

Series: Incommunicable Attributes of God #1690

**Title: Various Scriptures
*God Has No Needs***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. I hope you are well. And I appreciate you taking this time out of what I assume is a busy morning, afternoon, or evening for you, so that we can learn more about who God is. In order to demonstrate that God is self-sufficient and to speak of divine aseity we have been following the logical argument that our brother-in-Christ John Frame has put together.

The argument goes as follows: God owns all things. Everything possessed by creatures comes from God. When we give something back to God, we give Him only what He has first given us. When we give something back to God, He is not obligated to recompense us. God owes nothing to any creature. God has no needs. Therefore, God is a se. God is self-sufficient.

In a moment we will focus on point number six: God has no needs. And if you have your Bible with you, open it to the Book of Isaiah and also Acts. Isaiah and Acts. But I was reflecting last night on how prevalent it is for us to think, at some juncture of our lives, that God does owe us. I think this is especially true for those of us who serve Him as lay volunteers in churches, as pastors or ministers, as workers in Christian non-profits or Christian schools, home schoolers and the like. Missionaries are especially susceptible to this. "I have gone halfway around the world to serve Christ, I have sacrificed and given up so much, Lord, you owe me."

Having provided leadership and pastoral care to missionaries for several years, I saw that attitude stirring in many (not all, but not none). It manifests itself in a sense of entitlement. "I deserve this break," "Or I have been working hard serving God in this foreign land so people back home need to support me with more financial resources, gifts, and benefits." If they do not, a sense of resentment quickly settles in. But, before I sound too harsh towards others, I have to be honest and say that sometimes I have also felt this way, although because of my personality I do not broadcast it.

"Here I am slaving away in ministry, Jesus, working hard. Being diligent. And yet I am not quite getting the rewards I thought I would. Where is the listener mail? Where are the Christians who are growing as a result of my effort? Where are the miraculous stories of someone unintentionally landing on *God Is* on the car radio and becoming Christian as a result of what they hear?" Maybe I will throw a pity party and that will show the Almighty that I need Him to supply me with some payment for all my effort? Friends, I also have fallen prey sometimes in the past to feeling that when I give something to God that He is obligated to compensate me. But, as we saw last time, God is not.

Luke 17.10, "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'" The words of Christ to us. Now, that is not to say that ministry is pure drudgery and slog. It is not! Oh, it is not. But, for anyone tuning in who has been feeling that your service to God is not worth it, because you are not getting from it what you expected, I say that I hear you, I have been there, but let's renew our commitment to work for the Lord again today without anticipating any immediate, earthly prizes.

That reflection comes from my heart to, I hope, yours. And can be applied to every Christian, not just to those in (quote/unquote) "ministry." Every believer is doing ministry where ever you are today. This, the Bible teaches.

Also, I say to those of you who are teaching and those of you who listen to and agree with those who teach that God will bless us with health and wealth if we will just give generously and by faith to the ministry, I say shame on you and I urge you to repent of this false teaching before God and to immediately stop corrupting believers with this which is not true. God is *not* obligated to give anyone health, healing, or financial resources no matter what they give to Him.

If you have fallen victim to some preacher or healer somewhere who has promised you'll be blessed if you just increase your faith and send them money, and you are discouraged because that blessing has not come. Or worse, your faith in God Himself is weak or growing non-existent as a result of you not getting what you were promised, I say to you, *God never promised you that*. Do not blame God. Blame the false teacher. And stop listening to him or her. Stop watching them on the TV or internet. And stop sending those charlatans your money. Instead, receive solid Bible teaching, sound doctrine that will show you how you can cry out to God to meet your needs, trusting in Him, without trying to give him something in exchange.

I stress: When we give something back to God, we give Him only what He has first given us. He is not obligated to compensate us. God owes nothing to any creature. These are all part of the reason why God is self-sufficient, but these are also very practical points of application for Christian people. So, some application today. I really do care about people, and I have a special concern for men and women who have been suckered in by false teachers. And as we have said, theology is *both* theoretical *and* practical.

OK, let's get into the Bible and see where we find, point six, God has no needs. I will start with these compelling comments from Dr. Frame, quote, "God gives to us not so we will help Him to repair some lack in His being and life, but because He is the First Giver. He is not dependent on us, for then He would *owe* His existence or His well-being to us. This truth has important relevance to the worship of God's people (*Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, 408-409)." From this, he takes us into the Isaiah text to show us how God speaks of idolatry. What we will find is a contrast between worship of the true God versus worship of the idol (false gods).

Turn to Isaiah chapter 40. I will read verses 19 and 20. Here is what the idolater does. Isaiah 40, verses 19 and 20, "**As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, a goldsmith plates it with gold, and a silversmith fashions chains of silver. ²⁰ He who is too impoverished for such an offering selects a tree that does not rot; he seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman to prepare an idol that will not totter.**" This is how the one who worships idols goes about making his idol.

Listen also to Isaiah 41, verse 17, "**So the craftsman encourages the smelter, and he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, saying of the soldering, 'It is good'; and he fastens it with nails, so that it will not totter.**" And Isaiah 46, verse 6, "**Those who lavish gold from the purse and weigh silver on the scale hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; they bow down, indeed they worship it.**"

The prophet Isaiah is making the case that the idol is dependent on the person who makes it. How unlike the true God, who is dependent on no person. We find this again in stark terminology over in Isaiah chapter 44, verses 14-17. Find Isaiah 44 and verse 14.

"Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak and raises it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow. Then it becomes something for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image and falls down before it. ¹⁶ Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, 'Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire.' ¹⁷ But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god.'"

When we read that and think about it we see how ridiculous this making of an idol and worshipping it is. From the same wood that made a fire to warm the man and bake his bread. From the same wood that is used to roast meat. From this same wood is then made an idol so the man can fall down before it and pray to it?! Here is what Dr. Frame says, "The idol is dependent on man. Therefore, it is ridiculous that a man should worship it. To make an idol, you must be skillful. You must know what wood to use, because you don't want your god to rot on you; and you must make it carefully, because you don't want your god to topple.

And of course, it is your choice as to what wood you want to burn and what you want to worship. You are the one who saves the god from flaming destruction. So the Lord mocks the kind of worship in which the god is dependent on the worshiper, in which the worshiper meets the god's *needs* (4:10)."

Great insight. And I invite you to read this for yourself and think about it. Isaiah 44, verses 14-17. How sadly ironic it is that the idol is dependent on the person who made it. *God* is not dependent on the people He has made. That's the point and we will pick up here next time with more to be said. God is self-sufficient. Be sure and be with us as we continue to discover all this means.

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