

## The Goodness of God

How is God good? What is the resulting impact? Psalm 34:8 tells us: "*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*" It says that God is good. It's not just what he does; it's who he is and who he is never changes. Psalm invites others to experience the Lord's goodness. David has praised the Lord for delivering him from the Philistines at Gath. (1SAM21:10–15) Now, he celebrates what God does for those who fear Him: He gives His people happiness; He protects them; He provides bountifully for them; and He grants them long life. He is the foundation of goodness and of everything good. People can have good traits or do good deeds, but our goodness comes from God. Many times in our services and other Christian activities we sing the little chorus "God is so good; God is so good. God is so good to me." It is a simple little praise chorus, and we have sung it here many times; because a part of the essence and being of God is that He is so good. Not only that, but He is so good to me. Thank God that we have a God who is infinitely good.

The Psalmist said in 119:68 "*You are good, and do good; Teach me Your statutes.*" This is a good definition of the goodness of God. God is good by nature; very essence of God is that He is a good God. He is also very good in everything that He does. Psalmist expresses his appreciation for the goodness, mercies, faithfulness, righteousness, and character of God, and in so doing stands in awe of the Word of God. We have to be honest with ourselves and recognize the fact that there are times when we ourselves question the goodness of God. There are many people who live lives of questioning the goodness of God. That kind of questioning about the goodness of God goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. In the Garden of Eden, where God had placed Adam and Eve, there was "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." From the fruit of this one tree, the man and woman were forbidden to eat. Genesis, chapter 3, is the story of how Satan came and tempted Eve to sin. His approach to her was a subtle approach, and it is significant that Satan's attack was on this dimension of the character of God. It is true Satan virtually called God a liar, but the first attack of Satan was waged against the attribute of God's goodness. You will remember that he sidled up beside her and he said, "Are you allowed to eat of all of these trees in the garden?" And Eve said, "We are allowed to eat of all the trees except for one. God has said that we cannot eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Satan said, "Has God said?" Then he began to question goodness of God. By the time Satan has finished, Eve has come to view God as the One who is less than good, and the forbidden fruit as that which is good. Satan first changed Eve's perspective of God by doubting the goodness of God, and then he was able to persuade her to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit. Instead of looking at all of those trees they could eat from and all of the good things that God had provided for them, Eve began to focus on the one thing that God had said they couldn't have. God had a very good reason for telling them they could not have that thing, but her focus became the thing that she could not have. "Once Satan got Eve to focus on the one tree she couldn't eat from, rather than the hundreds that she could enjoy, she lost sight of God's goodness become unbelief and plunged herself into sin.

The goodness of God is a perspective from which we can and view all of God's commands, including His prohibitions. The prohibition was an expression of God's goodness. Eve did not understand why God forbade it, but knowing that God was good should have been enough. What a good God forbids must be evil, and what a good God commands must be good. We must know the truth found in the Word of God to avoid Satan when he tempts us to change our perspective of God. He often does this by causing us to doubt God and His Word. Satan's first line of attack to bring sin into the human race was to question the goodness of God. This is a very basic and underlying truth about God, that God is a good God, all things that are good are from God. And to question that is an extremely dangerous thing to do. It has extremely serious consequences. This is a warning that we need to give. We get to looking at what God has not done instead of all of those good things that He has done. We get to thinking about what God has done for somebody else that He hasn't done for us, or hasn't done yet for us. We begin to focus on what God has not done, rather than all the good things that He has done.

There are five things for the seriousness of understanding the goodness of God and having a right attitude. The first point is that God's goodness is the standard by which all goodness is judged. How do we decide what good is? In Mark 10, there is story of a young man ran up to Jesus, knelt down in front of Him and asked, "*Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" Jesus turned on him and said to him, "*Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.*(v.18) That is what we need to understand about God and His goodness. The bigger point is that anything that is good is from God, and anything that is not good is not from God. There are things we know are not good for us, and yet they bring us temporary pleasure. There are other things that we know are good for us, and yet they are not enjoyable as we participate in them; only the end result is what's good. How do we decide what is really good and what is not good? The answer to that is that God is good, and He is the only one who can rightfully be called good and He does good. Therefore, God is the standard by which all other good is determined; not our emotions, not our feelings, but God is the standard for good.

God has given us His Word, in which He reveals Himself to us, in which we can learn about God and about what He does. There is confusion about what is really good and what is not good, we are so attacked through the media with information and with people trying to tell us what's good and what's not. Being politically correct is the guiding principle of many people's lives. We need a standard of good. We need to understand about the goodness of God "*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows*" (JAM1:17)

Show me Your glory

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The goodness of God is expressed in His characteristics. God had been giving Moses instructions about his leadership of Israel, and Moses said; "LORD, if You would just let me see Your glory." God answered Moses in 33:18: "*I am going to let My goodness pass before you. You can't see Me and live. You couldn't stand to see all of My glory, but I will let My goodness pass before you.*" In chapter 34:5-7, it begins to describe how God showed Moses His goodness. "*Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,"*" Here we have a list of the various things that we know about God that demonstrate His goodness. In verse 7, "keeping mercy for thousands" "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" "By no means clearing the guilty" What a wonderful understanding of the goodness of God; our sins have been forgiven, clear the guilty as we call upon the name of the Lord. God is patient enough to let us keep living long enough to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and get saved. God is a patient God, and that demonstrates His goodness. God's grace and His truth demonstrates His goodness. He keeps on loving us even when we don't respond to His love. The Glory of God is the overpowering presence of God. Moses was seeking this revelation of God. He was asking God for confirmation that his presence would be with them. Moses asked God 'please show me your glory'. Moses, who had already spent 40 days in the glory cloud in the presence of the Lord, Moses, to whom God spoke as it were face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, He had tasted of the goodness of the Lord. Listen the song of a heart hungry and thirsty for more of God's glorious presence. "*Your Face, Lord, I Will Seek*"(PSA27:7-12)

When you put God's goodness together with His sovereignty, you will see God's glory. In the working out of that purpose, God reveals His character—His nature—to mankind. He shows us that we are to become like Him. His character is pure, holy and loving. In this revealing of His holy nature to His human creation, God is good. "*Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.*"(PSA25:8) In Galatians 5:22, "goodness" is one of the fruits of the indwelling Spirit of God, and in Ephesians 5:9 it is described as being, along with righteousness and truth, "the fruit of the light" which Christians had been "made" in Christ. Here, we are reminded that the Christian life in its truth is likeness to God, the source and perfection of all good. 2Th.1:11 regards God Himself as expressing His goodness in and through us. The spiritual fruit of goodness enables sinful man to do good and to be good—good in the truest sense of the word. Goodness, after all, is the essence of God's nature. To the extent that we have God's goodness, we have godliness or Christ-likeness. "*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of [fellow believers]*"(GAL6:9-10)

God's goodness demonstrated greater than all of the negative things: As we learn in Romans 8:28: "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*" The promise is that God works for our good "in all things" is reassuring. It means no matter the circumstance, there are only two qualifiers for God to be working all things together for our good. There are a lot of bad things that happen in the world. But what God says for us as His children is that He works even those bad things together for good. Those bad things are in the world because of sin. We can't deny those things or ignore them. We go out and mingle with the world, and some of the world rubs off on us, and we become guilty of some of those sins. When that happens we need to wash our hands.(1JO1:9) It is easy to get down and mingle with the cares of this world, get caught up in that, and begin to participate in sin ourselves, but God says that those things are not going to ruin you. He says that He is going to work all those things together for ultimate good, so God's goodness even transcends the bad things. When things don't go the way they should, God always makes them turn for good. Christians believe that, sooner or later, the sorrows and pains and disappointments and losses will work together for good. God is more powerful; He is able to redeem and restore anything for our good.

God's purpose for us is good. Just as parents want good for their children, our Heavenly Father wants only good for us. We should remember, however, that good things may not always show up as happy experiences. Sometimes good can come disguised as adversity or hardship, but God can use difficulties for good, In the end, Job's suffering brought him nearer to God; thus it was good, and God was good in afflicting him. Paul's suffering brought him nearer to God, he saw it as a blessing.(PHI3:10) The chastening of the Lord in the life of Christian is not only evidence of our sonship, it is God's working in us for good.(HEB12:1-13) "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.*(PSA119:71)

We may be convinced of God's goodness and yet doubt that everything which happens to us is good. We carefully avoid blaming God, because we know He is good. "*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*(JAM1:13) Christians to see trials in our lives as meaningful and ultimately beneficial things. Struggles during our earthly lives are opportunities to trust God at a deeper level. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was brought about by a "messenger of Satan"(2CO12:7), yet God permitted this so His strength might be manifested through Paul's weakness, so dependent on Christ for his strength. God understood that such knowledge had the potential to make Paul proud, arrogant. God wanted Paul to be Christlike in his humility instead of seeing himself as being above those he served. And the evil Joseph's brothers intended against him God intended "for good"(GEN50:20) Whatever suffering comes into the life of the Christian is a part of God's purpose to bring about our good and His glory.

God's goodness is shown in His provisions for us: In Genesis 1 describes creation, God pronounced everything which He created "good". v.27-31, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food So the evening and the morning were the sixth day". These verses tell us that everything that is in the earth, all the plants and animals, all the things around us, were created and provided for man. God created man, and God created plants, trees, fish, birds and animals for the enjoyment of man and for the provision of the livelihood of man. In chapter 2, God saw that it was "not good" for Adam to be alone, and so He created a wife for him as helpmate.(v.18-25) The Goodness of God is evident in all His creations and accomplishments. Gen.1:31, "*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.* We cannot earn and do not merit His goodness. It is available to us regardless of our station in life, even though we are not worthy of it. Mat.5:45:*He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*" Psalm 145:9 "*The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.*" *God shows His goodness by providing those things for us.* "Be stewards of the earth", and man is responsible to maintain to keep it.

The goodness of God leads us to repentance: *Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*(ROM2:4 ) Those self-righteous sinners are presuming on or showing contempt for the riches of God's kindness, forbearance, and patience. Aware of God's goodness, they have miscalculated that He won't ever judge their sin. In the following verse, describe just how wrong and dangerous it is to ignore God's merciful warnings. For now, God's goodness is meant to bring sinners, all of us, to repentance. The purpose of God's goodness is to draw us to Him. This was manifested in the highest degree when God sacrificed His Son, Jesus, for our salvation. Because of His goodness we have been given opportunities to hear His word and to claim eternal life by accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior. To know God is the most important and meaningful relationship you can have. To know His goodness is inspiring—it fills us with hope, and it motivates us to live a life of meaning, confidence and purpose. You can get to know God better. Now, here we come to one of the most basic elements of understanding the goodness of God in relation to the sinfulness of man. In Genesis 1:27, it says, "Let us make man in our image." The sense of that was that we could have fellowship with them. God wants our love and our fellowship, but in order to have beings who could genuinely worship Him. Thank God for his goodness and unfailing love. Ask him to help you develop the fruit of goodness in your life. It is so easy to take God's provisions for granted. What if God didn't let the sun come up in the morning? Every new day gives us reason for expressing our gratitude to God who has made possible all things worth having in this life and the life to come. The natural response to the goodness of God is for His people to praise Him.

Psalm 107:1-2, say: *Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.* How do we respond to the goodness of God? The psalm is a hymn of thanksgiving to the Lord "for the purpose of making the Lord's works known to humankind, so that they too can join in the praise of the Lord" Above all, a hymn honoring the power of God. Despite transgressions of His people, Lord forgives them. God's people (Christians), the redeemed should appreciate the goodness of God above all others on this earth and want to share that goodness with everyone else. His goodness leads to a satisfaction of the longing soul that hungers and thirsts. Thanks be to Lord that we can be filled through His goodness! Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. It is only in and through obedience to Jesus Christ that our hunger and thirst for righteousness can be satisfied, because of the goodness of God. It is the goodness of God that delivers us from sin, sickness and Satan. And gives us direction in our lives. "that they might go to a city for a dwelling place." This is speaking of heaven where our hopes. And it leads us to that heavenly city.

Praise the LORD! *Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.*(PSA106:1) Our response to God's goodness is not only praise, but also thanksgiving. If we take a few minutes each day to thank God for some of the good things He has done, we may never get depressed again. So take a thanksgiving break! Thanksgiving is like a tonic that brightens entire complexion of our lives. Learn to practice it. It may require discipline at first, but soon it will become a joyful and satisfying way of life. There is no better way to get it flowing than to rehearse the evidence of God's goodness. "*Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.*"(PSA107:22)

Ironically, some have such a distorted view of God, that they actually use His goodness as an excuse to do evil. God is good, but His goodness should prompt us to study His word so as to know how to please Him, and then determine to live in harmony with His will. We cannot disobey Him while claiming His goodness. "*Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.*"(ROM11:22) We need to know God that He is good to those who continue in His goodness.(who obey His will) They must continue in God's kindness by continuing to trust in Christ. He is severe toward those who fall (sin). God had cut off some of Israel for their rejection of Him. His goodness cannot excuse disobedience and rebellion, because God, who is the essence of goodness, also the essence of justice. Therefore consider both the goodness and severity of God. "*The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.*"(PSA84:11)