

The Immutability of God

The God Who Does Not Change

A Teaching Lesson · Seminary-level content, high-school-level clarity

LESSON AT A GLANCE

Big Idea: God never changes in His being, character, purposes, or promises. He does not grow, shrink, improve, or decline. Because He is already perfect, any change could only make Him less — so He stays exactly, eternally Himself.

Memory Verse: *“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.” — Malachi 3:6 (ESV)*

Contents

PART ONE

Teaching Outline (Leader Notes)

This lesson is about God's immutability — the truth that He does not change. It builds on the earlier lessons: because God exists from Himself (aseity), needs nothing (independence), and is not made of parts (simplicity), it follows that He cannot change. There is nothing outside Him to change Him, and nothing inside Him to rearrange. Part One is your full teaching material; Part Two is a handout to copy for students.

I. Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Define immutability in one clear sentence.
2. Name the four things about God that never change.
3. Give at least three passages that teach it.
4. Explain the Bible verses that seem to say God "changes His mind."
5. Say why an unchanging God is our greatest comfort.

II. What the Word Means

Immutability (say it: "im-mew-tuh-BILL-ih-tee") comes from a word meaning "cannot be changed." To say God is immutable is to say that He is always the same — He never becomes better, worse, older, wiser, or different in any way.

The key reason to give your class: God is already perfect. A perfect being cannot change for the better (there is nothing to improve) and would not change for the worse (that would make Him imperfect). So He does not change at all.

Four things about God that never change

His being	God's very existence and nature never change. He is always fully God — never more, never less.
His character	His holiness, love, justice, and faithfulness are always the same. He never has a bad day or a change of heart about who He is.
His purposes	His plans do not fail or get revised. "The counsel of the LORD stands forever" (Psalm 33:11).
His promises	What He has said, He will do. His word never expires and never needs updating.

III. The Biblical Foundation

1. God plainly says He does not change

“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.”

— Malachi 3:6 (ESV)

Notice the logic: because God does not change, His people are not destroyed. His unchanging faithfulness is the reason Israel survives its own sin. Immutability is not cold — it is the ground of mercy.

2. God does not shift like a changing sky

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

— James 1:17 (ESV)

The sun rises and sets and casts moving shadows; the seasons turn. God is the maker of all those changing lights, but He Himself never flickers or dims. There is not even a shadow of change in Him.

3. God is the same across all time

“They will perish, but you remain... you are the same, and your years have no end” (*Psalms 102:26–27*). The creation wears out like old clothing, but God does not age or fade. Hebrews 1 applies these very words to Jesus.

4. Jesus Christ is unchanging

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (*Hebrews 13:8*). The immutability of God belongs fully to the Son.

5. God’s plans and counsel stand firm

“The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations” (*Psalms 33:11*); “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind” (*Numbers 23:19*).

IV. The Hard Question: “But Doesn’t God Change His Mind?”

This is the objection your class will raise, so meet it head-on. Several passages say God “repented” or “relented” — for example, after the golden calf (Exodus 32:14), over Nineveh (Jonah 3:10), and over Saul as king (1 Samuel 15:11). If God never changes, what do these mean?

The key idea: anthropomorphism

The Bible often describes God in human terms so we can understand Him — this is called **anthropomorphism** (describing God “in the shape of man”). It speaks of God’s “hand,” “arm,” and “eyes,” though He is spirit. In the same way, it speaks of God “changing His mind” so we can feel the reality of His response — without meaning He literally discovered something new or reversed an eternal plan.

The tell: the SAME chapter says both

The clearest proof is in *1 Samuel 15*. In verse 11, God “regrets” making Saul king. But in verse 29 of the same chapter, Samuel says: “The Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.” The same chapter uses “regret” of God and denies that God regrets like a man. The point: God truly responds, but not the way a mistaken, surprised human does.

God’s unchanging character requires new responses

When Nineveh repented, God “relented” from the judgment He announced. But this is not God changing — it is God being consistent. His unchanging rule has always been: He judges the impenitent and spares the repentant (see Jeremiah 18:7–8, where God states this as His fixed policy). The people changed; God’s character stayed the same, and so His treatment of them changed. A steady rule applied to changed people produces a changed outcome — without any change in the rule-maker.

Illustration for class: The sun does not change, but it feels warm at noon and cold at night. What changed is not the sun — it is where the earth is standing in relation to it. When we repent, we move into the light of God’s mercy; when we rebel, we stand in the shadow of His judgment. God has not moved. We have.

What about the Incarnation? Didn’t God change by becoming man?

No. In the Incarnation, the eternal Son took to Himself a full human nature — He added humanity without subtracting or altering His deity. The divine nature did not turn into a human nature or get mixed with it. God the Son remained fully and unchangeably God while also becoming truly man. He gained a human nature; He lost nothing of His divine nature. This is why the church confesses two natures in one person, without confusion or change.

V. What the Church Has Taught

- **The early church fathers** defended God’s unchangeableness against the idea that God could suffer decay or improvement. Augustine wrote that God alone is “truly, because He is unchangeable.”

- **Thomas Aquinas** argued that because God is pure act (with no unrealized potential) and has no parts, He cannot change — there is nothing in Him left to become.
- **The Reformed and Baptist confessions** state it directly. The Westminster Confession (1646) and Second London Baptist Confession (1689) describe God as “immutable” and “without body, parts, or passions.”

The phrase to memorize: **God is “the same, and his years have no end.”**

A word of caution (open theism)

Some modern teachers claim God does not fully know the future and truly changes His plans in reaction to us (a view called “open theism”). The historic church has rejected this. Scripture is clear that God’s knowledge is complete and His counsel stands forever. Teach your students to hold firmly here: a God who could be surprised or forced to revise His plans is not the God of the Bible.

VI. Guarding the Balance

“If God never changes, is He frozen and unfeeling?”

No. Immutability does not mean God is a statue. He is the living God, fully active, who truly loves, hears, and acts in real relationship with us. What it means is that His love is never fickle, His mercy is never moody, and His faithfulness never wavers. He is not less alive than we are — He is more alive, with a life that never fluctuates.

The one-sentence guardrail

God really responds to us, but He is never changed by us. His actions vary; His being, character, and purposes do not.

VII. Why This Matters for Us

- **His promises are unbreakable.** A God who cannot change cannot break His word or forget His covenant. Every promise rests on a Being who never wavers.
- **His love is dependable.** He will not love you more on your good days or less on your bad ones. His love for His people rests on His unchanging character, not your changing performance.
- **He is a rock in a shifting world.** Everything around us changes — health, friendships, culture, our own moods. God alone is the fixed point we can build a life on.
- **It fuels worship and prayer.** We pray to a God whose ear never grows deaf and whose mercy never runs dry. The same God who saved His people long ago is exactly the same today.

PART TWO

Student Handout

The Immutability of God — The God Who Does Not Change. Fill in the blanks and follow along as we work through the lesson together.

The Big Idea

God never changes in His being, character, purposes, or promises. He is already perfect, so any change could only make Him less. He stays exactly, eternally Himself.

Word to Know

- **Immutability** (im-mew-tuh-BILL-ih-tee) — “cannot be changed.” God is always the same.
- **Anthropomorphism** — describing God in human terms (His “hand,” or “changing His mind”) so we can understand Him.

Four Things That Never Change

- His being — always fully God.
- His character — always holy, loving, just, faithful.
- His purposes — His plans never fail.
- His promises — His word never expires.

Key Verses

- **Malachi 3:6** — “I the LORD do not change.”
- **James 1:17** — “No variation or shadow due to change.”
- **Psalms 102:26-27** — “You are the same, and your years have no end.”
- **Hebrews 13:8** — “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

The Sun Illustration

The sun does not change, but noon feels warm and night feels cold. What changed is where WE are standing. When we repent, we step into God’s mercy; when we rebel, we stand in the shadow of His judgment. God has not moved — we have.

Fill in the Blanks

1. “I the LORD do not ____.” (Malachi 3:6)
2. God is already ____, so any change could only make Him less.
3. When the Bible says God “changed His mind,” it is using human language called ____.
4. God truly ____ to us, but He is never ____ by us.

Discussion Questions

1. Name three things in your life that have changed a lot in the past year. How does it feel to know God has not changed at all?
2. When Nineveh repented, God “relented.” Did God change, or did the people? Explain using the sun illustration.
3. If God loved you the same on your worst day as your best day, how would that change the way you come to Him?
4. Why is an unchanging God better news than a God who could change His mind about His promises?

One Sentence to Remember

God really responds to us, but He is never changed by us.

This Week

Memorize Malachi 3:6. Each day, name one thing that changed or worried you, then pray: “Lord, You are the same today as always — thank You that I can stand on You when everything else shifts.”

Sources & Further Study

Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV). Key passages and classic sources referenced in this lesson:

- Scripture: Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:11, 29; Psalm 33:11; Psalm 102:26–27; Jeremiah 18:7–8; Jonah 3:10; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Hebrews 1:10–12; Hebrews 13:8.
- Augustine, *Confessions* and *On the Trinity* (God “truly is, because He is unchangeable”).
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 9 (the immutability of God).
- Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), ch. 2; Second London Baptist Confession (1689), ch. 2 — God is “immutable... without body, parts, or passions.”
- For modern treatment: Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* vol. 2; Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God* (discourse on God’s immutability).