

56. So, how is the commandment to “love” your fellow man accomplished? Well, we get guidance by observing the definition of love and its coordination with the righteousness and justice of God. Here are some excerpts that define how the love of God is in concert with the righteousness, justice, and omniscience of God:

1. The righteousness of God is the perfect standard of His essence. He cannot compromise His righteousness without destroying His perfect character.
2. God protects His righteousness with His justice which is the source of both blessing and judgment. God’s justice guards His righteous standards which possess absolute truth.
3. Therefore, God’s righteousness and justice combine to form the integrity of God which is the synchronized operation of His righteousness and justice.
4. Righteousness is the *principle* of God’s integrity; justice is the *function* of God’s integrity.
5. God’s love is an inherent quality of absolute benevolence that does not require inspiration to be gracious, generous, or merciful.
6. His love always functions in a dispassionate, but benevolent manner.
7. Omniscience refers to the fact that God knows all that is knowable, confirming that He is never without all the facts regarding the details of angelic or human life or the inner thoughts and rationales of their souls.
8. Righteousness, justice, and omniscience form the integrity of God. The love of God is perfect because it works in concert with the integrity of God.
9. PRINCIPLE: The integrity of God is the love of God and the love of God is the integrity of God.⁴
10. The NET Bible’s translation of Psalm 33:4–5a is interesting because of its expanded translation of the Hebrew and its support for the preceding principles.
11. Accompanying this passage are four “translator’s notes” that help expand their translation:

⁴ Principles 1–9 are adapted from: R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Unfailing Love of God*, ed. Robert B. Thieme III (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2009), 6–11.



Psalm 33:4 For the Lord's decrees⁹ are just,¹⁰ and everything he does is fair.¹¹

v. 5a The Lord promotes¹² equity and justice ...

12. Translators' Note 9: "decrees" is the singular noun, דְּבָר (davar): "word."

tn 9. In this context, which depicts the Lord as the sovereign creator and ruler of the world, the Lord's "word" refers to the decrees whereby he governs his dominion.

To translate this "decrees" is fine although "divine decree" would be better.

13. Translators' Note 10: "just" is the adjective יָשָׁר (yashar) which refers to something that remains straight, not deviating to the right or to the left. This depicts the word of God as that which is immutable. "Just" is fine but "integrity" would be better.

14. Translators' Note 11: "fair" is the noun אֱמוּנָה ('emunah).

tn 11. "and all his work is in faithfulness."

The footnote is the better translation since His faithfulness is based on His divine integrity which is what certifies the immutability of His Word.

15. Translators' Note 12: "promotes" is the verb, אָהַב ('ahav) and refers to God's "love" for "equity and justice."

tn 12. The verb "loves" is here metonymic⁵; the Lord's commitment to principles of equity and justice causes him to actively promote these principles as he governs the world.

The NET Bible's translators view the word "love" here as the divine "promotion" of "equity and justice." This requires us to define these two English nouns.

The first is "equity," which is the Hebrew noun, צְדָקָה (sethaqah): "righteousness," followed by a second noun, "judgment," מִשְׁפָּט (mishphat): "jurisprudence."

⁵ "Metonymy. A figure of speech that replaces the name of one thing with the name of something else closely associated with it" (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 135).



16. The two combined refer to the integrity of God. God's righteous standards are inflexible and are defended by divine justice which prosecutes violations but blesses compliance.
17. At the moment of salvation, the new believer enters into the legal environment of the plan of God. I use the word "legal," to emphasize the new relationship that exists between perfect God and imperfect man.
18. The new believer is saved, in the royal family, recipient of the imputation of divine righteousness, sustained by God's matchless grace, but ignorant of the "rules" he is required to obey.
19. The undergirding and munificent grace of God takes on the new believer, characterized as a child, and teaches him the standards He wishes him to learn, retain, recall, and apply.
20. The only resource for acquiring this information is Scripture. The only biblically approved system by which this information is to be communicated is the pastor-teacher in a local church.
21. The second most important commandment in this growth process is said by our Lord to be the Royal Law which requires the believer to "love your neighbor as yourself."
22. This statement rolls off the tongue but causes most readers to remain vague on its meaning. Yet, this is the second most important commandment the believer is required to keep according to the Lord Himself.
23. In Matthew 22:34–40, the Pharisees approached the Lord in an effort to put Him to the test. One of them identified in the verse as "a lawyer," posed this question, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Here is the Lord's response:

Matthew 22:37 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart [stream of consciousness], with all your soul [volition and conscience], with all your mind [categorical storage].' (Deuteronomy 6:5)

v. 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.

v. 39 "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Leviticus 19:18)

v. 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets [i.e., the Tanakh]." (NASB)



24. We have established that the love of God is the integrity of God and that the integrity of God is the love of God. God's attributes are eternal, unalterable, and inviolate. Righteousness is the attribute that certifies the veracity of His standards.
25. Justice is the attribute that guards, defends, and enforces these standards. It blesses compliance with them and disciplines noncompliance.
26. The attribute of God's love functions as an umbrella under which divine integrity is protected. Although righteousness, justice, and omniscience are attributes, the three function as composites that form the integrity of God.
27. Because mankind is fallen, because new believers are born again at salvation but almost totally ignorant of divine policies, standards, and commandments, God administers His relationship with them under a policy of grace.
28. It is under this umbrella that the believer is privileged to function. His first responsibility within this system is to "grow in grace."
29. This is accomplished through spiritual growth inside the evanescent divine power system, i.e., "the bubble," and the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
30. Plagued by a genetically inherited sin nature with its collection of lust patterns, the believer's spiritual growth is constantly interrupted by personal sin which pops the evanescent bubble, instantly separating him from the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry.
31. Although the believer never loses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he does lose His teaching ministry while functioning outside the bubble.
32. Many believers have no concept of status-quo spirituality which describes the filling and teaching ministries of the Holy Spirit.
33. Thus, the struggle to advance in one's spiritual growth is plagued by ignorance of how to achieve and consistently employ and capitalize upon the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit.



34. In the ongoing battle between the flesh and the Spirit, between the volitionally permitted interventions of the sin nature and the intermittent periods inside the bubble, the believer's spiritual growth is negatively impacted.
35. In the midst of these competing systems of power, the believer is required to engage and consistently respond to the commandment, "love your neighbor as yourself"?
36. The word "love" in this passage is initially directed by the believer to God and then secondly to people. Therefore, love is an attitude that is to be directed outwardly to God and man. How love is defined is the challenge.
37. To do this we must start with the divine attribute of love that is part of divine essence. This is best approached by summary principles excerpted below: ▼

The Doctrine of Divine Essence

Love. God is love whether or not He has a creature to love. His love is an inherent quality that does not require inspiration.

There never was a time when each member of the Trinity did not love His own righteousness and the righteousness of the other two persons in the Godhead. The only object ever worthy of God's love is God's own eternal, unchangeable righteousness.

God's love is infinite and immutable; divine love does not increase or decrease, expand or diminish. No form of creature sinfulness, failure, vacillation, or rejection can change, effect, or elicit a reaction from God's love.

God's love is different from human love, which God does not possess. Even if we understand human love, that is no guarantee that we understand God's love. His love contains no emotion. In God's love there is no deception—only the inviolable demand of perfect truth and integrity—while our love is often blind. Whereas God's love needs no object, our love is not love unless it has an object.

Because He is righteous and just, His love is never partial or biased.

God's love depends on His integrity and is governed by His integrity. "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne" (Psalm 89:14a).⁶

⁶ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Integrity of God*, 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 278–79.



1. From these excerpts we are able to conclude that love is completely objective. It functions in association with the divine attributes of righteousness and justice.
2. Righteousness is the guardian of divine justice while justice is the function of the integrity of God.
3. God's perfection involves absolute truth, love, justice, and righteousness. Taken together, these attributes form the integrity of God.

Righteousness. God possesses eternal, unchangeable, and absolute righteousness. His righteousness in combination with His perfect justice is described as holiness or integrity.

Righteousness is the principle or standard of divine integrity. All that God does adhere to this measure of perfection.

Righteousness is the guardian of divine justice. All justice is administered from the perfect righteousness of God. (p. 275)

The intellect and character of God are perfect; His perfection involves absolute truth, justice, and righteousness.

God's very own righteousness is imputed to every believer at the moment of salvation as the target for blessing from God. "He [God] made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Justice. God is perfect justice. It is impossible for God to be unfair in the function of divine justice. Divine justice administers the system of divine laws that are compatible with divine righteousness and sovereignty. Justice is the function of the integrity of God. As the Judge of mankind, God's justice renders daily decisions in the Supreme Court of Heaven with regard to all members of the human race.

The justice of God administers the penalties and blessings which are demanded by His perfect righteousness. (p. 276)

From the moment we are born spiritually dead, the justice of God is our point of contact, and continues to be our point of contact after salvation. (p. 277)

(End JAS3-16. See JAS3-17 for continuation of study at p. 161.)



The righteousness of God is the principle of divine integrity; the justice of God is the function of divine integrity. What the righteousness of God demands, the justice of God executes.¹ (p. 278) ▼

1. Our analysis of Psalm 33:4–5a results in this expanded translation:

Psalm 33:4 For the Lord's divine decree is based on His integrity, everything he does expresses His faithfulness.

v. 5a The Lord loves righteousness and justice which combined form His integrity ... (EXT)
2. This passage constructs the formula that results in the development of divine integrity. It demonstrates that divine love responds to the veracity of His righteous standards.
3. This love also salutes divine justice which guards and defends those standards. The two attributes of righteousness and justice form the integrity of God which is certified by the omniscience of God which knows all that is knowable.
4. These attributes unite as composites to form the integrity of God. The love of God reflects the integrity of God while the integrity of God confirms the love of God.
5. The believer in Jesus Christ is given the opportunity to benefit from this divine arrangement. How does the person in James 3:2 borrow from the divine example?
6. Psalm 33:4–5a is an example of the system by which the body can be bridled. The example reveals the divine possession of integrity based on the composites of righteousness and justice.
7. We have established that when the combination of certain divine attributes is assembled into a unit, they become composites that reflect the love of God.
8. This concept becomes the second most important commandment in Scripture: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." To do this the believer must become a person who has personal integrity that is built on the thinking of God.
9. How is this seemingly impossible idea accomplished in the human soul when the body is contaminated with a sin nature and its various lust patterns?

¹ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Integrity of God*, 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 275–78.

