

Basic Theology Series: The Aseity of God

Big Idea: God has life in Himself. He does not need anything from us, but He lovingly gives life, breath, salvation, and every good thing to us.

Primary Texts:

Acts 17:24–25;

Exodus 3:14;

Psalms 50:10–12;

John 5:26

1. “What Do You Need?”

What are some things you need in order to live?

Does God need food? Does God need sleep? Does God need air? Does God need people to help Him be God?

Every created thing depends on something else. People need food, water, oxygen, sleep, and care. Plants need sunlight and water. Animals need food and shelter. Even the sun, moon, stars, and planets were made by God and are held together by God. But God is different. God does not depend on anything. God simply is. He has life in Himself. Today we are learning a big theology word: aseity.

2. Defining Aseity

The word aseity means that God depends on nothing outside Himself.

A simple definition: God’s aseity means God has life in Himself, depends on nothing, and needs nothing outside of Himself to be who He is. This is different from us. We are dependent creatures. We did not create ourselves. We do not keep ourselves alive by our own power. We depend on God for every breath.

Communicable or Noncommunicable

Read Acts 17:24–25: *“The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.”*

Paul is teaching that God is not needy. God does not need a temple. God does not need food. God does not need human beings to complete Him. Instead, God is the One who gives life and breath and all things. This means God is not like the false gods of the nations. In many pagan religions, people believed their gods needed temples, food, sacrifices, and attention in order to remain powerful or pleased. But the true God is not weak, hungry, lonely, tired, or incomplete. God does not need us. But here is the amazing part:

God does not need us, yet He loves us.

God does not need our worship, yet He invites us to worship Him.

God does not need our service, yet He allows us to serve Him.

God does not need our love, yet He sets His love on us.

God does not need us, yet He wants us!

Whole Group Discussion: Why is it good news that God does not need anything

3. God's Name Shows His Aseity

Read Exodus 3:13–14: *“Then Moses asked God, ‘If I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what should I tell them?’ God replied to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.’”*

When Moses asked God His name, God answered, “I AM WHO I AM.”

That name teaches us that God simply is. He is not becoming God. He is not trying to stay God. He was not created. He does not grow stronger or weaker. He does not depend on anyone or anything.

God is the great “I AM.”

We say, “I am hungry.”

We say, “I am tired.”

We say, “I am learning.”

We say, “I am growing.”

We say, “I am dependent.”

But God says, “I AM.”

He is eternal, self-existent, self-sufficient, and perfectly complete. This connects with many attributes we have already studied. Because God is infinite, He has no limits. Because God is immutable, He does not change. Because God is omnipotent, He has all power. Because God is omniscient, He has all knowledge. Because God is love, He gives love not because He lacks something, but because love is truly part of who He is.

Family Discussion

What is one way people sometimes act like God needs them?

For younger children:

Does God need us to take care of Him, or does God take care of us?

4. Aseity and Worship

Read Psalm 50:10–12: *“For every animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and everything in it is mine.”*

God is correcting wrong thinking about worship. The people were offering sacrifices, but some may have thought God needed their sacrifices the way a hungry person needs a meal. God says, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you." In other words, God does not need to be fed. God already owns everything.

So why worship?

We worship God not because He needs something from us, but because He is worthy. Worship is not giving God something He lacks. Worship is responding rightly to who God is.

This guards us from two errors.

First, it guards us from pride. We should never think, "God is lucky to have me." God does not need our talents, money, songs, sermons, buildings, or programs. Anything we give to God was first given to us by Him.

Second, it guards us from fear. God is not weak. God is not running out of power. God is not stressed, desperate, lonely, or uncertain. God is perfectly full, perfectly alive, and perfectly sufficient in Himself.

Christian worship begins with humble awe: "Lord, You do not need me, but You have loved me. You do not depend on me, but I depend completely on You." That kind of worship is joyful, humble, thankful, and reverent.

5. Aseity and the Christian Life

God's aseity changes how we live.

First, it teaches dependence: We are not self-sufficient. We are dependent on God for every breath.

Read: Acts 17:25 God gives "life and breath and all things."

Every heartbeat is a gift. Every meal is a gift. Every sunrise is a gift. Every ability we have is a gift. We do not exist because we are strong. We exist because God is gracious. This should make us thankful.

Second, it teaches humility. Since God does not need us, our service should not be prideful. Serving God is a privilege, not a favor we do for Him. We do not serve because God is helpless. We serve because God is worthy and because He has called us by grace.

Third, it teaches peace. Because God does not depend on us, we do not carry the weight of being God. Parents are not God. Pastors are not God. Church leaders are not God. Children are not God. We are responsible to obey, serve, love, and be faithful—but we are not responsible to hold the universe together. God does that!

Fourth, it points us to the gospel.

God did not save us because He was lonely. God did not send Jesus because He needed more people on His team. God saved us because of His grace, mercy, and love.

Read John 5:26: *“For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted to the Son to have life in himself.”*

The Father and the Son have life in themselves. Jesus did not come because God lacked something. Jesus came because sinners lacked everything.

We needed forgiveness.

We needed righteousness.

We needed life.

We needed rescue.

God did not need us, but we desperately needed Him. And in Christ, God gives us what we could never give ourselves: salvation, forgiveness, adoption, and eternal life.

Family Discussion:

“How does God’s aseity help us worship with humility?”

“How does it comfort us to know God does not depend on us?”

“How does this attribute make God’s love and grace even more amazing?”

Take-Home Family Question

“At dinner this week, ask: What is one thing we depend on God for today?”