

The Immutability of God

God is immutable, simply put, God does not change. He does not change with regards to His character, His will, His covenantal promises. As stated in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, "[God] is a spirit, whose being, wisdom power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth are infinite, eternal, and unchangeable." 1 Sam 15:29 *He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind.* This has major implications for us as believers. It means that His personality does not change. He doesn't change His mind with regards to His promises. His immutability is expressed also in His covenantal mindset. He sticks to His agreements with us. When God called you, He already knew all the mistakes you would make in life, but He still called you and spoke all those wonderful things over your life. His word is still actively seeking to perform that which was spoken. He has not called His word back. Is 55:11 *so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* The implications of this can be very encouraging for the believer. Isn't it great that we have a God who doesn't have mood-swings. In summary, God does not change in essence, in attributes, in His plans, in His promises, in the objects of His affection, in His Word and in the consequences of being outside of His covenant (Jn 3:18; Heb 9:27).

We can trust God's immutability knowing that His unchanging plan will always be for His glory and the good of mankind. This is because His immutability is always in the context of His other attributes such as His love and mercy. God is unalterable; He cannot increase or decrease. Examining some of God's other attributes helps us to see by implication that He is indeed immutable. For example, the fact that God is perfect means He can't change. Changing would imply a change from perfection.

Immutability is a natural implication of God's aseity. While everything changes, God is and remains the same. If God were not immutable, he would not be God. To God alone belongs true being, and that which truly is remains. Contrary to both Deism and pantheism God who is cannot change, for every change would diminish his being.

- Herman Bavinck

If one thing is infinite, there is no room for anything else; for infinite means all. It means not bounded, not finite, having no end. Well, there cannot be two infinities. ... The fact of his being an infinite being at once quashes the thought of his being a changeable being. Infinity has written on its very brow the word "immutability".

- Charles Spurgeon.

God's immutability protects us. It is based on His mercy; His covenant to keep on loving us.

Malachi 3:6

I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

This is covenantal language. Their freedom from destruction is based on their association with Jacob's covenant with God. On the one hand He does not change His mind with regards to the consequences of staying outside His covenant whilst on the other hand He does not change His mind concerning His covenant of mercy when we turn back to Him. If my people humble themselves....

God's immutability means that He is eternally changeless. James 1:17 *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.* The word for change is *parallage* and means change, variation or mutation. The word shift here is *trope* which also speaks of turning, changing or mutating. If Jesus healed when He was on the earth, then it means He still heals today. This is a problem for those that believe miracles were just for the early church. The same God that healed through Peter's shadow is here today. The same God that appeared in the cloud of glory is here today. *Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

God's Word is immutable. God is unchanging in His Word. When it goes out it can't fail to come to pass. This is extremely significant. Let's look at Ps 119 which is longer than 30 of the books in the Bible. This psalm is focused on glorifying the perfections of God's Word.

Ps 119:89

Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

Ps 119:160

All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

Steve Lawson, the pastor, speaks of how when he was studying law some of the laws had changed by the time he was in the final semester. He subsequently made a decision to study a law that never changes.

Is 40:8

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.

There is no new standard from one generation to another.

Mt 5:18

For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

A stroke is like an apostrophe (called a yode).

Luke 16:17

It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

Understanding God's immutable nature motivates us to align with His agenda as opposed to fighting against it. Man cannot curse what God has already blessed.

Numbers 23:19-20

¹⁹*God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?* ²⁰*I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it.*

Understanding His immutable nature will help you to keep believing that His promises will be fulfilled. It is this aspect of His character that helps us when waging warfare according to the prophecies we have received. When you understand how mighty God is, it becomes easier to trust Him for bigger breakthroughs in society.

Ps 33:10-11

¹⁰*The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.* ¹¹*But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

His immutability must be understood in the context of His sovereignty and aseity.

Job 23:13

But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases.

God's values do not change. God's eternal purpose does not change.

Ps 33:11

But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Heb 6:17-18

¹⁷*Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.* ¹⁸*God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.*

We have become so used to dealing with flawed human laws that need to be challenged.

The process of democracy is one of change. Our laws are not frozen into immutable form, they are constantly in the process of revision in response to the needs of a changing society. - Thurgood Marshall

Now, Thurgood Marshall played an important role in the Civil Rights movement and we do need to challenge laws that are not aligned with preserving human rights etc. However, there are certain moral laws that God put in place for our protection that people feel free to change today, saying they are archaic. Sadly, the humanistic moral relativism of the day has resulted in us challenging God's immutable laws. Despite the great social reform he bought about in education in the first half of last century this is what John Dewey, the psychologist and philosopher, had to say about immutability.

There is no god and there is no soul. Hence, there is no need for the props of traditional religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable truth is dead and buried. There is no room for fixed and natural law or permanent moral absolutes.

— John Dewey

The moment we use terms like immutable people tend to resist because they have seen the abuse of it. The reality is that depraved man has attempted to theorize around certain realities they don't want to change in order to reinforce domination. For example, look what the former Governor of Georgia and Vice President of the Confederate States said in the 1800s.

As a race, the African is inferior to the white man. Subordination to the white man is his normal condition. He is not his equal by nature and cannot be made so by human laws or human institutions. Our system, therefore, so far as regards this inferior race, rests upon this great immutable law of nature. — Alexander H. Stephens

However, immutability in the hands of God is safe and He would not be God were He not immutable.

God's immutability has implications for our gifts and callings. This is good news for many of us.

Rom 11:29

for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

His gifts and callings are irrevocable. What does this mean? Some translations describe it as "without repentance", in other words, He doesn't change His mind about them. Remember that He created you with a purpose in mind.

We change, not Him. We are ever changing but He does not change. For example, as we get older, we change in levels of wisdom and levels of physicality.

Ps 119:89-91

⁸⁹*Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.* ⁹⁰*Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.* ⁹¹*Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you.*

God spoke and created the World with His words. His word endures. All things were created to serve Him. This is the power of His word. The sun rises when it is supposed to. There are laws He has established in the universe. He hasn't changed those laws. One such law is the law of seedtime and harvest.

Ps 102:26-27

²⁶*They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.* ²⁷*But you remain the same, and your years will never end.*

Prov 19:21

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

I want to be aligned with His unchanging and unfailing purpose. My plans are many, but His purpose prevails in my life if I allow Him to. I still need to pray the prayer of relinquishment and allow Him to be Lord.

Do you sometimes feel that God has changed His mind concerning you and your purpose? Where do these thoughts come from? Is this the voice of shame and condemnation? Is it the voice of disillusionment? His blessing and favour last for a lifetime.

Ps 30:5

For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Just because you went through a season of discipline from the Lord does not mean that is His default state toward you. There is no hidden catch to this. Stop doubting. Mercy triumphs over judgement.

Ecc1 3:14

I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

God in this hour wants to build things that last. He is glorified when this happens. He has a plan for your life and does not want you to be a one hit wonder. The only person who can stop this from happening is you. Have you believed the lie that God has changed His mind about you? Think back to a time in your life when you believed His promises. At what point did doubt and unbelief enter? Was it when you looked at the circumstances or lack of results? God hasn't changed His mind about you. You just need to persevere.

Hebrews 6:12

We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.