

God is . . . Self-sufficient!

(Acts 17:22-31)

Let's pretend a close friend has come to *you* for advice . . .

Relationship advice, about **him or her** starting one.

And the advice being sought is quite specific: your friend tells you,

"There are **2** people interested **in** me, & of interest **to** me.

I need help choosing between them . . . whom should I pursue?!"

Thankfully, your friend, a *Christian*, already *knows* (pew 🙌)

[as you should know, un-marrieds!] that 'dating' is for the purpose of finding out if someone is ***compatible for marriage***, and that God wants Christians *marrying Christians*.

So, the 2 options presented are both Christians ... but are still *different*:

- 1 seems grounded, mature, established, satisfied – content with life **as is** (ensemble of satisfied & content-looking folk, 1 of whom your friend has in mind)
- The other person of interest has for years seemed consistently troubled, deeply damaged. Slogan "distressed & depressed, but well-dressed!"

Being a 'wise counsellor', the choice seems *obvious* 🙌 to you!

because we're not talking about *merely* assisting in a time of need, helping someone bear a burden . . . which Christians should do gladly.

No, we're talking which of these 2 you are hoping to spend your life with, *be around continually*, a spouse you desire to be *Best Friends Forever*

But your friend is one of 'those sorts' who is drawn to the 'damaged' . . .

- wanting someone to **DEPEND** on them, needing to hear 'you **COMPLETE ME**'
- If your friend's a guy, he's keen to **rescue** the 'damsel in distress'
- If your friend's a female, she's confident: "I can **fix** him!"

Hmmm! You seasoned, wise counsellor! You know such *confidence is misplaced*, such *keenness*, naïve. Your vast life experience has taught you something your pastor of 25 years has confirmed from much counselling:

Your friend **cannot** 'rescue' her or 'fix' him. Only God can!

So you courageously counsel your friend, saying,

“Friend, ditch your 🙄 messiah-complex!

What you now see 👉 as an **adorable “little project”**,

will become an *increasingly heavy* burden, a *life-long* cross to bear.

Though such a marriage may well sanctify you/grow you spiritually, the phrase **“Marital Bliss”** will rarely come to mind!

👉 This person is grounded, visibly motivated by the joy of the Lord, already content with their life, recognising God’s many blessings.

Certainly **THIS** is the sort of person you should be drawn to:

a person **not NEEDING** someone to **“complete”** them,

but a person it is a *privilege* to around, to be *united to*.

We’re in a mini-series on Attributes or Qualities of God, and I began with that story or analogy, fully granting that every analogy ‘breaks down.’

And the attribute of God I unpack this morning is SO vastly **different** to us & **distinct** from our experience . . . it’s hard for *any* analogy to work!

But I hope you can get the idea.

The foundational attribute we consider this morning:

God is . . . God **IS!**

***God depends on nothing & no one,
existing without any prior cause,
with nothing external sustaining Him.***

We call this God’s **“Self-Sufficiency”**,

(if you’re a theology reader, the old Latin word is *Aseity*, **“from oneself”**)

It’s a **MIND-blowing** attribute of God, but I wanted to start with a ***personal relational*** analogy because the impact of this attribute on our relationship with God is foundational . . . It’s very important that our God is a God who does not need us, but rather, we need Him more than anyone & anything.

In reality, ONLY our Triune Creator – Father, Son & Spirit –

is Self-Sufficient, “Complete”, w/o need.

ALL of us creatures are dependent *incomplete*, made to be complete in God
 . . . and after our Fall into sin, we are ALL are broken, damaged goods,
 needing not just *completing*, but *saving*.

The BIG IDEA this morning:

ONLY the God who has no needs
 can meet **ALL** of our needs!

This also forms our Outline

The God who has no needs	(Acts 17:24-25)
The God who meets all our needs, body & soul	(Acts 17:26-31) [MOST time on our 1 st point]

Acts 17 will be a key Bible passage we launch from,
 but we'll also look at other passages.

THE GOD WHO HAS NO NEEDS (ACTS 17:24-25)

In the Book of Acts, Paul, the persecutor who became a preacher & missionary walked thru Athens, the intellectual capital of anc. Greece: the city of Socrates, the playground of Plato! As Paul walked, he saw a city chock-a-block w/idols.

A few verses later, Paul is invited to what we'd call the Philosopher's Club, and he begins his speech, have a look in your Bibles at verse 22 . . .

"People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' [BTW, 3 'unknown God' altars excavated] Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

3 'unknown' God altars excavated. It's not quite as insulting as it sounds:

The word "Unknown" is *agnostos* (where we get "*agnostic*",
 someone undecided about God)

The word "Ignorance" is *agnountes* (same root word).

Paul is saying, *I want to "connect the dots" for you, religiously speaking, fill in the gaps that your own altars admit to.*

What does Paul say FIRST?

What foundational truth does he lay down:

Who is the true God? What is He like? ... and not like?

Verses 24-25

*The God who made the world and everything in it— He is Lord of heaven & earth and does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as if He needed anything! – since He Himself **GIVES** everyone life & breath & everything else. (Acts 17:24-25)*

The Lord of Lords, of heaven & earth depends on nothing & no one.

Instead,

*The existence of everyone & everything
is **DERIVED from** God and **DEPENDS on** God*

The very next breath you take depends on Him! Q:

Why does Paul need to teach this to a bunch of Dr. Smarty Pants philosophers in 1st century Athens? Surely they'd know this!

As Christians, we can take for granted **awesome theology** (awesome truths about God) . . . and we can forget that **bad theology** is crippling, causing people to live in fear & superstition.

Let's consider just 3 qualities about God's awesome Self-Sufficiency . . .

He is in essence, intrinsically

- **Original** – creating Everything from Nothing
- **Moral** – creating with Order & Beauty & Purpose
- **Relational** – Loving, Speaking & Saving

ORIGINAL – creating Everything from Nothing

God was FIRST.

more accurately,

God **IS** first! God "has life in Himself" is the way Jesus said it.

Bible readers are SO familiar with,

"In the beginning, God"

that we can be unaware of its RADICAL significance!

God exists **outside** of our limitations of space & time . . . he CREATED Space & Time!

The Bible says this in many ways & places, but here's just 2 more . . . 1 OT, 1 NT:

Before the mountains were born,
before You formed the entire world,
from ETERNITY to ETERNITY, You are God! (Psalm 90:2)

A **Passport** has an 🖱️ “issue date” & an 🖱️ “expiry date”
People have an “issue date” & an *earthly* “expiry date”
Our **Planet** has a creation date & an expiry date,
when God wraps it all up to create a NEW Heaven & Earth
The Home of Righteousness.

Passports, people & planets have an issue date & expiry date.
Not God! He has no beginning, and no ending!

“God is the one who . . . calls into existence things that did not exist” (Romans 4:5)

He merely spoke, commanded the universe into existence.
He used no **tools** or **matter** to create b/c there were no tools or matter!
God created, *ex nihilo*, **out of nothing**.

This is **so** different to the rival ‘gods’ of the Bible’s day & our day!

With **COVID** we haven’t been able to travel much, so let’s do a quick TOUR OF THE GLOBE & learn how MOST world religions answer the proverbial Q:

“Which came first, the **chicken** or the **egg**?” repackaged as,
Which came first, the **Creator** or **creation**?

You might be **SURPRISED** by how they answer:
in the vast majority world religions, Creation came first of!
The Creator’s ultimate origin was from creation – the Maker was first made!?!

Rah, the **Egyptian** Creator God, declared:
“I came out of the eternal waters” (the waters were first)

Don’t forget the egg!, because... flying over to **India**

In Hinduism, **Brahma**, the Creator, was birthed from a Golden Egg
From the **egg-shell** that birthed him, He created the earth
From the **egg white+yolk**, he made ocean water.
[In some branches of Hinduism, Brahma came from a Lotus flower.
Either way, Brahma came second, originating *from* creation.]

If you're scratching your head in confusion, don't stop scratching! . . .

China: The Creator **Pangu** broke out of the Egg of chaos

Central Africa: **Boomba**, the Creator, came out of the *eternal waters*, as did the group of creators in beliefs of Mayans & Aztecs of Central America

In most religions, the 'creator' is **NOT first** & **NOT distinct** from creation.

Each of these "creators" is DEPENDENT on His creatures . . .
for *nourishment, refreshment & more*.

It's why idols of these so-called creators get fanned by worshippers to stay cool, and why worshippers leave food beside the giant idols at the temple, as well as the tiny idol-shrines at the homes of worshippers.

These 'creators' NEED their creatures, to be sustained by them!

But for the True God, the Self-Sufficient God, Paul puts it bluntly: **"As If!"**

I think **ATHEISM** is 'like' another pagan religious creation story.

Think about it . . . **BANG!** . . . a *Big Bang*.

Where did the ***matter*** for the Big Bang come from?

Most atheists say matter is eternal and just changes form . . .

Eternal like the *golden egg* or the *lotus flower* or the *ocean waters!*

Movie director Ridley Scott is a staunch atheist. In his film ***Prometheus*** he suggests our planet was seeded by alien ancestors, who "dispersed" their DNA on earth.

But who gave the DNA to those alien ancestors?! How'd it start off?

This is 'Question Begging', & *answers nothing* about ultimate origins.

An atheist who believes matter is eternal is not consistent arguing that God cannot be eternal.

A common but totally flawed atheist argument against God is this:

"All things must have a cause.

So if the universe has a cause, then God also must have a cause."

WRONG! Not everything must have a cause.

The law of causality is that "Every ***EFFECT*** must have a ***cause.***"

Cause → Effect

But God is not an effect! The Bible says God is ***eternal.***

Christians do not view God as "***The Uncaused Effect!***"

He is The ***Uncaused Cause!***

Without God, there can be *no beginning.*

Without *Being*, there can be no *becoming.*

Unlike pagan – or atheist – creation stories,

Our Self-Sufficient God was ***caused*** by nothing, is ***dependent*** upon no one and ***created everything from nothing!***

Our Lord and God,
You are WORTHY to receive
glory and honour and power,
because You have created ALL things,
and by Your will they exist (Rev 4:11)

God's glorious **Self-sufficiency** mean not just He's intrinsically *ORIGINAL*
He's also intrinsically

MORAL – creating with Order & Beauty & Purpose

Ethics do not come from outside of God.

God's Ethics are simply a reflection of WHO He Is.

- '*Be Holy for I am Holy*' says the Lord – holiness ethics reflect Him.
- '*Love one another, for God is love*' – loves parameters are shaped by God

From the very beginning, from *other* Creation stories, other gods are so different re. their ethics in Creating, even their reasons for Creating.

1 example of each:

- Ethics in Creating: **BABYLONIA ENUMA ELISH**

Tiamat, the female goddess of eternal salt waters,
mated with Abzu, the male god of eternal fresh waters.

Tiamat gives birth to *2nd gen gods* but some revolted & killed Abzu (Dad).

So, Tiamat wages war on her husband's murderers,
but is slain by the next-gen god Marduk.

The text of the ***Enuma Elish*** is not for the faint hearted: **{DP}**

*"With his merciless club Marduk smashed Tiamat's skull,
and severed her arteries. Then he sliced her in half like a dried fish.
With one half of her stretched out the heavens
... from the other half of her he made the earth."*

How's that for Creation ethics! By the way, *ethically* speaking,
that's *par for the course* in world religions, NOT exceptional!

How about **Reasons** for Creating?

The Atrahasis Epic is the Sumerian creation story,

describing a pantheon of gods: the lower gods, the Igigi,
revolting against the 'Great' gods, the Anun-naki.

It begins with the Anun-naki, being exhausted: I quote,

*The gods' load was **too great**, their work **too hard**!
So the great Anun-naki forced the Igigi to carry the workload*

*[The Igigi] had to dig & clear the channels to make the Tigris river then the Euphrates.
Hard work, night & day for 3,600 **years**, they **groaned & blamed** each other:*

***'We have put a stop to the digging!**
The load is excessive, it's killing us!* [end quote]

So, the Igigi conspired against the Anun-naki, but a Council
is held to avoid all-out war. An agreement is reached. I quote:

"Let's CREATE MAN to bear the load of the gods!"

Wow . . . so humanity is the rescuer of the gods!!

And after 600 years of humanity toiling for the gods, again I quote:

*Mankind's country was as **noisy** as a bellowing bull.
The Igigi grew restless listening to humanity's racket!
So they addressed the great gods,
The noise of mankind has become too much,
We're **losing sleep** over their racket.
Give the order that **disease** shall break out upon them!*

Grumpy, sleepy, selfish, vindictive gods!

Creating us to bear their loads . . . **Why should we WORSHIP them?**

Contrast our gloriously self-sufficient biblical God, and His creating: repeated each day, leaving out the different variables: **{DPb}**

*Then God said,
 "Let there be"
 And there was . . .
 it was good
 God named it . . .
 Evening & Morning,
 The [# of the] Day Repeat x 6*

Beyond the clear repetition is the clear structure:
 Forming was formless; Filling what was empty.

NO HINT of accident, spite, war, butchery, one-upmanship, decay or death.
All of it was "VERY GOOD!"

So ethical, so intentional, reflecting a self-sufficient God . . . in control.
 Creating with **glory & beauty & design**

God created humanity in His image, to rule under God,
 Living ethically, that is, **godly** . . . and filling the world with His glory
*Declare the greatness of our God!
 His work is perfect, all His ways are just!
 A faithful God, without bias,
 He is righteous and true! (Deuteronomy 32:4)*

God's glorious **self-sufficiency** is not just intrinsically *ORIGINAL & MORAL...*

RELATIONAL – Loving, Speaking & Saving

Not only did God *speak* the world into existence,
 He *spoke* to us, **personally**, giving humanity a *calling*
 – to cultivate the world, filling it with His glory

God also called out a **people for His name**,

- 1st choosing a nation, Israel in the Old Covenant, a shadow *pointing* to
- J, Messiah, the True Israel, & a New Cov w/God's international people.

God spoke quite personally to Moses @ the **Burning Bush**
 when God revealed his Name

I AM WHO I AM

God was speaking emphatically of His **glorious SELF-SUFFICIENCY**.
present in the bush but *preserving* the bush
not dependent on the bush, since the bush was not consumed.

Yahweh – I Am who I Am – as God unpacks His salvation plan.

I will be with you, God promised in Exodus 3:12.

I will be your deliverance from Egypt.

I will be what I will be – which is what My people need to be saved.

God spoke *quite* personally to Moses,

BUT God spoke ***MOST personally in Jesus***,

In these last days, God has spoken to us in His Son!

The Son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact expression of His nature

Jesus is Eternal, but to save us He took on flesh:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God
 . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*

*We beheld His **glory**, the glory of the one & only Son from the Father (John 1:1, 14)*

Who IS this fully self-sufficient God?...

A Triune being, 1 God in 3 persons, an eternal fellowship of love!

A Lover, a Beloved and a Spirit of love

Unlike Allah, or other monotheistic gods, Our Lord is never 'lonely, needy.'
 He is not *potentially* loving, **DESPERATE** to create something to love, like
 those over-the-top pet owners, spoiling & licking, taking turtle to a psych!

No, our Triune God Himself IS love . . . *always has been, always will be.*

Eternally inter-personal, God is a **community** of delight!

In Creation God merely "**went public**" with His glory!

And invited us into HIS gloriously all-sufficient love

He invites us to join His eternal **bliss**, not **blah**.

In Scripture, the First Letter to Timothy says,

sound doctrine [is] in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed [happy] God

Pastor John Piper comments on this verse:

*It is a glorious thing for God to be as happy as he is — infinitely happy.
No one would want to spend eternity with an unhappy God.*

*But, in fact, Jesus invites us to spend eternity with a happy God when he says,
“**Enter into the JOY of Your Master**” (Matthew 25:23)*

*Jesus lived & died that His joy — God’s joy — might be in us & our joy might be full
(John 15:11; 17:3)*

*BUT the happiness of God is first & foremost a happiness **in Himself**.*

Piper’s saying Jesus’ gospel love is for the Father 1st; His love for us is 2nd

What **primarily** motivated Jesus ministry? Jesus answers that Question:

*So that the world may know that I LOVE THE FATHER, [going public w/glorious love!]
I do as the Father commanded Me. . . I always do what pleases Him.” (Jn 14:31; 8:29)*

And the best love is mutual:

*The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hands . . .
Father, You loved Me before the world’s foundation! Jesus said (John 3:35; 17:24)*

God’s love for us is **Real**,

*God loved the world in this way: He gave His 1 & only Son, so whoever believes in Him
will not perish but have eternal life.*

God’s love for us is **real**, but His love for us is **Second!**

And it must be so, for **Jesus is no idolater**.

Back to what John Piper writes,

*Because God is unique as an all-glorious, totally self-sufficient Being . . . If God should
turn away from Himself as the Source of infinite joy, he would cease to be God. He
would deny the infinite worth of his own glory. He would imply that there is something
more valuable OUTSIDE of Himself. He would commit **IDOLATRY**.*

So when we share in the happiness of God,
we share in the very pleasure that God has in Himself.

God is complete in Himself.

When we worship Him, we are not adding to His greatness,
but rather **expressing OUR SATISFACTION** in Him and in His greatness.

FEED your soul on by meditating on portions of Scripture that highlight God's awe-inspiring self-sufficiency (such as Job 38-41, Rev 4-5).

In addition to Scripture, I highly commend John Piper's book ***The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God***

Why it's important that our God is self-sufficient?

If God needed you . . . He would NOT be worthy of worship. [OFF]

Why it's important that our God is self-sufficient?

If God actually needed you . . . He would NOT be worthy of worship!

Even atheists get this!

Star Trek fans might recall one rather anti-God movie, "*Star Trek V – The Final Frontier*". The main antagonist character, claims to be "god", and this god-pretender asks for the Starship Enterprise.

Capt Kirk asks, then demands, "*What does God need with a starship?!*"

If God needed you . . . **He'd be worshipping you!!**

[THE GOD WHO HAS NO NEEDS]

THE GOD WHO MEETS ALL OUR NEEDS (ACTS 17:26-31)

R. C. Sproul put it well:

All 'human beings' are also 'human becomings'!

– becoming hungry, becoming tired, becoming OLD & decaying!

Not God!

He is the same yesterday, today & forever!

In our fallen nature, we're not just corrupt & decaying *physically*,
we are corrupt & decaying *spiritually* . . .

We are all moral rebels, glory thieves who fall short of the glory of God.

A moment ago I said God's love for us is **real** but His love for us is **Second!**

There's a website with a title I really like:

"I Am Second"

It's filled with salvation testimonies (some better than others, of course).

But every testimony ends with "*My name is so-&-so, and I am second*"

"Because declaring oneself second is not natural! [why?] We all idolise ourselves."

A popular Christian song, "Above All", references Christ's death on the cross and declares, "***You took the fall and thought of me above all.***"

What? Jesus thought about me above *all*?

Idolatry News flash!:

Jesus didn't save you because He has good taste!

He saved you for ***the praise of HIS GLORIOUS GRACE!***

Even ***non-Xians*** understand the basic sense of *misplaced worship* (idolatry)

David Foster Wallace, a NON-Christian author, nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, shared this stunning insight in his graduation speech at Kenyon College:

In the day-to-day trenches of life, there is no such thing as atheism.

*There is no such thing as not worshipping. **Everybody worships.***

The only choice we get is what to worship.

And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship . . . is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive.

*Worship **POWER** – you will feel weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to keep the fear at bay.*

*Worship your **INTELLECT** – being seen as smart – you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.*

*Worship your **BODY & BEAUTY & SEXUAL ALLURE** and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally bury you.*

On one level, we all know this stuff already."

We are not only *worshippers* by nature, but ***idolaters*** by nature.

We deserve judgment for this! But Wallace's solution – to worship... *any ol' god* or '*spiritual-thing*' will not do because they are not worthy!

ONLY our Self-Sufficient God is **WORTHY** of worth-ship, worship.

Returning to Acts 17 & Paul's speech to the Philosophers, Paul says WHY God made humanity **in His image** . . . that we might Know Him.

Starting at Acts 17:26,

²⁶ *From one man God has made every nationality ... [why?]*

²⁷ *He did this so that they might seek God,*

and perhaps might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

²⁸ *For in Him we live and move and have our being . . .*

³⁰ *"Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in*

righteousness by The Man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:26-31)

Verses 30-31 give hope in Jesus, the Saviour-King who is risen from the dead.
 . . . Dead? Yes, we murdered the sinless King of Glory, crucifying Him.

That ‘unknown’ God, the **God you never knew – He came down to you!**

And to me

And we killed Him ☹

The Good News is not trying hard@being good enuf. That’s *despairing* news!

Instead, v. 27 say we “reach out” to Him . . . in simple repentant trust (v.30)

The GNews is completely trusting in our complete **self-sufficient** God.

to save you **insufficient** you!...

Only the Self-Sufficient God over whom the grave has no power can raise us!

God the Self-Sufficient God with NO SIN can save us from sin

to make you **clean**, to **forgive** your sins

sparing us from the eternal condemnation we deserve

bringing us into what we don’t deserve: God’s Forever Family

The Creator who **made everything from nothing**

became nothing so that we might have everything!

“Christ Jesus, existing in the form of God,

did not consider equality with God

as something to be exploited.

Instead He **EMPTIED** Himself

by assuming the form of a servant,

taking on the likeness of humanity.

He **HUMBLLED** himself by becoming obedient

to the point of death – even to death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

He died so we could live, taking our wretchedness to give us His righteousness!

Our humble Saviour King is precious! As are the lyrics of this Xian song:

“How **refreshing** to know You **don’t need** me;

How **amazing** to hear that You **want** me!”¹

Please don’t try “Solitary Confinement” – *going it your own way eternally!*

You will not stand the test on judgment day standing in your own righteousness!

¹ Refrain from the song “In Me” by Casting Crowns, from the Album *Lifesong*.

Likewise, people cannot handle *earthly* life totally isolated & insulated. *Genuine* solitary confinement is one of the greatest tortures to a person! We were made for fellowship, not just fellowship with people. Created *in God's image*, ultimately we are designed for fellowship with Him!

Respond to Jesus' call: come home to God, to joy! Repent & believe in Jesus!

APPLICATION - FOR THOSE ALREADY CHRISTIANS

Earlier we saw that the best love is "mutual".

How great then that God gives ***us*** a new heart – a new love, a divine love! So that we can delight in Him, His presence, His kingdom, and strive in glorious endeavour that His will be done on earth as in heaven

Impossible application: Playing 'Captain Kirk'

Captain Kirk did not just ask, but repeatedly pelted out his Q as a protest:

"What does God need with a starship!"

. . . as if the One who is worthy & made everyone & everything has no right to the make use of the things of His creation for His purposes.

He is the Potter, we are the clay!

So let's be careful what we mean, & what we hear when we use the phrase

"God does not need"

So it is a gross misuse of the phrase ***"God does not need"***

to escape responsibility, disobey commands & neglect your stewardship!

For Example . . .

"God does not 'need' . . . missionaries."

BUT He ***uses*** missionaries, *commands* us all to make disciples of all nations. It's our *privilege* to be the means God's uses – the *feet & mouth* that bring the good news of Jesus!

William Carey, a young Baptist pastor, had to point this out at a meeting of local ministers in Northampton, England in the year 1786.

Carey expressed a desire to bring the Good News of Jesus to India.

But the leader of this ministers meeting responded,

Young man, sit down! When God is pleased to convert the heathen world, He will do it without your help or mine."

That leader had no biblical support for his assertion! So Carey wrote a pamphlet

An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.

[a pamphlet which became the first 'theology of missions' of modern times]

Listen: we are called to God's mission on earth

not because God needs us,

but because He loves us,

and wants us to love His world by sharing His good news.

"God does not 'need' . . . your money."

Ultimately, technically, it's *His* money, not yours . . .

Like God said,

"the cattle on a thousand hills belong to Me." (Psalm 50:10)

God created everything, so everything belongs to Him.

But we have the privilege of *stewardship* to look after cattle & kingdom!

True, God does not 'need' your money - but your money is for His kingdom, supporting missionaries, uni evangelists, pastors, funds to feed the poor through ***Grace Care***, and funds gained ethically through every noble endeavour of work to *provide for your family* & for public services.

Roman 11:35 asks

"Who has ever first given to God, that God should repay them?"

NO ONE! God owes no one! Whenever you feel proud & entitled remember

Everything in your life is *dependent on* God & *tiny* compared to God.

Tiny, but ***NOT*** insignificant!

Because v.36 of Romans 11 continues,

from Him &

through Him &

to Him are ALL things

He is ***pleased*** to *enlist us* in His significant saving purposes!

We should feel humbled & blessed that

our gloriously complete Creator,

wants His incomplete creatures ***to know Him & be satisfied in Him!***

Knowing THIS self-sufficient God who conquers sin & death is what motivates Christians to overcome evil
*by the **blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony;
 for they did not love their lives to the point of death. (Rev. 12)*

Knowing THIS self-sufficient God who alone has pleasures at His right hand forever more, is what motivates Christians to **LONG** for Him & look past sin, viewing sin as mere *passing pleasures* that do not satisfy, cracked-cisterns that hold no living water! We also turn GOOD things into GOD things when we treat them as our primary goal & delight & pursuit: spouse, kids, marriage, career, video game zombie apocalypse master:

ALL these will disappoint! They will NOT "complete" you!

At the end of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, it is not as though God was lonely & bored until Peter & Susan & Edmund & Lucy entered . . . or any other creatures!! God is the Life, God is the Joy & Love. ***We enter His Party!***
 He WELCOMES us in – in Christ!

ONLY the God without any needs

Can meets all of our needs! . . . body & soul, now & forever!

As the musicians & singers come up I will close in a different way, with a Benediction of select lyrics from a song, "Self-sufficiency" by Timothee Brindle...

BENEDICTORY PRAYER

*Creatures, there is none so awesome
 As Yahweh, the only Uncaused One!
 No one put Him into existence, see
 He always was His own sufficiency...*

*You need none – You're independent,
 Impossible for You to have discontentment.
 Because in Yourself – You're full of pleasure
 Oh God, You are Your own Holy treasure!*

*To speak of God in need would be absurd,
 because "need" itself is a creature word.*

*Worthy of authentic worship
We can't add to God – He's already perfect!*

*But Father, Son, Spirit, yes – all of You –
Chose to create, just because You wanted to!
Even though LORD – You don't need us,
It pleased You to show Your glory to creatures*

*So come to the Giver of this Life
And drink daily from His River of Delights!*

*Lord,
In Yourself, You have all power and might
In Yourself, You are the Fountain of Life
So savour the Saviour:
To know Him is the Life we were made for!*

CLOSING SONG: BEHOLD OUR GOD

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(NEXT PAGE)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

***ONLY the God who has no needs
can meet ALL of our needs!***

The God who has no needs (Acts 17:24-25)

The God who meets all our needs (Acts 17:26-31)

- 1] What is the Context of Acts 17?
How does it correlate to our religious & philosophical context today?

- 2] Genesis 1 is historical, and yet, clearly refutes the cosmogonies (creation stories) & gods of the surrounding nations.

How does God being intrinsically *Original, Moral & Relational* stand out?

What are key ways the *Self-Sufficient* God of Scripture can help your conversations about creation, The Creator and our culture's creation stories? (whether atheistic stories or rival religion stories)

- 3] How can the "*What do you worship?*" question help your gospel conversations?

For people who say, "*I don't worship anything; I'm an atheist*" . . . how can you helpfully reference David Foster Wallace's graduation speech into your chat? How can the idea "I am second" help?

- 4] How does/should God's self-sufficient satisfaction . . .
 . . . **Humble** your soul?
 . . . **Delight** your soul?
How might God's *unique* self-sufficiency "ground" other attributes?
(Jealousy? Immutability? Etc.)

- 5] "*God does not need you/your....*"
How can this be *misused* to deny stewardship & responsibility?
How should we counter this misuse?

- 6] How does Jesus fit into the picture of salvation & God's self-sufficiency?
Consider **Colossians 1:15-17** as a great parallel passage.
Why is Jesus the only sufficient Saviour?

- 7a] Apart from songs like "Above All" (quoted), what might be some other *human-centred* Christian song lyrics need changing? How & why?
 [Learn from trying to "re-centre" a couple songs on God's glorious self-sufficiency!]

- b] Share are some great God-centred song lyrics that bless your soul. Sing!

[Consider Andrew Peterson's song, "Is He Worthy?" as a song to deeply minister to your soul in really tough times: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIahc83Kvp4>]