

God Is...

Infinite Power, Infinite Possibilities

The greatest single distinguishing feature of the omnipotence of God is that our imagination gets lost when thinking about it. *Blaise Pascal*

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Is Your God Too Small?

Read your Bible: [Psalm 29](#)

Spotlight Verse:

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic. [Psalm 29:4](#)

In the church where I was raised, we talked a lot about God being *personal*. But in retrospect, this seemed to give some people the idea that they could have their own *personal god*, meaning a god that fit their idea of what a god should be like.

I can do that too. As I mentioned earlier, one of my big temptations is to create a little mental idol, a false godlet made in my own image, a deity that approves of all my indulgences and gets angry with everything I'm peeved about too.

God is *personal*, but that doesn't mean He's a person *like me*. The Bible talks a lot about God's bigness and otherness, or, to use a more biblical term, *majesty*.

The Bible writers loved that word.

*The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty;
the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength...* Psalm 93:1a

They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty — and I will meditate on your wonderful works. Psalm 145:5

Our English word "majesty" comes from Latin; it means *greatness*. This is what the Bible means when it talks about God being "on high" and "in heaven." It doesn't mean He lives up there, in space, or is physically above you, but that He is far above you in greatness, and is worthy to be adored and worshipped.

And feared.

Is Your God Too Tame?

It's interesting that when people in the Bible encounter God, their first reaction is always the same: Fear. Not always a cringing, shameful fear, either; many times it's appropriate awe and reverence and gasping wonder at encountering the most majestic Being in the universe.

This is so healthy. The Bible says,

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Proverbs 9:10 (KJV)

Maybe this is an aspect of God we miss in our culture because our thinking about God is so anemic; we hardly ever think about Him, and when we do, we think of one of our little godlets we fashion, and not the might and majesty of the actual God.

Maybe this is also why we can sin so blithely. In the Old Testament, one phrase repeatedly describes people who pursue destructive behavior: "there was no fear of God before their eyes."

In C.S. Lewis' classic *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, one of the children asks Mr. and Mrs. Beaver about Aslan, the great king and lion:

"Is Aslan quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver. "If there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or just plain silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."[19](#)

Is God safe?

Well, He is our Savior, our Refuge, our Rock. So He is *good*.

But if *safe* means that God never does anything I dislike, that God always meets my puny expectations, that God is never alarming, then, no, He's definitely not safe.

God is wild, majestic, mighty, creative, challenging...

In Mark Buchanan's book *Is Your God Too Safe?* he says:

The safe god asks nothing of us, gives nothing to us. He never makes us bold to dance... never whispers anything in our ears but greeting card slogans... a safe god inspires neither awe, nor worship, nor sacrifice...[20](#)

Is your God too safe? Good question!

Power Source

That's why, for the next several days, we'll be focusing on what you could call the *majestic* attributes of God. After this I hope your knees knock some when you think of Him.

Let's start by looking at the *omnipotence* of God, from the words *omni* meaning *all*, and *potence*, meaning *power*. When theologians say God is *omnipotent* they mean He is *all-powerful*.

When you first see God in the Bible, in Genesis 1, He's creating everything you and I know — time, space, the earth, and all life. So, chronologically and logically, God's creative power seems like a good place to start a study of God's attributes.

In today's reading in Psalm 29, David is trying to capture the power and majesty of God by comparing Him to the fury and might of a storm. The power of God in these verses is wild, untamed, frightening.

But check out the surprise ending:

The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace. Psalm 29:11

I love that David *ends* with that. Because after you've seen God's power, His offer of strength makes a lifelong impression.

Facing a problem that makes you feel weak and powerless? Remind yourself that God is infinitely more powerful than the problem you are facing right now. Asking Him for strength will not dilute his reservoir of power in any way. And you will be “blessed with peace.”

In prayer today, say, “God, You’re all powerful. Nothing is too hard for You. With God all things are possible. You rule over nations. You rule over nature. You rule the universe. And You give me strength and bless me with peace.”

God is... majestic.

Questions For Reflection

In what ways do people sometimes have a God that is “too safe”?

What are the most impressive displays of nature’s power you have witnessed? How do these displays remind you about God’s power?

What is the promise in Psalm 29:11? What situation are you facing where you need to claim that promise?

The Miracle of Life

Read your Bible: [Psalm 33:1–9](#)

Spotlight Verse:

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. [Psalm 33:6](#)

For the next few days I want to help you to rediscover wonder.

To get lost in amazement.

To wander in worship.

Famous scientist Stephen Hawking wrote *The Grand Design* to defend his atheism. Ironically, the book had the exact opposite effect on me: It rocketed my faith in the creativity and omnipotence of God to new heights. For weeks after reading just the first chapter I walked around in wide-eyed wonder that anything living existed at all.

In that first chapter Hawking says, “The discovery recently of the extreme fine-tuning of so many laws of nature could lead some to the idea that this grand design is the work of some grand Designer...” And then he elaborates on some apparent evidences of design:

Many improbable occurrences conspired to create Earth’s human-friendly design. We need liquid water to exist, and if the Earth were too close [to the sun], it would all boil off; if it were too far, it would freeze.

Even a small disturbance in gravity would send the planet off its circular orbit, and cause it to spiral either into or away from the sun.

It is not only the peculiar characteristics of our solar system that seem oddly conducive to the development of human life, but also the characteristics of our entire universe — and its laws. They appear to have a design that is both tailor-made to support us and, if we are to exist, leaves little room for alteration.[21](#)

He goes on to produce many examples, and then concludes:

Most of the laws of nature appear fine-tuned in the sense that if they were altered by only modest amounts, the universe would be ...unsuitable for the development of life. They do seem tailor-made for humans...[22](#)

In fact, he says, if you try to explain how this all happened by accident, you run into literally impossible odds. There is simply not a chance that this happened by chance!

But then Hawking goes on to handle the problem of God this way: Since it is too incredible to believe this finely-tuned *universe* came about by random chance, why not postulate an infinite number of *multiverses*?

If nature randomly spat out an infinite number of universes so that a nearly infinite number of them now exist in a multiverse, then surely at least *one* would have our characteristics, just by luck of the draw.

Another famous scientist, Paul Davies, wrote his response to this idea in the *New York Times*:

The multiverse theory is increasingly popular, but it doesn't so much explain the laws of physics as dodge the whole issue. There has to be a physical mechanism to make all those universes and bestow bylaws on them. Where do *they* come from? The problem has simply been shifted up a level from the laws of the universe to the meta-laws of the multiverse.[23](#)

I am certainly not qualified to issue some detailed critique of the work of an esteemed scientist. What I get out of this debate goes in a different direction: Everything I can see on earth every day that is alive, even common things like leaves and skin and blades of grass, is, when seen in the scope of the whole universe, more precious than the rarest jewel.

The odds against *anything* being alive *anywhere* in this universe are so great that the mere fact that you are reading these words, inhaling air, conscious of the beauty around us, thinking about this together, is less likely than you winning every lottery in history.

The Bible's explanation? God is the creative powerhouse behind everything, the artist-engineer-poet-scientist who wove it all together. The creation sparkles with life endowed by the Creator!

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. Psalm 102:25

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. Psalm 33:6

And you want a real-mind-blower? The One who made all this is the One who loves you so much He gave Himself to you in Christ!

Take some precious moments today to consider the sheer greatness of God's power. Let your spirit soar with His Spirit.

Pause to see... with eyes wide open.

Take in the heavens, the stars, the moon and the sun and the clouds and the oceans and the mountains.

God is... infinitely powerful.

Questions For Reflection

How does meditating on the omnipotence of God impact you?

Where today did you see evidence of the power of God?

Amazing Artist, Brilliant Engineer

Read your Bible: [Psalm 148](#)

Spotlight Verse:

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created. [Psalm 148:5](#)

We went big yesterday, thinking of the cosmos. Today let's go small.

Remember the old Disneyland ride *Adventure Through Inner Space* where you were “shrunk” to the size of a molecule? Well, try to imagine that actually happening. Let's say you decreased in size a billion times, until a single human cell looked as big as a city the size of New York.

Dr. Michael Denton, quoted in Jerry Bridges' book *The Joy of Fearing God*, describes what you'd see: On the surface there are millions of portholes, opening and closing to allow a stream of materials flowing in and out. You enter one of these openings and discover “a world of supreme technology and bewildering complexity”:

You see endless highly organized corridors and conduits branching in every direction, some leading to the central memory bank in the nucleus and others to assembly plants and processing units... a huge range of products and raw materials shuttle along in orderly fashion to and from all the various assembly plants in the outer regions of the cell... [like] an immense automated factory, a factory larger than a city and carrying out almost as many unique functions as all the manufacturing activities of man on earth.[24](#)

In at least one respect it would be different from a factory, though: “It would be capable of replicating its entire structure within a few hours.”

Now consider that there are about 75 trillion of these cells in your body!

What does all this have to do with the power of God?

As Jerry Bridges points out, it's just one illustration of millions that could be drawn from nature to show how God is an amazingly creative artist and brilliant engineer.

God is like the ultimate Leonardo Da Vinci, an artist and engineer — or I should say, Da Vinci reflected this aspect of the image of God. And when you create art, or engineer a solution, or do math, you do too!

We looked upward yesterday at the stars. Take time to stop today and look more closely at the tiny world around you. Where do you see the brilliance of God's power displayed — just with your naked eye, never mind the microscope it would take to unlock the wonders we just described?

Pause to see... with eyes wide open.

Take in the flowers. Butterflies. Dogs. Cats. Babies. Leaves. Water droplets. Blades of grass. The rise and fall of your own rhythmic breaths.

And take in some of the creative ways that human artists, made in God's image, try to reflect all these things.

As Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote,

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes...[25](#)

God is... infinitely creative.

Questions For Reflection

How does Psalm 148 impact you?

What did you praise God for today — something you noticed in the world around you for which you have rarely given Him thanks, perhaps one of the “smaller” things?

Why is seeing the world in this way a good habit?

Recovering Wonder

Read your Bible: [Psalm 19:1–6](#)

Spotlight Verse:

*The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. [Psalm 19:1–2](#)
[NLT](#)*

The Creator delights in His creation.

The Bible says that when God created the world, He paused and said, “It is good.” And when I get lost in wonder while enjoying His handiwork, I am reflecting His own delight.

We live in Santa Cruz, California, where I sometimes jog on an oceanfront trail that winds through Natural Bridges State Beach. Each winter, thousands of monarch butterflies migrate from Mexico to hang out there. I mean, they literally hang out, clustering like bunches of bananas from the trees, occasionally breaking free of the group to flutter across the path.

I enjoy running through the grove they inhabit on my way to the beach, seeing them, and other parts of creation, bursting with life all around me. I wish I could take you on a run with me. Just imagine:

It’s a warm day and they float around you,
like something from a dream,
delicate orange-and-black origami come to life.

At the same beach, framed by a rock arch, you watch
comical shore birds race the waves on stick-thin legs

while elegant pelicans glide just above them,
dinosaur silhouettes against the pale blue sky

In the tide pools underfoot: other glimpses of life.
Purple and red sea stars, the world’s slowest predators,
advance nonchalantly on their prey;
hermit crabs scuttle sideways
carrying their stolen homes
looking for a place to lurk;
sea anemones wave their tentacles,
raising multiple hands to warn “I’m hungry!”

And then suddenly
you catch a distant glimpse:
A spout of water. A glistening fin.
Migrating whales frolic further offshore.

You look back over your shoulder and smile as you see
the fluttering butterflies that sparked your reverie
still drifting and glimmering
and the symmetry fascinates:

The minuscule monarchs and the massive whales,
mysteriously mirroring their migrations.

The other day, because I was looking for it, I saw all this *in the same hour*. Wow. My spirit was refreshed with a sense of awe. The creation was proclaiming the creativity of God pretty loudly.

Yet most days I don't notice a thing. Of course I don't. *I'm not even looking.*

As author and pastor Mark Buchanan says,

We are all in the habit of asking the Spirit to open our minds before we read Scripture or hear a sermon. But rarely if ever do we ask the Spirit to reveal to us more of God when we study a leaf, rock, bird, child, painting, carving, or poem.[26](#)

This kind of wonder was certainly enjoyed by the Bible writers:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Psalm 19:1

How many are your works, LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Psalm 104:24

There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number — living things both large and small. Psalm 104:25

They noticed.

Today try to very intentionally notice God's handiwork all around you. Ask God to open your eyes and help you see.

I wonder if distraction from God's voice in creation is not the most insidious of the many evils that our culture's clamor for amusement can bring. Because if I'm indoors staring at a screen all the time I'm missing something very important that God is saying:

Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Romans 1:20

So notice His power and divine nature in what you see today. I'd also invite you to do something else: Notice the difference that noticing makes. How are you changed when you see evidence of His creative power?

And why not tell God about what you see that you find wondrous, just as you'd compliment a master artist?

God is... revealing Himself all around me.

Questions For Reflection

What impresses you about Psalm 19?

Notice the difference that noticing God's power in the world around you makes to your attitude. How are you changed when you see evidence of His creative power?

What difference does it make to your attitude? To your stress level? To your sense of the powerful presence of God?

Eyes Wide Open

Read your Bible: [Psalm 104:1–26](#)

Spotlight Verse:

How many are your works, LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. [Psalm 104:24](#)

My wife and I love snorkeling. One morning we read Psalm 104 together and got so excited about all its aquatic imagery that we said, “Let’s go snorkeling right now and see all those ‘teeming creatures beyond number — living things both large and small!’” We agreed we’d see them all as reasons to worship, as examples of the Creator’s art.

Twenty minutes later we were in the water, alone in an early morning ocean inlet... and were surprised to hear the faint sounds of dolphins!

Just listening to their “praise songs” was enough for me, but it got better: Their singing got louder and louder until a whole pod of them circled us, delighting us with their joyful leaps and dives.

They were above and below us, in front and in back of us, and on either side. They raced past, then returned to circle and splash and sing again.

To be honest, it was delightful and kind of scary all at the same time. What, I wondered, if they were *evil* dolphins? They could take us out like Flipper took out sharks every week!

But I only wondered that for about one second. Then the worry turned to worship.

All that would have been *fun* enough on any day, but what made it *transcendent* was the timing: We were framing everything we saw in terms of Psalm 104. Then to experience *this*?

We were both so moved spiritually that we were laughing and crying at the same time — and that’s hard to do while wearing a snorkel! In fact, it’s dangerous!

This was an exceptional experience — but little moments like this are all around you, all the time. Keeping your ears, eyes, and heart wide open for signs of God’s power in creation is so important.

Cure for My Near-Sightedness

Seeing the thunderous wonders of God was a turning point for Job, who because of his terrible trials was asking the question, “Why waste time trying to please God?” (Job 34:9 NLT).

But then God finally speaks to Job directly and draws his attention to the mysteries of creation in chapters 38–41. Read it to see an amazing sequence of descriptions of God’s creative power.

It’s interesting to me how in the first two chapters of this section, God starts big:

“Can you loosen Orion’s belt?” Job 38:31

and goes small:

“Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn?” Job 39:1

and then zooms back out a little:

“Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane?” Job 39:19

as He points out that all around you, Job, everywhere you look, from constellation to gestation, from horses to hawks, there are mysteries to behold.

Job’s response? He’s drawn into awe and worship.

The God-rocket blasts off, and he’s silenced into holy fear and reverence.

Someone told me once: “René, my biggest health problem is ingrown eyeballs.” I think that’s pretty much everyone’s problem. It’s a great description of what it’s like to get caught in a loop of self-pitying or self-justifying or self-aggrandizing thoughts.

Got ingrown eyeballs? Get some wonder.

This might be one of the reasons I’m drawn to nature documentaries like *Planet Earth*. Particularly when seen through the lens of what the Bible tells me about God, they both inspire me and put me in my place, like taking a ride through these chapters of the Book of Job!

God is... awesome in power.

Questions For Reflection

Today look around you and journal about whatever strikes you as an example of God’s creative power — especially if you’ve never noticed it before. *Intention* is a huge part of noticing God’s omnipotence at work around you. Where today did you see evidence of the power of God?

If you have time, please read Job 38 and 39. Why do you think a meditation on creation was a big part of God’s answer to Job?

How is this part of God’s answer to your own questions and fears?

Ex Nihilo

Read your Bible: [Genesis 1:1–5](#)

Spotlight Verse:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [Genesis 1:1](#)

Here's a mind-blower: God created everything that ever existed out of *absolutely nothing*. He didn't start with a blank canvas, or lump of clay, or a sheet of paper. There was zero for Him to work with.

Theologians have a Latin name for this: *ex nihilo*, which literally means "out of nothing." He creates something where there was nothing before, and He looks at it and says, "It is good."

This is a kind of creative power I have a hard time fathoming, because there isn't anything we humans make on our planet like that. You and I always start with previously existing materials in order to make something else.

Be sure to check out today's verses from Genesis 1.

The Hebrew word used there for *create* is *bara*. It's only used in the Old Testament when *God* creates.

When *human beings* create, there's another, lesser Hebrew word used. It's intended to express that, while our creativity reflects our creative God, we can't really produce *something out of nothing* the way God can.

Like Carl Sagan said, "If you wish to truly make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe."²⁷

Only God creates from scratch. But this is not just limited to the way God makes stars and planets. If you'll allow me to use *ex nihilo* poetically but truthfully, this is also related to how God *changes you*.

God is not held back by pre-existing conditions. He can do anything from scratch, bring anyone back to life again, when there are no resources, no hope, nothing.

Nihilo.

I think of the stories of some friends of mine...

About ten years ago, Kurtis was smoking pot for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He didn't want to feel any pain; he didn't want to feel anything at all. His once well-muscled construction workers' body had been laid waste by multiple sclerosis. His marriage? Over. His career skills? Useless. He literally had nothing left. He was being warehoused in a nursing home for low-income patients, feeling no good to anyone. A big zero.

Nihilo.

One day Kurtis slipped out of the facility, steered his motorized wheelchair to the edge of a busy street, and tried to pick out a car that looked like the owner has good insurance — so he could roll into its path and end his suffering. But his nerve failed him and he rolled back to his room, feeling defeated even in his attempt at suicide — a new low, he thought.

Then a friend invited him to church. And from the first day Kurtis felt something stirring — something alive, happy, playful, all around him. He tells me he now believes it was the Holy Spirit breathing new life into his dead soul. The Spirit moved across what was formless and void.

To see Kurtis now, worshipping with tears flowing, leading the residents' advocacy group at the nursing center, or greeting people at church with the biggest grin in the building, you wouldn't recognize him. His wheelchair is plastered with signs he prints out from his computer ("He Is Risen Indeed!" says one). He is in many ways brand-new.

Then there's my friend Robert. He went into the family business several years ago: Importing and exporting... drugs. With no trace of conscience, he happily funneled millions of dollars of drugs, mostly cocaine, into the U.S. It was a booming market. Until he got busted and sent to prison. And his marriage crumbled. And his daughter was murdered. And he lost everything. He was left with *nothing*.

Nihilo.

But then, spiritual truths Robert had first heard as a child began to finally take effect as he attended prison Bible studies. A faith muscle started to grow where there had been nothing before.

Fast-forward to the present-day. The man I know smiles more than almost anyone else at church, unless he is weeping with brokenness when thinking of the addicts he helped create.

His occupation? He's a counselor. His specialty? Addictions. Helping others get off the path he once trod. God looked at his total darkness and said, "Let there be light." And Robert *shines*.

"Omnipotence": It's not just a fancy theological term. It means God sees possibilities where no one else sees them.

It means there is always hope.

It means God delights in His creative skill every time He produces a masterpiece out of a life seemingly devoid of hope or promise.

And it means He steps back and looks at His work in *you* and says, "It is good."

You've been keeping your eyes wide open for signs of His finesse in nature — now watch for signs of His power in changed lives all around you.

And the next time you see someone and think, "there is no hope there — nothing," remember how God likes to work:

Ex nihilo.

God is... not limited by anything.

Questions For Reflection

What does it mean that God creates *ex nihilo*?

How could this truth inspire and motivate you in your daily life, and as you look at the challenges and the needy people around you?

Infinite Power, Infinite Possibilities

Read your Bible: [Ephesians 1:18–23](#)

Spotlight Verse:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. [Ephesians 3:20–21](#)

Meditating on the power of God is important.

One of the many times the opponents of Jesus tried to lure him into a debate, Christ's response was this:

"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God."
Matthew 22:29

I wonder how many times I am in error because of the same thing?

When I worry that all my efforts as a pastor are weak and ineffective...

When I lose hope about a friend who is blowing it...

When I wonder if I'll ever conquer that habit...

When I worry about my future...

When I worry about my kids...

I am in error because I do not know the *Scriptures* or the *power of God*.

More Than Positive Thinking

When times get tough, I find that the tough usually get stuck in the old stand-by: Positive thinking.

Generally speaking I'm happy to try to be a positive thinker. After all, that's better than being a negative thinker. But what do you do when the negative circumstances overwhelm you?

The way through is to realize that you are helpless. *Powerless*.

But then you realize what *Scripture* says about the *power of God*.

I am the LORD, the God of all mankind; is anything too difficult for me? Jeremiah 32:27

Nothing is impossible for God. Luke 1:37

I pray that you will be able to understand the incredible greatness of His power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead.
Ephesians 1:19–20a (NLT)

God's Power in You

Think of all the ways we've meditated on God's power together this week. Now realize that same God wants to use that power *in you*.

As Paul says in today's spotlight verses:

"Now to Him who is able to do..." God is able. Worried about whether you'll ever overcome that habit? Concerned you're not equipped to raise children? Anxious about making ends meet? God is able. Able to help. Able to empower. Able to do...

"More... than we can ask." Now, I can ask for a lot. But God can do more. And He can do...

"More than we can... imagine." I have a pretty good imagination! But He can do more. In fact, He can do...

"Immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine."

What do you ask God for — or perhaps just imagine, without daring to even ask?

To find a spouse?

To have a child?

To write a book?

To be healed?

To find peace as you enter old age?

To control your urges?

To heal your marriage?

Why do we think this stuff is too hard for God? I'm not saying He'll answer all these prayers the way you want them answered — because, what's the verse say? He is able to do *more than* we ask or imagine. His answer is, ultimately, more — immeasurably more, better, richer — than what we had imagined.

Are you ready for that adventure?

God is... able.

Questions For Reflection

Although you may theoretically believe that God is omnipotent, does your life demonstrate your belief?

Why do you think you — or other believers — may not be experiencing the power of God as frequently as He seems to wish to provide it?

How might your life change if you truly internalized the truth of God's omnipotence?

What powerful things do you expect God to do in your life?