



(2) The Goodness of God

Assured that all His requests and plans are good (Ps 31:19)

God is always good. This is His nature. When we question our Lord's goodness due to personal difficulties or blatant evil around us, then we are humming the evil one's tune. Instead, trust in God's goodness, and your heart will not be troubled.

- **Our Relationship with God**

- We are not only learning things about God but more deeply knowing and treasuring Him.
- Two significant questions answered by personally knowing God:
 - "Who am I?" - I am His and so I want to know more what He is like so that I can better please Him.
 - "Why am I here?" - God made me for a particular purpose which I get to know by knowing and trusting Him.
- Our task here is to take these attributes of God and make sure they help us relate to our Lord. 'And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness,' declares the LORD" (Jer 31:14).

1) God is Good

- **A Genesis study**

- What main lessons do we learn from the first two chapters of Genesis about God?
- How does this differ from how you think God would introduce Himself? Why?

- **A Psalms study**

- "O taste and see that the **LORD is good** (hwhy bwj); How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!" (Psalm 34:8).
- "For the **LORD is good**; His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).
- "Praise the LORD, for the **LORD is good**; Sing praises to His name, for it is lovely" (Psalm 135:3).
- "Surely **God is good** to Israel, to those who are pure in heart!" (Psalm 73:1).

- **Two world views of self**

Self-esteem: *I believe in myself. => I can do or be whatever I want.*

God-trust: *I believe in God's goodness => He has wonderfully designed & equipped me to carry out His good purposes.*

Examine: On what basis does the world tout self-esteem? On what basis can we believe in God's goodness?

A Summary

God chiefly introduces Himself as being good. Something is wrong when we doubt that the Lord's motivation toward His creatures are inferior or even evil. Our confidence in life does not come from an imagined reservoir of potential (i.e. self-esteem) but in God's goodness through which we can assume we are wonderfully designed, equipped, and placed.

We might have numerous unsolved questions about what happens in this world or in our personal lives, but we must not doubt God's inherent inclination to kindly help (i.e. be good towards) His creatures. He is good!

Question: List four things in this world that you would, if possible, improve. Star the most important one.

: _____ : _____
: _____ : _____

2) Difficulties Believing in God's Goodness

• Terribly Twisting Truth

- Believing in God's truth is not easy because all the unhappy, difficult and even unjust things happening in our lives and around the world. Think about the things we want to improve. It is easy to jump from this criticism to doubt God's motives. "If God was truly good, then He would" Have you ever asked this kind of question?
- The problem of evil can be differently answered or left unanswered, but in no case should we accuse God of an inferior good which is not good. Be like Job, "Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God" (Job 1:22).
- Satan turns good into evil by having us doubt God's goodness. "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Is 5:20).



• Satan's tactics

Notice the sinister progression of Satan's persuasiveness, which first cast doubts about God's goodness and then subtly replaces good with evil.

- "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" (Gen 3:1) => Good is not good enough because of limitations.
- "Your eyes will be opened" (Gen 3:5) => Good is eating that fruit (which God said not to).
- "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food..." (Gen 3:6) 'Good' is something else than what God defines as good and provides.
- Nehemiah summarizes the corruption of a person/society by abusing God's goodness. "And they captured fortified cities and a fertile land. They took possession of houses full of every good thing...so they ate, were filled, and grew fat, and reveled in Thy great goodness. But they became disobedient and rebelled against Thee, And cast Thy law behind their backs..." (Neh 9:25-26).

Summary - At the heart of false worship is the belief that God offers inferior products in an unfair world, and that something else, the idol, offers something better. Religions, philosophies and distortions of Christianity become means by which God's goodness is locked out from their minds, stripping any real knowledge of God's goodness from them. (e.g., If God is not good, then why should I trust Him.)

- Do you question God's goodness expressed towards you? Confess your doubt about how you doubt His good treatment of your person or role in society, then affirm His goodness in the very area you questioned.

A society's decline is directly measured by how complete this switch of good and evil has taken place. Dare we measure our society?

3) The Power of Knowing God's Goodness

"How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast stored up for those who fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for those who take refuge in Thee, before the sons of men!" (Ps 31:19)

- Think about the attribute of God's goodness. What other characteristics do you think of? From God emanates various expressions of His glorious goodness. We see them in the various ways He deals with His people.
- God is good. We seen His goodness overflowing in His creation-His works. God is calling us to respond to Him. "If you like what you see around you, then you will like Me whom you cannot see!"
- Because the goodness of His nature, we can be sure His plans and dealings are derived out of that goodness.
- Psalm 31:19 calls us to hide in His goodness. It protects us from the scoffing of the world, scars of bitterness, and marks of hopelessness. Can you see the faith this verse inspires in us?

• Other Scriptures

*"Jesus is our good shepherd. "I am the **good shepherd**, and I know My own and My own know Me" (John 10:14).*

God's goodness is translated to our lives largely through Jesus Christ. He tenderly leads us along in life. He never leaves us alone and vulnerable (Mat 28:20). Jesus is our good shepherd. When He leaves, He lives in us through the Holy Spirit (Php 1:9).

*"And we know that God causes all things to work together for **good** to those who love God, to those who are called.." (Rom 8:28).*

God's goodness affects our daily lives and even our problems. We can be confident of the very way God works out all the details of our lives-'work together for good.' Without faith, we live outside His sphere of goodness, though it still be there. The inability to attach God's personal care to us through His goodness strips much joy from our lives and increases insecurity.

- **Overview**

- **God is good.** “God is good. This is the way God is. I need to start believing it!”
- **Difficulties believing.** “I have wrongly understood God, myself and the world. Forgive me Lord!”
- **Knowing God’s Goodness.** “I am but a beggar, trying to grab a crumb of your goodness to feed my own soul. I repent of this narrow and selfish approach. Now let the power of the abundance of your goodness flow into my life for your glory and the sake of others” (Eph 3:20-21).

“Generosity expresses the simple wish that others should have what they need to make them happy. Generosity is, so to speak, the focal point of God’s moral perfection; it is the quality which determines how all God’s other excellences are to be displayed.”⁴

knowing God by J. I. Packer, p. 146-147.