

The Power of God

Definition of God's power:

Omnipotence (Power, Sovereignty): "God is all-powerful and able to do whatever he wills,"^{36 1} yet "God cannot do anything (absurd or)² inconsistent with the perfection of divine nature"³

The word *omnipotence* means "all-powerful" derived from two Latin words, *omni* "all," and *potens* "powerful"

God's freedom refers to the fact that there are no external constraints on God's decisions,

Whereas God's omnipotence has reference to his own power to do what he decides to do⁴

"Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever he pleases" (Ps. 115:3)

"A being is rightly called omnipotent from doing what he wills and not from suffering what he does not will."

St. Augustine

"God is all-powerful and able to do whatever he wills..."

- "I am the Almighty God." (Gen. 17:1) = Hebrew word (*el shad-di*) = Almighty God; all-sufficient God;⁵
- "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:27)
- "nothing is too hard for you" (Jer. 32:17)
- God is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20)
- God is called the "Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8), παντοκράτωρ (*pantokratōr*)
- "With God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37)
- Jesus says, "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).
- God is one who "does whatever he pleases" (Ps. 115:3)

"...God cannot do anything absurd."

- God's power is not defined in terms of the absurd or logical impossibilities.
 - create a square triangle
 - build a wall he cannot jump over
 - create a material spirit

"...or inconsistent with the perfection of divine nature."

- "He cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. 2:13) This means God cannot cease to exist, or cease to be God, or act in a way inconsistent with any of his attributes.
 - (e.g.) God cannot lie. "God, who never lies" (Titus 1:2) "it is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18)
 - (e.g.) God cannot be tempted. "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13)
 - (e.g.) God cannot tempt others. "He himself tempts no one" (James 1:13)
 - (e.g.) God cannot go back on his word. "The rock, a God of faithfulness" (Deut. 32:4)
 - (e.g.) God cannot sin. "without iniquity," (Deut. 32:4)
 - (e.g.) God cannot be unjust. "for all his ways are justice... just and upright is he." (Deut. 32:4)
 - (e.g.) God cannot change (Exodus 3:14; Malachi 3:6)

³⁶ Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 827

¹ Enns, P. (2014). [The Moody Handbook of Theology](#). (J. Vincent & A. Sholes, Eds.) (Revised and Expanded, p. 201). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

² My addition to the original definition by Shedd, W. G. T in (2003) *Dogmatic theology*.

³ Shedd, W. G. T. (2003). [Dogmatic theology](#). (A. W. Gomes, Ed.) (3rd ed., p. 289). Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub.

⁴ Grudem, W. A. (2004). [Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine](#) (p. 216). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

⁵ Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). In [The exhaustive dictionary of Bible names](#) (p. 82). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos.

Dispersion of God's power:

- *God creates this world ex nihilo.* (Rom. 4:17; Isa. 44:24; Gen. 1:1). (*potentia absoluta* =Absolute Power)
- God is “*Upholding all things by the word of his power*” (Heb. 1:3) (*potentia ordinata* =Ordained Power)
- God gifts man with power, freedom, and ability to rule by creating us in his image. (Gen. 1:26-28)
- However man's power, freedom, and ability to rule are governed, controlled, and limited by God's absolute and ordained power.
 - *“The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.”*
Proverbs 21:1
 - *“...Why are the people making useless plans? The kings of the earth prepare to fight, and their leaders make plans together against the Lord and his appointed one.... But the one who sits in heaven laughs; the Lord makes fun of them.”*
Psalm 2:1-4
 - *Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. Jn. 8:34*
 - *So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Jn. 8:36*
 - *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? Romans 6:16*
 - *And, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. Romans 6:18*

Objections to God's power:

External objection

- If God is so good and powerful why is there so much evil and suffering in this world? Why Coronavirus?
- Either he doesn't have the power to stop it or he has the power but isn't using his power for the good.
 - **Answer 1:** You must stand on the stage of theism to announce your accusation of good and evil.
 - **Answer 2:** You must assume omniscience and moral superiority to accuse God of misuse of power.
 - **Answer 3:** Scripture portrays a God who uses evil for good. So we must humble ourselves in faith.
“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good...” Genesis 50:20

Internal objection

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Avoid such people. 2 Timothy 3:1-5

Response to God's power:

There are 2 basic responses to God's ultimate rule and power

- Response 1: Rebel against God's rule to futility and suffer the consequences of high treason.
- Response 2: Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, “kiss the son” take refuge in him, and celebrate his gracious rule in your life for eternity.

¹ *Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?*

Against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, ³“Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”

⁴ *The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.*

⁵ *He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,*

⁶ *“I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”*

¹¹ *Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.*

¹² *Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Psalm 2:1-6; 11-12*

Discussion of God's power:

- Many parents have said something like this to their child... "You can do whatever you set your mind to"
 - **This is actually an inaccurate statement**, Only God can do this. He is the only truly free being, unlimited, and unconstrained in power. Although God gives us a certain abilities and power to do things we must always acknowledge our limits and God's sovereignty and give ourselves to do His will and not our own...
- ❖ Read the passage below and talk about how we should always acknowledge our limits & God's power...

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil...

James 4:13-17

- Arrogance is failing to acknowledge that *your* power was given to you by God, and is limited by God.
 - Dewey Boyd has made a habit of saying, "Lord willing" after stating what he intends to do.
e.g. "I will meet you for lunch at 12 o'clock today ...Lord willing"
- ❖ Discuss what types of habits or reminders you personally can set up in your life to remind you of God's sovereignty and your limitations so that you can guard your heart from arrogance.
List some of them below...

- ❖ Read the passage below and take some time as a group to praise God for his power...

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all." 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

In the space provided below, write out the descriptors of God within the passage: