

# The Primary Characteristic of God

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When considering God and His various attributes we tend to assign a single attribute to be His primary characteristic. God is:

- Consuming Fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29)
- Jealous (Deuteronomy 4:24)
- Merciful (Deuteronomy 4:31)
- Mighty (Deuteronomy 10:17)
- Terrible (Deuteronomy 10:17)
- Gracious (2 Chronicles 30:9)
- Greater than man (Job 33:12)
- Terrible Majesty (Job 37:22)
- Angry (Psalm 7:11)
- King of all the Earth (Psalm 47:7)
- Judge (Psalm 50:6)
- Good (Psalm 73:1)
- Holy (Psalm 99:9; 1 Peter 1:16)
- Righteous (Daniel 9:14)
- Furious (Nahum 1:2)
- Faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9)
- Author of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33)
- Light (1 John 1:5)
- Love (1 John 4:8)

There are probably many more. This is simply a quick search in the KJV for “God is”. When I hear people speak about God they normally focus on love, goodness, mercy, and grace. John Calvin focused on God’s sovereignty and based his entire system of doctrine on the inescapable power and foreknowledge of God. What Calvin and others fail to understand is that God is not like men. His ways are not our ways. Most times men try to make God in their image. The pagan world had numerous gods which had an abundance of human characteristics including our flaws. God is not like this.

In Hebrews 6:18 it states that “it was impossible for God to lie”. Many of our youngest children can lie, all adults can lie, how is it that we feeble beings, created by God, can do something that our Creator cannot? Does this mean God created something that can do things outside of God’s power? God could have made us like animals and taken from us the free will that we have but instead He allowed us to choose whether we will be like Him or not. Because God is Holy He cannot lie. Because God is Holy He is righteous. Because God is Holy He requires punishment for sin. This is why He is jealous when men worship others besides Him, place their own interests above those of the Creator, spend time thinking up ways to do evil, etc. God is all powerful but cannot sin. This is true because it would change His underlying nature if He sinned. If God sinned He wouldn’t be God.

Since God is Holy and cannot lie I can place my full trust in Him and in His promises. I am glad that God also care for His creation because He provided for us a way to live with Him even though we are unholy. God’s grace and mercy are freely given to us but remember that His nature will not change therefore His statements on judgment and eternal fire are sure and will occur once His patience has run out (2 Peter 3:9-12).