

**Forward: Claiming the Life God Gave You**  
**Joshua 13:8 – 21:45 - Part 3**  
**Godly Character**  
**Joshua 14:6-15; 15:13-19; 21:9-12**

**Introduction:** Oxford Languages defines the word “character” as “the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.”<sup>1</sup> The Bible has a plethora of examples of men and women with exemplary character as well as those with questionable and flat-out lack of character. Now, be sure, the only person in the Bible with perfect character is Jesus, but that doesn’t mean we don’t find examples of men and women with great character throughout the Bible. If you’ve been around church long at all, you’ve probably heard about men and women like Joseph, Joshua, Ruth, and Esther. They were people who could be trusted no matter what. They refused to abandon their morals and ethics in situations you would expect most to do so. They refused to give up hope even when it seemed to be lost. They were willing to do the right thing when the wrong thing would be easier. Most importantly, they refused to stop loving and trusting God when their circumstances undoubtedly had to have tempted them to do so. These people clearly demonstrated Godly character!

However, instead of focusing on these obvious examples of Godly character, I want to take you to the story of a key leader in the history of Israel who disappears from the historical narrative in Deuteronomy 1 but then suddenly reappears in Joshua 14. His name is Caleb, and in my opinion, he is one of the greatest examples of Godly character in all the Bible.

Like Joshua, Caleb’s story begins in Egypt. C. J. Barber wrote the following,

“Caleb had been born in slavery. He grew to manhood knowing what it was like to toil all day in the heat of the Egyptian sun, to have perspiration run in rivulets down his body, to force his aching muscles to carry clay and mix mortar, and to feel the sting of the taskmaster’s whip on his back. He knew the weariness of endless servile work, and this made the promise of an inheritance in Canaan precious to him. Caleb was not an Israelite by birth. He is introduced to us as the “son of Jephunneh, the Kennizite,” and the implication is that he was a descendant of Kenaz, the son of Esau. It is probable that Jephunneh became a believer in the God of Israel and married into the tribe of Judah. He taught his son, Caleb, to believe in the promise that God had made to Abraham, and as a young lad Caleb looked forward to the time when the Israelites would be restored to the land that had been promised to them. As Caleb attained manhood, he became an outstanding leader. The families of the tribe of Judah recognized the qualities of honesty and courage, self-discipline and decisiveness which were inherent in him, and they made him the *rosh*, “prince,” of their tribe. Later a man named Moses demanded of Pharaoh that he let God’s people go. Pharaoh refused, and a series of plagues made the lives of the Egyptians miserable. Then on a never-to-be-forgotten night Pharaoh ordered their departure, and the Red Sea opened before them. A few weeks later God constituted His people a nation at Mt. Sinai, and after building the Tabernacle the sons of Israel set off for

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<sup>1</sup> <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

the Promised Land. Stopping at the southern border of Canaan, Moses sent spies into the country to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the people, and bring back evidence of the land's productivity (Numbers 13:1–14:45). Caleb was chosen as one of the spies. After six weeks of traveling up and down the country, they returned. The report given to Moses was that the land contained everything they had been promised, but ten of the spies filled the hearts of the people with fear. They described the giant Anakim whom they had seen and exaggerated the strength of the cities by claiming that their walls reached up to heaven. Caleb and Joshua stood firm against this false report, but the ten spies turned the hearts of the people against Moses. These cowardly spies died that day in a plague before the Lord, and the people who did not believe that the Lord could give them the land spent the next 38 years wandering aimlessly in the desert. Worst of all, Caleb and Joshua were kept out of their inheritance because of the unbelief of the others. ... Caleb exercised patience during the 38 years in the desert. He did not give way to complaining. He could have bemoaned the fact that his most productive years were being wasted, or blamed others for the predicament in which he found himself. Instead, he placed his confidence in God's promise and persevered without losing sight of the goal—his possession of an inheritance in the Land of Promise. Finally, when the last of the faithless Israelites had died, Joshua led the Israelites across the River Jordan: the conquest of the land had begun. And when the land had been conquered, Caleb with the leaders of the tribe of Judah came to Joshua and asked that he be given the inheritance that Moses had promised him. ... In the final analysis Caleb proves that God is faithful to His promises in spite of the delays that often leave us frustrated and resentful.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the day the people of Israel sought to kill Joshua and Caleb for faithfully calling them to trust God and conquer the promised land, Joshua and Caleb have not stopped leading the people under them to accomplish that very task. We obviously know way more about Joshua because he was the man God chose to be the successor to Moses; however, that doesn't mean Caleb wasn't playing a significant role under Joshua's leadership.

When Caleb's name reappears in the book of Joshua, we find out the significance of the meaning of his name. In Hebrew, his name means “dog.”

Note: “Caleb's name means ‘Dog’ and may reflect the honoured status of this faithful and humble ‘servant of the Lord’ (Nu. 14:24). In the Amarna (c. 1350 bc) and the Lachish letters (586 bc) vassals use the term of themselves to express their loyalty to kings.”<sup>3</sup>

Now, in one context, to be named “dog” would be the most derogatory name possible. In the New Testament era, the Jews called Gentiles dogs because they ate unholy food and practiced wicked lifestyles that, to them, resembled the natural actions of a dog. However, it's the other personas of a dog that characterize the intended meaning of Caleb's name. For instance, a dog is considered a man's best friend because it will be loyal to him even if it costs the dog its life. Furthermore, if you are into football recruiting, you've heard the term

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<sup>2</sup> Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (pp. 145–150). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Waltke, B. K. (1994). *Joshua*. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 253). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

“dog” used for the ideal football player. When recruiting analysts describe a football player as a “dog,” they mean the athlete has a fearless, wide-open, all-in, never-quit mindset that plays every down to completely dominate his opponent. This is who Caleb was!

However, after Numbers 14, the only time Caleb’s name is mentioned is to reflect on what happened in Numbers 14. If you only read the Bible from Genesis 1 to Joshua 13, you might think Caleb’s role in the life of Israel was never significant after the nation rejected his and Joshua’s appeal to invade the Promised Land. But it turns out that’s not the case at all. Caleb was a dog!! This guy never left the battlefield, and he never wavered in his loyalty to Moses, Joshua, and, most importantly, God. Watch what happens in Joshua 14. For those that are new, the Israelites have not rid the land of the Canaanites yet, but they have subdued it. All the significant Kings and cities of Canaan have been conquered, and Joshua has gone back to his headquarters in Gilgal to start the process of dividing up the land between the tribes. As we saw last week, seven tribes were willing to sit around and do nothing. They were ready to continue being nomadic people living in tents instead of claiming the cities and thriving on the land God had used them to conquer! However, Judah is not one of those. Under the leadership of Caleb, they are more than eager to finish what they started and get about the business of prospering! Here’s what happened,

**6 Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. 7 I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. 8 But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' 10 And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. 11 I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. 12 So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said." 13 Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. 14 Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. 15 Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba. (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim.) And the land had rest from war. (Joshua 14:6-15)**

The following is some helpful commentary on the passage from some highly respected Bible scholars.

- (1) “Now eighty-five, Caleb asked Joshua to give him a mountain that had giants and fortified cities! Caleb’s confidence that he would be able to conquer this land was based on this: ‘the Lord said’ (14:12).”<sup>4</sup>
- (2) “Joshua honors his request and gives him Hebron, which was recorded as having been captured previously (10:3, 36–37; 12:10). The Anakim had apparently moved back into the area (compare 11:22). ... **14:15 Kiriath Arba** The city’s name means “town of four” and may indicate that Hebron belonged to a confederacy of four neighboring settlements (Gen 14:13, 24). **Arba** The father of Anak (Josh 15:13). **Anakites** One of Canaan’s clans of giant people, which Caleb had encountered while a spy (Deut 2:10–11, 20–21; 3:10–13; compare Num 13:25–33).”<sup>5</sup>
- (3) “**Caleb requests an inheritance in the highlands** (14:10–12) One of the reasons that the majority of spies did not want to invade the land of Canaan was the presence of the sons of Anak (Num. 13:33). These large people, who are compared to the giant Nephilim mentioned in Genesis 6:4, instilled great fear in the scouts. At the time of Caleb’s meeting with Joshua at Gilgal some of the Anakim still reside in the Judaeen hill country (see Num. 13:22). Caleb, ever the warrior, wants his inheritance to be in the area where the feared Anakim still dwell (14:12). ... Caleb announces that he is just as strong for battle and ‘**for going and coming**’. The latter phrase is a formula used in the Old Testament to reflect a person’s ability to lead, in particular for military leadership (see Num. 27:17; Deut. 31:2; 1 Kings 3:7). Caleb is saying that, even at his advanced age, he has retained those leadership qualities. Most people have certainly lost many of their physical and mental faculties by this age; not so Caleb! And, in fact, he is so fit that he is looking for a fight! **Hebron** (14:13–15) Joshua responds to Caleb’s request by assigning the city of Hebron as his inheritance. Hebron is located on the highest peak of the Judaeen highlands. It was from here that Abraham and Lot divided the land (Gen. 13:8–11), and it was here that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were buried.”<sup>6</sup>
- (4) “In the end of the chapter it is said, that the name of Hebron was Ciriath-Arba, (Kirjath-Arba.) Here it is to be observed, that it is not the mountain itself that is meant, but the principal city, of which there is frequent mention in Scripture. It is said to have received the surname from a giant famous for his stature. And this refutes the imagination of those expositors who insist that it was so called from having been the burial-place of four patriarchs—Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ... A question, however, arises. Since Hebron not only became the portion of the Levites, but was one of the cities of refuge, how could the grant stand good? If we say that Caleb was contented with other towns, and resigned his right to the Levites, it is obvious that the difficulty is not solved, because Caleb is distinctly appointed owner of that city.

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<sup>4</sup> Ellsworth, R. (2008). *Opening up Joshua* (p. 101). Leominster: Day One Publications.

<sup>5</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jos 14:6–15). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>6</sup> Currid, J. D. (2011). *Strong and Courageous: Joshua Simply Explained* (pp. 175–177). Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: EP Books.

But if we reflect that the right of dwelling in the cities was all that was granted to the Levites, there will be no inconsistency. Meanwhile, no small praise is due to the moderation of Caleb, who, in a locality made his own by extraordinary privilege, did not refuse a hospitable reception to the Levites.”<sup>7</sup>

- (5) “Caleb’s family then was originally outside the covenant and commonwealth of Israel as were Heber the Kenite (Jud. 4:17), Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth 1:1–5), Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11:3, 6, 24), and others. It is apparent that the Kenizzites in part at least joined the tribe of Judah before the Exodus. So their faith was not hereditary but was the fruit of conviction. And Caleb displayed that faith throughout his long lifetime. ...The autobiographical story continued as Caleb reminisced about God’s faithfulness to him over many years. First he affirmed that God had kept him alive the past 45 years as He had promised. Actually Caleb was the recipient of two divine promises: one, that his life would be prolonged, and the other, that he would someday inherit the territory he had bravely explored near Hebron. But 45 years is a long time to wait for the fulfillment of a pledge, a long time for faith to live on a promise. Yet Caleb did wait through the weary years of the wilderness wanderings and the demanding years of the Conquest. Caleb had strong faith in *the promises of God*. ... Caleb concluded his speech to **Joshua** with an astounding request. At age 85, when he might have asked for a quiet place to spend his last days raising some vegetables or flowers, he instead requested that he be given the same section of land that had struck fear into the hearts of the 10 spies. This was the **inheritance** he desired in fulfillment of God’s earlier promise. Though most older people are more apt to talk about old conflicts than to take on new ones, **Caleb** was ready for one more good battle. He was eager to fight **the Anakites at Hebron** and take that city for his possession. Caleb chose a large and foreboding task. Not that he was filled with pride in his own ability. Rather he believed God would be with him. Caleb had faith *in the presence of God*. With flashing eyes and a strong voice he concluded, **The Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as He said**. And drive them out he did, as Joshua (15:13–19) recorded.”<sup>8</sup>

In Joshua 15:13-19 we find out Caleb did exactly what he said he was going to do.

**13 According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the people of Judah, Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). 14 And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi, the descendants of Anak. 15 And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir. Now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher. 16 And Caleb said, "Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and captures it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife." 17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the**

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<sup>7</sup> Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). *Commentary on the Book of Joshua* (pp. 194–198). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, D. K. (1985). *Joshua*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 356–359). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**brother of Caleb, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. (Joshua 15:13-17)**

We will return to this passage next week and examine what happened after verse 17. In a world where women were generally treated as property, Caleb does something for his daughter that totally goes against the cultural norm and challenges what many still today assume what the Bible teaches about gender, particularly as it relates to the question, “What is a woman?” But you’ll have to come back next week to see what that’s all about!

What I want you to see for now is that Caleb gets it done! He also not only leads his men to defeat some of the most feared people in all of Canaan that lived on the land he inherited, the very people that 45 years prior scared ten of the twelve spies to death; but he also leads his men to conquer Debir, a city in the tribal inheritance of Judah that Caleb is not personally inheriting. To add to the valor of this effort is the fact that many scholars believe conquering Debir was such a dangerous task that Caleb needed to offer of his daughter as an incentivize for one of his military leaders to take it.

J. D. Currid noted the following about this passage,

“These verses are a historical insertion in the text to demonstrate that Caleb acts upon the inheritance that had been given to him in Joshua 14:13–15. Caleb dispossesses the three sons of Anak from the city of Hebron (15:13–14). ‘**Sheshai**’, ‘**Ahiman**’ and ‘**Talmi**’ are probably either family or clan designations, so that Caleb defeated more than merely three men, but rather three people groups. These ‘**descendants of Anak**’ were the ones who had inspired fear in the Israelite scouts in Numbers 13–14. ... Apparently Caleb is not satisfied with cleaning out the area of Hebron, but, as a member of the tribe of Judah, he wants to help dispossess the Canaanites of a larger region that belongs to Judah. He thus makes a raid against the city of Debir, which is located eight miles to the south-west of Hebron at the modern site of Khirbet Rabud (15:15). The Israelites originally captured this site during the conquest (10:38–39), but obviously it has fallen back into the hands of the Canaanites. In verse 16, Caleb offers his daughter as the prize for whoever captures Debir. Calvin says about this offer: And it appears, that when he held out this rare prize to his fellow-soldiers for taking the city, no small achievement was required. This confirms what formerly seemed to be the case, that it was a dangerous and difficult task which had been assigned him, when he obtained his conditional grant. Accordingly, with the view of urging the bravest to exert themselves, he promises his daughter in marriage as a reward to the valour of the man who should first scale the wall. Such an offer may signify that this job was viewed by Caleb as an insurmountable task. No matter how great the difficulty, Othniel, the son of Kenaz, captures the city of Debir (15:17). This is the same man who later serves as one of the judges of Israel, delivers the people from the oppression of Cushan-rishathaim and gives the land of Israel peace for forty years (Judg. 3:7–11). Thus he is a mighty and courageous warrior. He also comes from good fighting stock: he is Caleb’s nephew (Judg. 3:9).”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Currid, J. D. (2011). *Strong and Courageous: Joshua Simply Explained* (pp. 183–184). Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: EP Books.

Finally, after all that effort, and years and years of patience and endurance as he wandered around the wilderness for four decades helping people who refused to follow him and Joshua into the promised land and, more importantly, lacked faith in God to do it; after years of fighting both on the east and west sides of the Jordan; you could understand how Caleb could end up with a sense of entitlement to not share any of his lands with the Levites. The Levites, the priestly tribe, didn't receive a tribal inheritance to rule but were granted lands to live and thrive on within each tribe so that they could live among all the Jewish people they were called to serve.

The inheritance given to Judah was huge, so you could imagine Caleb telling Joshua that he shouldn't have to share anything with a priestly tribe led by a bunch of people with less faith in God than he had! But that's not at all the case. There are no complaints from Caleb when the city he requested also ends up being a city to be shared with a clan of the Levites. In Joshua 21, we read,

**9 Out of the tribe of the people of Judah and the tribe of the people of Simeon they gave the following cities mentioned by name, 10 which went to the descendants of Aaron, one of the clans of the Kohathites who belonged to the people of Levi; since the lot fell to them first. 11 They gave them Kiriath-arba (Arba being the father of Anak), that is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, along with the pasturelands around it. 12 But the fields of the city and its villages had been given to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession. (Joshua 21:9-12)**

Later, we read Hebron was also to serve as a city of refuge (we will learn more about what a city of refuge is in two weeks). To be a city of refuge was not a privilege but a serious responsibility. In addition, Debir, the city Caleb gave his daughter away as an incentive for his men to conquer, was also given to the Levites (Joshua 21:15). Put in Caleb's shoes, after enduring all that Caleb did, most people would have been extremely unhappy about this situation. But, nothing in the Bible tells us anything that would even hint at Caleb feeling that way. Why? Caleb was a man who exemplified Godly Character. Caleb was a dog totally committed to serving his God and nation.

There is so much we can say on this subject, but I want to take the rest of our time today to reflect on the Godly character traits that every one of us should have as a standard for ourselves. And let me be clear: when I say we should have these as a standard for ourselves, I'm not saying that on my authority, but on God's. We will study 2 Peter next year; therefore, I'm not going to dig into this passage today; instead, I just want you to see the mandate from God related to how we are to address our character.

**5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of**

**our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. (2 Peter 1:5-9)**

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter gives us some examples of God's character. He makes it really clear that we are to make every effort to make those character traits the standards of our life as well. Godly character doesn't happen by accident; it happens when we labor with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to conform us to the image of Christ. So let me walk you through some of the character traits of God we see in the Bible that we can say beyond a shadow of a doubt God wants to describe us. As you will see, each of these is clearly demonstrated in Scripture and are either directly referenced by Peter in his second letter or implied. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of the descriptions of God's character in the Bible, but they are arguably the most prominent.

**Proposition: The following are 9 Biblical descriptions of the character of God.**

**The first Biblical description of the character of God is that He is ...**

**(1) Reliable - God is always trustworthy.**

- A. 19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (Numbers 13:19)**
- B. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:9)**
- C. A reliable person will not only follow through on their commitments but do them to the best of their ability. However, a person who lacks character leaves you wondering if they will show up to what they said they were going to show up to and do what it is they said they were committed to do. God made a covenant with Abraham that He would give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan and make them into a mighty nation that He was going to use to bring forth the one who blesses all the peoples of the earth—Jesus. Even though the faithfulness of the Jewish people to God was unreliable, God's commitment to them and the promise He made to them wasn't.**

**The second description of the character of God is that He is ...**

**(2) Humble - God is more glorious than all of creation, and as such, He is truly worthy of all praise, yet He seeks to know, serve, and be one with us.**

- A. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened**

not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. (Isaiah 53:5-7)

- B. **3 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:3-8)**

The third description of the character of God is that He is ...

- (3) **Independent** – God does not invite us to know Him because He needs us, but rather because He loves us.

- A. **24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (Acts 17:24-25)**
- B. Spoiler alert: love will be one of the descriptions of the character of God I will give you. However, what I want to drill down on here is the independent character of God that makes His love what it is. Many think of independence as a character flaw. Indeed, the self-centered version of independence, incapable of living bound together with others as one, is a sinful version of this character trait. But independence in its pure and holy form is an essential character trait that brings eternal significance to His love. Because He is independent, we know His love is pure. He doesn't love us to replace something in Himself that's missing or to serve Himself in some way, but rather, He loves us with nothing less than pure, unadulterated love from one who is totally complete in Himself.
- C. Wayne Grudem put it this way, **"God's independence is also seen in his self-designation in Exodus 3:14: "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.'" It is also possible to translate this statement "I will be what I will be," but in both cases the implication is that God's existence and character are determined by himself alone and are not dependent on anyone or anything else. This means that God's being has always been and will always be exactly what it is. God is not dependent upon any part of creation for his existence or his nature. Without creation, God would still be infinitely loving, infinitely just, eternal, omniscient, trinitarian, and so forth."**<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.monergism.com/independence-god#:~:text=Moses%20tells%20us%20that%20God,I%20AM%20WHO%20I%20AM.>

**The fourth description of the character of God is that He is ...**

- (4) **Merciful** - God can withhold His wrath from those who genuinely deserve it.
- A. **22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (Lamentations 3:22)**
  - B. **8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Psalm 103:8)**
  - C. **5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; our God is merciful. (Psalm 116:5)**
  - D. **5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)**
  - E. At the heart of the idea of mercy is that a person truly deserves wrath that God is fully capable of issuing with no consequence to Himself. However, although God certainly doesn't withhold His anger from all who deserve it, the fact that He can and does is a testament to His character.

**The fifth description of the character of God is that He is ...**

- (5) **Gracious** - God pours out His blessings on those who truly don't deserve it.
- A. **14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)**
  - B. **11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)**
  - C. True grace isn't seen in giving away something you didn't earn but rather in giving away something you earned that the person you're giving it to didn't. Therefore, in the case of Jesus, what He gave us cost Him everything! There is literally NOTHING that I have done to deserve to be an eternal child of God, nor could I ever possibly earn it. But God sent His Son to do for me and provide for me what I could not accomplish or achieve!

**The sixth description of the character of God is that He is ...**

**(6) Steadfast – God never quits nor relents.**

- A. 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. (Isaiah 40:28)**
- B. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ. (2 Thessalonians 3:5)**
- C. David Mathis wrote, “Steadfastness isn’t a virtue that shines in comfort but in conflict, afflictions, and uncertainty.”<sup>11</sup>**
- D. The fact that Christ never abandons us despite our rebellion against Him shows the kind of character God has. In Christ’s darkest hour, Peter, who more fervently stated his loyalty to Christ than any other disciple, denied even knowing Him! Yet, after the resurrection, Jesus sought Peter out to assure him He was still loved, called, and favored! It's why the Psalmists wrote,**
- E. 7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. (Psalm 36:7)**

**The seventh description of the character of God is that He is ...**

**(7) Just. God’s judgments are perfectly based on nothing but the truth and the standards He has declared.**

- A. 5 He loves righteousness and justice; (Psalm 33:5)**
- B. 17 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy; (Psalm 111:17)**
- C. 8 For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. (Isaiah 61:8)**
- D. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:23)**
- E. 7 And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!” (Revelation 16:7)**

**The eighth description of the character of God is that He is ...**

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-stability-of-our-times>

**(8) Holy.** All that God is and does is perfectly righteous.

- A. **2** There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. (1 Samuel 2:2)
- B. **15** but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, **16** since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)
- C. **8** And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:8)

**The ninth description of the character of God is that He is ...**

**(9) Loving.** God sincerely desires and is fully committed to doing the work necessary to eternally know us and bless us with no condition of us being able to bless Him.

- A. **8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)
- B. **8** Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. **10** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:8-10)

**Challenge:** Evaluate your character against God's and see what's lacking. Ask people you trust to be honest with you, to tell you which ones they strongly see in your life and which ones they believe are lacking. Hold yourself to the standard of God's character and make no excuses or allowances for anything less.

**12** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15)