

Test 2

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[2 : 1 9] This is Kyle Worley.

I'm joined by my co-host, Jen Wilkin. Hi. Like, tell me if you're going to do that. Nope. Curveball and JT English.

Okay. This is the worst. No, I mean, you know, sometimes we just got to change it up. I got to keep you guys on your toes. Keep you honest. I need you coming in here.

Is this you trying to make it so awkward that everybody will go listen to your new podcast and stop listening to your old one? Yeah, that... What if I just started, like, firebombing this podcast regularly?

Uh-huh. Yeah, and it'd be like, well, you know, if you want... You know, like, I just became, like, a terrible friend. I was, like... I asked hostile questions, and it was like, if you want a more peaceful podcast, you should check out Confident Christianity.

[3 : 17] Although Rebecca hasn't... Here's the question. She hasn't been hesitant to throw heat at me, so, you know, it is what it is. Are you guys bantering over there? We are. I mean, you know, are our banter bona fides at Knowing Faith level?

No, they're not. We had to build steam. You know, if you go back and... You know, if the audience wants to really punish themselves, go back and listen to those early episodes of Knowing Faith, and you'll find that this has been...

This was a crucible of chemistry for us, and we figured it out as we went, but, yeah, you know, it's... We're blown and going over at Confident Christianity.

A lot of fun. We need to have you guys on to confront you. I don't know enough to think about that. I'm just kidding. We'd love to have you on, and I would love to just, you know... We'll bring you on. What would you like to be confronted about, Jen?

I don't know. What are some of the confrontational things you could bring up? Oh, we'd just be like, okay, Jen, we need to confront you on the Oxford comma.

[4 : 16] Texas A&M.; Oh, Texas A&M.; Oh. All both. Yeah. All right. Hugs. No, I'm not coming on. Okay. Yeah, all right. We'll do a Confronting Christianity episode on the Oxford comma and Texas A&M.;

Yeah. With Jen, JT, if we were going to confront you, I think we'd have to confront you on your arrogance, probably. Oh, come on. Come on. CrossFit West Wing, my love for queso at Torchy's Tacos.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, we're not confronting anybody today. It's the simplicity that is within JT. Well, here we go. Trying to tie us back in. Not a good segue. We are not confronting JT today.

It's not an intervention. We are talking about the communicable attributes of God. And one of us has written prolifically on the topic. The other two of us have read that book.

So we are. So we're ready to go. We're ready to go. Let's, last episode, we started with a definition of attributes of God.

[5 : 16] And then we talked about incommunicable attributes of God. Those attributes with God, those attributes of God that we do not share in. Attributes of God that are unique to God.

Let's talk through communicable attributes. What are the communicable attributes of God, Jen? Yeah, so they're the ones that you're probably more familiar with. They're the things that are true about God that can also become true of us, increasingly true of us.

And so God is holy. We can be holy. In fact, we are told that we are to be holy as He is holy. And when we talk about the holiness of God specifically, we'll talk about how it's the overarching idea or the overarching attribute for the other communicable attributes that we are going to look at that to be good as God is good is to be holy.

It's a way of being holy. So holiness is just God's utter purity of character. And so therefore, any other character trait that builds us into His image is going to be an expression of holiness.

So He's holy. He's loving. We also can be loving as He is loving. He is just. We can understand the justice of God and then begin to be just as He is just.

[6 : 29] He's good, merciful, or sometimes you'll hear the term compassionate. He's gracious. He's faithful. He's patient, which is one that I don't know about the rest of you, but I am already patient as God is patient in every area of my life.

He's truthful. He's wise. And so, you know, that's not a full list, but that's some of the list of things that are true about God that can also become true of us. And just because they become true about us, I think one thing that is that we need to state clearly is that the communicable attributes are attributes of God that we can share by virtue of kind, but not degree.

Like, for example, like, we can love. God is love. We can share in that communicable attribute by virtue of kind, meaning we can demonstrate the love of God.

We can practice and live our lives in ways that are congruent with the love of God. But the communicable attributes are not to suggest that we can possess what God possesses at the same degree, right?

Right. Okay. This points back to what we talked about in our previous episode. God is transcendent and He's infinite. And we will never be infinite. We will always be finite.

[7 : 45] Even in eternity, we will be finite. We will still be limited creatures. That's the way we were created to be. And that's the way we will always be, which means that while God is infinitely good, we will ever only be good to the extent that it is possible to be good as a finite creature.

Right. We can become perfectly good, not in this lifetime, but we could become perfectly good insofar as a human being can be. But we will never be infinitely good as God is infinitely good.

And that means that for those of us who are still wrestling through how to be good, we will always have as a reference point, you know, oh, there's further still, I can see it.

And where we see the communicable attributes lived out exactly the way that they should be, obviously, is in Christ, in the witness of Jesus during His earthly ministry, we are able to see, oh, that's what it looks like to be an image bearer.

That's what it looks like to be merciful in a limited human form. So the communicable attributes, a short way to say it, is they show us how to grow in holiness.

[8 : 56] They are sanctification. They're the way that we think about sanctification. Anybody who's ever said, I just want to be more like Jesus, you know, or we've read those passages, they fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith, or that which He has started He's faithful to complete.

What's being talked about there? Look to Him so that you can look like Him. This is the work that was begun in you at salvation and will be completed in you. It will be worked out during your lifetime and your sanctification and in glorification it will be completed.

All right. Now, okay, if Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, is our bearing the image of God, are the communicable attributes one of the ways that we bear the image of God?

Like, is that a reflection of that? Yeah, that's the way. And I think there's a lot of confusion. I learned this when I was writing on it. I think this was a confusion point that I had, that because of the fall, we have lost the image of God, like that we're no longer in the image of God.

And that's actually not accurate. Even an unbeliever still bears the image of God to some degree. But it is, the best way I can think, and this is probably not even the most precise way to talk about it, and JT and Kyle, if you guys have better ways, please jump in, is that it has become obscured in us.

[10 : 13] But it has not been removed from us. So we were created to image Him, but you can't see it because sin has muddied the waters.

Would you say it differently? I think that's actually a great way to say it. I was actually reading on this the other day for another project I'm working on, and I never said it quite this way because bear is the right word.

It's the biblical word. But this author is saying, really what that entails isn't that we have the image of God, but that we are the image of God. I found that really helpful. So it is something that we cannot lose, and that means that all, Jen, you said this in a previous podcast.

I'm going to mess this up, but like, oh gosh, what did you say? Image bearing is not based on usefulness, I think is what you said. I found that really helpful. Like, dignity is something that can't be lost. Bearing the image of God is something that we all have, which means all people are worthy of honor, dignity, respect, love, care.

Like, there is no subordination within the human species. All of us are God's image. But you're also right that sin does mar it. It fractures it. It means that not only do we do it finitely, but that we do it wrongly, and that we need it to be redirected.

[11 : 21] We need our actions to be, that we have it, we need them to be reshaped and reformed into the image of Christ. And that's ultimately why salvation isn't just being forgiven, but being sanctified and ultimately glorified.

Yeah, and I think that's exactly right. I think direction is the right word when we think about some of the dissonance here. In creation regained, I've talked about this before, but Albert Wolters in creation regained, it's a book.

Albert Wolters is the author. Creation regained is the book. It's fantastic. And it makes this distinction, which is really helpful when we're talking about image bearing and particularly image bearing and a fallen world, that we are all those who bear the image of God structurally.

Like structurally, the structure is there. The ontological substance, the isness of what a person is, regardless of whether that person's a Christian, whether they're a follower of Jesus Christ, whether they're righteous, unrighteous, structurally, every person who is from conception to the end of their life is an image bearer of God.

But the direction, sin has broken the direction that we're aimed in. So it's almost like things are just out of sorts. We're aimed at the wrong direction. And you can either use Luther's idea here that we're aimed, sin has aimed us in curvatus in se, sin has turned us in on ourself, or it's aimed us in the direction of idols or creaturely things, Romans 1.

[12 : 46] But the structure still remains. The structure of image bearing is sound. It just has to be reoriented, redeemed, and restored for it to be aimed in its proper direction or towards its proper end or purpose.

So I do think it's fair. It's more than fair. I think it's necessary both biblically and existentially to say that every person who is from conception to when they die is an image bearer of God structurally.

I think that's essential to say, both in light of Scripture and in light of the witness of the world in natural law. I think it is a different thing to say that every image bearer of God is aimed in the appropriate direction.

That is not the case. That has to be redirected. That's not me. That's Al Walters. It's very helpful and a very helpful book. Well, and if you think about the catechism, what's the purpose?

What's the chief end of man to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever? That means that's an image bearer who's aimed in the right direction, right? And so that's what we lose. I think that's a really good way of thinking about it.

[13 : 49] And I would say that what we lose when we turn, whether you think of it as turning inward or toward idols, which arguably is the same thing ultimately, what you see playing out is something we touched on in the previous episode.

It's that we were created to reflect God, right? That's what image bearing is. And instead, we choose to rival God. We want to become like Him in a way that we were not created to be like Him.

So rather than devote ourselves to the pursuit of the communicable attributes, those things which we were created to reflect, right? We were actually made.

If I become more loving over this lifetime, I'm not becoming an idealized version of myself. I'm becoming what I was created to be all along, right? I'm stepping into full humanness, so to speak.

And so when we turn inward or when we turn toward idols, what we're doing is we're saying, I will neglect those things which I should have devoted myself to, the things that I was created to look like.

[14 : 51] And I will instead strive for those things which set me up in opposition to God, the things that belong to Him alone. So instead of reflecting Him, I choose to rival Him, leaning toward the incommunicable instead of to the communicable attributes.

So instead of reflecting Him, you've chosen to rival Him? Is that what you said? Yeah. Okay. Or rather than represent Him, we rebel against Him? Okay. Or rather than relish Him, we didn't want to relinquish our rule?

I tried my best. I tried to complete the circle. That was really, really ridiculous. Come back to the original one because that's the good one. We were just riffing. If you think about it, it's pretty simple to keep it straight this way.

Those who were created to reflect Him at the fall choose instead to rival Him. Yeah. That's pretty good. That's a pretty good, I'll give you credit. That's a pretty good line, Jen. So thank you for that.

JT, yours was second best. I think mine was obviously garbage. So would we say that like I'm the first member of this Trinity and that JT proceeds from me and that you proceed from me?

[15 : 55] I'm the image of the invisible Jen. Dang. I think we need to run in the opposite direction. Speaking of heretical things to talk about. I'm trying to think of another one. Rather than reign for Him, we ridicule Him.

Nope, stop. That's not good. That's third best. Kyle's his fourth still. Yeah. Yeah, it's still pretty bad. Okay, so we asked this question in the last episode about incommunicable attributes, but I want us to retrace our steps kind of episode by episode this season because I know that we're diving deep into some of these matters.

It's important. Repetition is the mother of learning as we know this, right? Not, as I've said before, mother is the repetition of learning. That's not correct, but repetition is the mother of learning.

So I want us to retrace our steps. Does God have these communicable attributes or is God these attributes? Like, let's just... Yes.

Okay. Why are we saying yes to that? Because I said, I made it an either or and you made it a both and. Why? Yeah. We don't have to choose because what God does is an expression of who He is.

[17 : 04] And honestly, that's a way that we can become, we can grow in image bearing is when our doing becomes an expression of our being.

I mean, I think that's what we're created for. In fact, that's true any way you slice it. When we are made a new creation in Christ, we are able to have our being, you know, our hearts are changed, we're transformed, and then that inside to outside transformation begins to take place.

And so it matters to us that God, it's not just merely what He does, but it's who He is because that is also true of us. That's how we will relate to the world around us. Yeah. Now, but JT, the communicable attributes aren't equally shared among the Godhead because obviously God the Father is wrathful, God the Son is loving, and God the Holy Spirit is comforting, right?

That's... Not only that, but God was wrathful in the Old Testament and He's loving in the New Testament, right? Exactly. I mean, that's exactly what we see in the Bible, right? No, no, no, no, the exact opposite.

We don't want to make these kinds of distinctions. They end up actually pitting the Godhead against itself, which is a supremely unhelpful thing and might make you even just... Again, we're trying to make this just kind of ministerially present for you, might make you more prone to commune with a certain person of the Godhead instead of wanting to commune in fellowship with every person of the Godhead.

[18 : 24] So when we're looking, let's just think about Jesus on the cross. The Son of God shares in the wrath of God towards sin and sinners in the same way that the Father and the Holy Spirit do.

God is demonstrating His wrath and pouring out His wrath upon sin. It's absorbed in God the Son because God the Father, Son, and Spirit are demonstrating love and mercy and grace towards sinners in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus.

So we think of even simple examples like John 3, 16. For God had so much wrath towards the world that He sent His only loving Son that whoever believes in Him won't perish but have everlasting life. Now, of course, it's not what it says and we know that, but that is some of the theology that we'll have is that the Father is demonstrating His wrath towards us but He's demonstrating His love towards us and the same could be said is that the Son is demonstrating His wrath towards sin by coming for them to save them from their sin.

And so we want to make sure that all of these attributes both incommunicable, last episode incommunicable, are not equally distributed but are totally and exhaustively true in each person of the Godhead.

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Crossway Plus account. Crossway Plus account. Crossway Plus account. Well, and I think, you know, we're going to talk about the communicable and the incommunicable as these two separate categories, but that's even not a great way to think about them.

It can help us to sort of, for lack of a better term, taxonomize things that are true about God or have a way of organizing our thoughts around them. But God being loving is directly, our understanding of God's love cannot be separated from our understanding of God's omnipotence or His omniscience.

Those things are interrelated. And that's what I think we're going to see develop as we talk about each of these attributes. And that's why I like to talk about the incommunicable first, because I don't think we have often contemplated the relationship between His unlimited power and our concept of His love or, you know, or one of the other incommunicable attributes.

So that's part of what's the fun for me is to say, I know you've spent a fair amount of time thinking about God being loving, in particular, as it relates to your own experience of Him. But have you thought about how mind-boggling it is that He loves you in relation to His omniscience?

[22 : 42] Because in His omniscience, it means He knows every single thing about you, and yet He loves you. That's a different way of thinking about His love than just, oh, He loves me.

No, I think that's really well said. And part of the reason why that gap exists in our own mind is because we typically, we're prone to view, to remake God in our own image, and the communicable attributes are a lot easier to do that than the incommunicable attributes.

But I also think, you know, it works the other way. Like, you really don't want to talk about the sovereignty of God without the love of God in view, right? And so while we will be parsing them out into categories that are helpful for retaining, you know, a concept around each of these, what you ought not to do is walk away thinking, okay, I've mastered this one list, now I'm going to work on this other list, or vice versa.

They're talking to each other because, again, they're all true of God, past, present, and future. They're not varying in degrees. One has not increased or decreased, and it is in some ways a necessary human exercise to separate them out to the degree that it helps us understand God better.

But if we understand them as separate, then we're doing it wrong. Yep. How do we maintain a distinction between the creator and the creature without minimizing the reality and depth of the shared communicable attributes?

[24 : 02] Like, so if one temptation with incommunicable attributes is to view God as so wholly other, we talked about this a lot in the last episode. He's like, so wholly other, like, he's omniscient, he's infinite, he's eternal, he's self-existent, you know, really being emphatic about the transcendental reality of God, which is, that's, you gotta have that.

That's a part of who God is. He's not merely imminent, he's transcendent. It's both. How do we maintain a distinction between, listen, God is a transcendent other, and he is of a different kind being than us?

How do we maintain that without minimizing, no, there are really meaningful ways where we share in these communicable attributes of God. How do we, I guess if incommunicable attributes could lead us to this sense of God is so far over there as to be incomprehensible and so different from us as to be unknowable, then how do we avoid allowing the communicable attributes to make us go, God is virtually indistinguishable from us.

He is like us. His love is like our love. Yeah, we talked about this a little bit in the last episode as transcendence guards against pantheism or polytheism and, or the incommunicable attributes, the imminence of God guard us against atheism or kind of a deism, like a God who kind of sets the clock and walks away.

So when you think about the, and I love how we, I wish we would have spent some more time talking about this, but Jen, I just thought the point that you made a few minutes ago was so good that I just want to return to it because I think it helps us here is we're always trying to hold these two things in perfect tension, transcendence and imminence.

[25 : 44] If any one of them get out of order, we run the risk of either being kind of pantheistic, polytheistic, or deistic, or atheistic. So holding these in tension is important, but we also have to remember anytime we're speaking about God, we're speaking, this is a big term, but I'm going to define it anthropomorphically, which means that we're using human terms, and even God condescends to us to use human terminology so that we can understand him.

So even our love isn't exactly like, it's not a one-to-one correlation of his love. Even our goodness is not a one-to-one correlation of his goodness. And part of that is because of his transcendence. But we do look to him and I thought this was, your point, Jen, was I think so well taken and I wish, I was going to say, I wish you'd revisit it.

I am revisiting it. Like, to think about God's love not being a finite love but being an infinite amount of love, which means it's immovable.

It never ends. It cannot be exhausted because he is infinite and loving. If we just emphasize the lovingness of God or the loving nature of God without emphasizing his infinite nature, it's not good news.

And if we were just to emphasize the infinite nature of God but not emphasize that he's also loving and good, that's also not good news. But when both of these things are held in tension, God is infinite and God is loving, which means God is infinitely loving, I mean, there is no greater news in the world.

[27 : 09] So it's not just that we have this great news that God is transcendent and here's how he holds the world in order and here's how he's created and here's how he's above and everything. And it's also not good news that he's good and that he's loving.

But the fact that both of those things are true is the gospel. And this is where we say God himself is the good news of the world. He is the creator God who loves us infinitely and came to redeem us in Jesus Christ, his eternally begotten son so that we might be filled with his presence forever and infinitely enjoy or forever, eternally enjoy his presence.

I mean, that's, if you lose one of those two things, it's no longer good news. That's right. I think another thing that's important for us to point out and we'll see this as we walk through the communicable attributes is that though we are created to bear the image of God, we should not assume that that is easy, right?

Yeah. And this takes me to 1 John 5 where it speaks of the commands of God are not burdensome. They're difficult, but they're not burdensome, right?

And so when we speak about the work of sanctification, we have to remember it is indeed work. It is work done by the Spirit and through the application of the grace that's ours in Christ.

[28 : 27] But when I think about growing in patience because God is patient, I don't think, well, I'm just going to ask the Spirit and He's going to give me increased patience.

I can look around and recognize that the way that we are often granted patience is by working at it and by feeling the sting of conviction when we're not patient.

And so I'm not even going to hide the fact that as we talk about what's true about God and what's true about us, that what we're talking about is a labor on our part.

That we are the children of God who want to be workers unashamed of rightly dividing the truth. That the commands of God are calling us not just toward being obedient but toward being like Christ who is the image of God.

And so when we speak of being image bearers and having the image of God restored in us, this is what we're saying. We're saying that the Christian life is devoted to this.

[29 : 28] We're not simply asking God to plop these things on us. Anyone who's seen themselves grow in the fruit of the Spirit would probably say that they didn't just wake up one morning and they were more joyful or more kind.

It was a process that required prayer and meditation on the scriptures and Christian community and sitting under the preaching of the word and confession.

And so I don't want us in a time and age that wants to push the easy button for everything. We want the quick diet fix or we want the quick fitness program or whatever it is to mistake that being conformed to the image of God is not labor.

It is the very best labor but it will be a work. It will be the work of a lifetime. It's good. It will be. And we're going to be exploring both the incommunicable and communicable attributes of God really for the rest of this season.

So we're going to be diving deep into specific incommunicable and specific communicable attributes of God and we hope you'll join us on that. You can find Knowing Faith on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

[30 : 33] Wherever you're at, we're out there too. In our next episode, we'll be going to infinity and beyond. You've been so excited to say that, haven't you? Yes, I have. I didn't want to tell you guys before I said it.

I almost didn't include it in the run sheet. I was afraid you guys would be like, don't do it, but I was going to do it. So that is what we're covering. Next episode is the infinitude, incomprehensibility of God, incommunicable attributes.

I hope you'll join us. We hope you enjoy the discussion. Grace and peace. Bye.