**GREAT MEN…GREATER GOD**

***Knowing & Experiencing The God Who Is Forges Men of Distinction***

**New Series: January 9,10, 11, 2018 All sites**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**Hey** guys Happy New Year…Well we’re off and running at FORGE as we enter our 5th year.

Our mission hasn’t changed! Our mission is to build great men as God defines greatness by helping men to be gripped with how the grace of God energizes Biblical manhood.

That’s it…that’s our mission.

Repeat.

Great manhood.

You see the grace of God in the Gospel is needed not only when we become Christians but every day as we live as Christians.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is what fuels manhood and that’s what all men deeply desire at their core: **To be real men.**

Today we begin a new series:

**GREAT MEN, GREATER GOD.**

The theme of this series is this:

***Knowing & Experiencing The God Who Is Forges Men of Distinction***

**Repeat**

We’ll be studying in January and February what the Apostle Paul calls: THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

The attributes of God are what we know to be true of God.

 They could also be called the perfections of God.

 In essence we’ll be studying who God reveals Himself to be. He reveals His nature, His being, His perfections, He reveals Who He is in His

 Names

 Actions

 Works and in His

 Character

We see God’s attributes everywhere in Scripture and in Creation.

Check out what Paul says:

**Romans 1:18-23 (ESV)**

**18 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.**

**Up on Screen: v20 only**

**Romans 1:20**

**20For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.**

**21For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.”**

**The NIV at verse 20: attributes is “qualities”.**

The Apostle Paul is teaching here that people ignore the self-revelation of God to their peril!

Frankly I like how Pat Morley put it:

 ***“There is a God we want and a God who is, and they are not the same God. The turning point in a man’s life is when he accepts the God who is and not the God he wants.”***

Why is it a turning point in a man’s life when he accepts the God who is and not the God he wants?

**ILL A.W. Tozer: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."**

It’s the turning point in our life. Why?

Because we men tend to have delusions of personal grandeur rather than visions of God’s grandeur. It’s ridiculous if you stop to think about it but true! We would always like to have the position of God and think we’re not totally bad candidates should the vacancy ever come up.

 But as Paul says as in Romans 1:20 as we look at creation, we see that all of this didn’t get here by accident. God’s eternal and independent power and divine nature are written all over creation. When a man comes to the end of himself and says:

**“God is God. He is Who He reveals Himself to be and I can’t change that but I must and will adapt and submit to His superior power and attributes.”**

When a man gets to that place in his spiritual journey, when he is ready to recognize that God is infinitely superior to him in every way, then he is ready to become a real man…a man of distinction. Because at that point of accepting God as He is, unreservedly, a man finally is living in the real world, and he willingly moves closer to God and is transformed by the true reality of who God is and he will adapt as a man to who God is.

It is life changing to accept the God who is, not the God I want, because the God Who Is Always Wins, and the god I want doesn’t exist and never existed and will never exist!

To demand God shift to me, is the height of insanity!

The way to greatness is to be with true Greatness. That is, to be with God.

And that’s why the name and theme of this series:

**GREAT MEN…GREATER GOD**

***Knowing & Experiencing The God Who Is Forges Men of Distinction***

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**Now you say: “WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD? HOW MANY ARE THERE?”**

A quick list of the attributes of God as revealed in the Bible are:

1. Self-Existence (Aseity)
2. Eternity
3. Immutability
4. Omnipotence
5. Omnipresence
6. Omniscience
7. Holiness
8. Righteousness
9. Love
10. Grace
11. Mercy
12. Patience
13. Justice
14. Goodness
15. Faithfulness
16. Wisdom
17. Infinity
18. Trinity
19. Simplicity

And there are more but these are some of the most obvious!

Now a couple of clarifications:

#1- God is the standard of these perfections, He doesn’t live up to these perfections.

 **Clarification:** There isn’t a standard external to God that He lives up to. He is the standard. He creates the standard for us. God Himself is the baseline of all perfection. There isn’t a law outside of God that God happens to fulfill perfectly. He is the embodiment of the Law. There isn’t a standard of righteousness outside of God that He lives up to. He is that standard of perfect righteousness. Think of any attribute or virtue you can. God is the standard. That is why we are judged by His standard, and rightly so.

#2- All of these attributes work together perfectly. In other words God is Love and the perfect embodiment of Love, even when He is omnipotent, and just. When God is just, He is also loving and merciful and gracious! We may not be able to figure all of that out…but when we get to heaven we will see it is true and we won’t have any criticism to offer Him. His glory will convince us instantly that whatever He allowed is true.

#3- God reveals Himself willingly to us and there is no One in all of creation who is anything like this. God stands alone. Sui Generous. One of a kind.

Because of His infinity…we will never exhaust the knowledge of all of who God is in all of time and eternity!

* You’ll never get bored with God.
* You’ll never have God in your hip pocket-ie, you’ll never have Him figured out completely nor will you ever be able to control Him.
* Your dignity and mine is directly proportional to how close you are to this One of a Kind, Supremely Great God.

Truth: Relational Proximity to Greatness Determines Dignity.

**And** what is our core identity in Christ because of what Jesus has done for us in His life, death, burial and resurrection?

Yes…We are beloved and redeemed sons of the Most High God!

You’re dignity and mine can’t get any higher than that!

Ok…let’s talk about the first Attribute of God on the list:

**THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF GOD**

God is Self-Existent the Scriptures teach, and this means that God has no origin. God has no beginning point. God has no dependence on anything outside of Himself for His existence.

 A Latin term has often been given to this attribute/perfection of God: ASEITY…”a see”-or : “from oneself.”

Aseity: “existence originating from and having no source other than itself.” Now clearly there is only One Person in all existence who has this attribute! God. All the rest of us and everything else that exists has existence from someone or something else.

**ILL It’s like the angry mom who said to her disobedient teenage son:**

 ***“I brought you into this world and I can take you out of it too!”***

Everyone and Everything has his or her or its origin FROM someone or something else…but NOT God! God has no origin and therefore has no origin from anyone else.

We see this in the Bible **clearly:**

1. The Bible never talks about God coming into existence. The Bible assumes God’s existence.
2. Gen. 1:1: “In the Beginning God”-God always was and in this speaks of His self-existence from all eternity.
3. In Exodus 3- when God calls Moses to go and tell the Israelite leaders that he is supposed to lead them out of Egyptian bondage, and Moses is trying to get out of it, says this:

**Exodus 3:13-14English Standard Version (ESV)**

**13Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”**

**Up on screen:**

**Exodus 3:14**

**14God said to Moses, “I am who I am.”[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A13-14&version=ESV#fen-ESV-1594a)**] And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”**

**Footnotes:**

[**Exodus 3:14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A13-14&version=ESV#en-ESV-1594)**Or *I am what I am*, or *I will be what I will be***

This is self-existence. I AM.

When God wants Moses to know Him as the I AM…God is communicating that He wants Moses to tell the Israelites that no One less than the Existent One, the Great and Mighty and True God, the One and Only God Who Exists in and Of Himself, and Has always existed in and Of Himself is the One who is calling them to take this great step of breaking away from the Egyptians.

“I AM” is the verb of Being. Of Existence from Oneself and dependent on no other and thus as The I AM, God has supreme power over everyone and everything else because all other beings and things other than God are dependent beings.

Jesus talks about this great attribute of God, which He also possesses:

Up on Screen:

#  **John 5:25-27**

**25“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.**

This does NOT teach that the Father created the Son but that the Son is authorized by the Father to give life to other people.

Catch this: Because God has life in Himself, and so does the Son, they can give life to others in creation and in redemption!

Alright-let me pull together some of the implications for us as Christ following men about the SELF-EXISTENCE of God:

1. There is only One Self-Existent Person in the Universe and all that is in the Universe is dependent upon Him. God is that Self-Existent One and thus we men ought to revere Him as bigger than His Creation. Outside of His Creation. Much bigger and more powerful than we could ever imagine. We should let this reality of God sink in until we gain awe of God. After all, as Self-Existent, God is:

Eternal- no beginning and no end

Immutable-unchanging in His being-How can perfection get better?

Infinite-there is no limit to His being and His attributes

Incomprehensible-we can never fully know Him because He has no limits to His perfections.

Self-Sufficient

 The Self-Existence of God in a sense encompasses all His other attributes and creates awe…He is the only One who is truly Awesome and we should think deeply about Him and meditate on Him and let it give us a bigger view of God than we previously had.

1. Secondly, and logically, the Self-Existence of God, makes men the worshippers we ought to be. Guys, we have met our match! There is only One Self-Existent One and it is decidedly not us! The Self-Existence of God right sizes us as men. We are creatures and fallen creatures at that. In light of the awesome nature of God as the Self-Existent One and depend on no one, it only makes sense to bow down to that power. Before God there is no room for ego and pride! As we worship and bow down to God, we are reminded that we are not self-existent. That every breath we breathe comes from the hand of God. Everyone will worship someone or something because we were created to worship. Worship Perfection!
2. But the Self-Existence of God also must be understood in light of what God has done for us in Christ. We teach the Gospel here at FORGE.

**2 Corinthians 5:14-21English Standard Version (ESV)**

**14For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.**

**16From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14-21&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28878a)**] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19that is, in Christ God was reconciling[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14-21&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28880b)**] the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

1. Why would a Self-Existent God want anything to do with us? Why would He create us? Did He create us because He needed something from us? No. His Self-Existence proves He is totally independent from us. Does He need our worship to thrive and feel good about Himself? Does God call us to Obey Him because when we obey Him it throws off power into His being? No He’s Self-Sufficient.
2. But As Paul teaches in this text and as the entire NT teaches, God in Christ came to reconcile us to God, why? Gotta be for our good because we’re a liability to Him…sometimes a royal pain in the neck!

But Jesus comes with Compassion…”Oh Jerusalem, I came to you but you would not listen.”

God came to the people of Israel in the OT pleading with them to repent, but they would not.

Every day the Holy Spirit brings the Good News of the Cross to people….It is not too much to say that the Self-Existent God who needs nothing longs to have a relationship with us. He longs for our good.

Here’s the amazing thing:

 We long for and fight for and work for what we feel we need to survive and thrive. Money, sex, power, you name it.

But God longs for what He doesn’t need but deeply desires to give us-His Love, blessing and success as He defines it.

He longs for our good. He longs for a relationship with us. He teaches us how to live because He longs not to mess up our lives but to give us life. The Life He has in Himself, He wants to give to us, and we can only get it from Him.

If we men ever get it that the Self-Existent God isn’t trying to use us but only to build and bless us, we will become dangerous.

We’ll become dangerous to Satan’s plans to proliferate the idols of money, sex and power everywhere on the planet.

We’ll become dangerous to the political process that thinks the state is more important to God.

We’ll become dangerous to false teachings about God because we will realize how loved we are by Him that we will defend Him whenever we get a chance. Talk about leading people to Christ! We will do that and won’t be able to stop telling them about the goodness of a Self-Existent and totally independent God who needs nothing from us but wants to give us all good things. We’ll talk about Jesus!

We’ll not be so concerned for our own resources! We’ll be generous. Oh ya, you can’t out give a Self-Existent God who gives all to us and really needs nothing from us.

OK…LOOK…YOU’VE GOT 3 QUESTIONS AROUND THE TABLE TO DISCUSS…

I’ve said enough…Go after it!

**TEAM TALK**

**WRAP UP:**

 3 ESSENTIALS…49 partners.