

# Is It A Good Principle Statement?

If you're wondering if you are on the right track with your principles for the Attribute Assignment, check them against these questions:

1. Is your principle concise? It should be one sentence only, one concise statement. It should *not* just say that God has that attribute (i.e. "God is merciful," "God is faithful," etc.) but it should also NOT be a long explanation of everything in that verse. It should *not* include information not directly connected to the attribute you are studying.
2. Does your principle say something directly about that attribute? For example: "God's faithfulness is everlasting" or "God knows our innermost thoughts" (about omniscience).
3. Does your principle merely rewrite the verse? It shouldn't. Rather it should be a close paraphrase of all the material in the verse that has to do with your attribute and nothing else.
4. Does your principle bring in information from other verses? It shouldn't. Do not even include verses in the immediate context, unless they are a part of the assigned or chosen passage.

**Sample: Job 34:10** "Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong."

**Attribute:** God's Righteousness.

**Good Principle Statement:** God never does anything wicked or wrong.

**Poor Principle Statement:** All who have understanding should know that God does not do wickedness and though He is omnipotent, He does no wrong. *(While the first sentence is a part of the verse, it adds nothing directly about the attribute of God's Righteousness. Likewise the mention that God is almighty, deals with another attribute. Both of these ideas, which might be very important in some other exercise, should be eliminated from a principle stating what the verse says about the attribute of righteousness.)*

**Poor Principle Statement:** Far be it from God to do wickedness and to do wrong. *This is not a paraphrase stating the principle of the verse; it is simply a repeat of parts of the verse with no attempt at synthesis.*

**Poor Principle Statement:** I can trust God that even when bad things happen to me, He is still righteous and will bring good in the end. *(This is an application from the verse, not a principle statement.)*

## Is It A Good Application Statement?

There is some confusion as to what constitutes application. The following are examples of poor and good application statements.

**Poor:** I appreciate God's mercy when I look at the sunrise every day.

**Good:** I will take time to thank God that He loves me and has mercy on me every morning when I see the sun rise.

**Poor:** The students on my campus really need to know more about the attribute of God's providence so they can trust Him and I want to teach this next semester.

*(Wanting to do something is not an application).*

**Good:** I will use this study with five students starting in September.

**Poor:** I need to trust God more because of His providence.

**Good:** I will choose to believe that God is in control every time my car does not start knowing that He has a greater plan at work.

**Poor:** I should be more patient with my roommate. *(Although this is a true statement, it is not an application. There are many "shoulds" in life. Knowing what we should do and what we actually do are two different things)*

**Good:** When my roommate takes too long in the bathroom, I will not get angry but instead ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit and lovingly talk to her how I feel about it.

**Poor:** I need to trust God that He has a better plan for my life than I do. *(What we "need" to do and actually "do" are not the same. "Trust" needs to be measurable.)*

**Good:** When things go wrong in my ministry (people do not come to my bible study, no one supports me and I feel like quitting) I will maintain my commitment to Christ and not lose my enthusiasm or quit the ministry. I will stay positive and live by faith that God is using me despite the circumstances.

**Poor:** I will trust more in God's faithfulness to me.

**Good:** Because God is faithful to me to keep His promises, I will be faithful in keeping my agreements I make with other people especially when I agree to get together for lunch with them or promise to call them back.

***As you see, what we should, want, or need to do are not applications. Neither are "reflections". Applications are the specific plans we determine to do that are measurable.***