. We know this because the Bible is filled with thousands upon thousands of verses that tell us more wonderful, exciting, and awesome things about God!

But there is another MOST important question to ask after “Who is God?” and “What is God like?” What is it? Before guessing, imagine for a moment that you are playing outside and you see a brilliant flash of lightning and hear a huge clap of thunder. Next, the wind blows so hard that the trees begin to sway and rain starts to pour down. How might you respond? Why might one kind of response lead to safety and another kind of response lead to danger? There are right and wrong ways to act toward a thunderstorm. Now can you guess what the third most important question might be?

How should I act toward God?

Because there is only one true God and because He is more spectacular than a thunderstorm or anything else, there are certain ways you should act toward Him—right and wrong ways to respond. You don’t need to guess what these are because, just as the Bible tells us the truth about who God is and what He is like, the Bible also tells us the truth about how all people should act toward God. Here is just one example:

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

In this book, we will be going on a kind of treasure hunt through God’s Word looking for answers to the questions *Who is God? What is God like?* and *How should I act toward God?* The answers are meant to amaze you beyond anything you could ever imagine and give you hope, comfort, strength, peace, and more happiness than you ever thought you could have! In fact, learning the answers about who God is, what He is like, and how you should act toward Him are meant to lead you to find life and joy forever and ever!

LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- ✦ Read 2 Samuel 22:32 and Exodus 15:11 again. Do you see any special words in these verses that hint at or tell you something about who God is and what He is like? Read Deuteronomy 6:5 again. Why would this be a right response to God? Is that the way you respond to God? Can you think of other right ways to respond to God?
- ✦ Read 2 Timothy 3:14–17. Why is knowing the Bible so important? What does the Bible “**make you wise for**”? How does verse 15 answer the question “How should I act toward God?” Why is this more important than anything else?
- ✦ **Activity:** Take about ten minutes to make a list of things you already know about God—special words that describe who God is and what He is like. How would a person check your answers to see if they are correct? What is one way you could rightly respond to God this week?