

The Goodness of God

God is a good Father.

Of course there are a few challenges that statement may provide for some of us. First of all, many of us have not had good role models or good experiences in terms of father figures or authority figures. Associating the concept of “Father” with “good” therefore, may sound a bit like an oxymoron. That being said, God is a perfect Father. Our belief about God doesn’t define who God is and what He is like. It merely shapes us. Blaise Pascal commented “God made man in His image and man returned the compliment”. Our view of God doesn’t change how God is, it just changes us. In fact, our view of who God is and how I work that out in my life is one of the most critical and defining factors, with the most repercussions and ramifications for each of us on earth, no matter what season or sphere of life we find ourselves in.

I love what Bill Johnson says in his book entitled “God is Good:

If I were to do to my children what many people think God does to His children, I’d be arrested for child abuse. People say God is good, yet they credit Him with causing cancer and natural disasters and even blame Him for terrorist activities. Some try to escape the pain of such shameful reasoning by stating, “He allowed it” instead of “He caused it.” In my way of thinking, there’s little to no difference. If I abuse my children, or “allow/approve” a neighbour to do it, it’s obvious I have a very serious problem. And when we sweep the abusive misdeed under the carpet called God works in mysterious ways, we add insult to injury. There is a common thought among many that God causes or allows evil to take place so He can display His mercy. That would be like me breaking my child’s arm to show my ability to give him comfort, and then using my skills to reset the broken bone. People ask me, “What about Job?” My response is, “What about Jesus?”

Johnson, Bill (2016-10-17T22:58:59). God is Good (Kindle Locations 330-338). Destiny Image, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

The Word of God is truth. It is the absolute authority on all matters. It does not change and is timeless.

God describes Himself as abounding and goodness and truth:

Ex. 34:5-6

*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,..."*

Goodness - **chêsêd** (*kheh'-sed*)

From [H2616](#); *kindness*; by implication (towards God) *piety*; rarely (by opprobrium) *reproof*, or (subjectively) *beauty*: - favour, good deed (-liness, -ness), kindly, (loving-) kindness, merciful (kindness), mercy, pity, reproach, wicked thing.

The Psalms teach us that He **has prepared and laid up great goodness** for those who fear and trust in Him:

Ps. 31:19

*Oh, how great is Your **goodness**,
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!*

Goodness - **ṭûb** (*toob*)

From [H2895](#); *good* (as a noun), in the widest sense, especially *goodness* (superlatively concrete, the *best*), *beauty*, *gladness*, *welfare*: - fair, gladness, good (-ness, thing, -s), joy, go well with.

God is good.

Some people believe that God sends sickness for a reason,.... For discipline, instruction, to make them holy... or some other reason. Some believe that God causes evil, for one reason or another. God is good. All good. There is no evil in Him.

Bill Johnsons writes: What is... devastating in this view of God causing evil is that it ultimately compromises our ability to discern the difference between God's discipline and an actual demonic assault. And that is a weakness that we cannot afford to carry around any longer. People constantly embrace a hellish situation in their lives because of the thought that God intended it for good. That way of thinking infects the

God-given ability to discern the works of the devil with a human reasoning that is demonic in nature. In fact, it's not just discernment that is in question. This kind of breakdown in our assignment to spiritual maturity causes us to forget who the enemy really is and what we're actually fighting against. Jesus gave us all we needed to know—

John 10:10–11

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep”.

It's not complicated. Loss, death, and destruction are the things left behind when the devil has had influence in a given situation. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. And what does that goodness look like? He gives abundant life. Here is it—loss, death, and destruction vs. abundant life. One is bad; the other is good. It shouldn't be that hard to distinguish between the two. And if that wasn't enough,

John summarized why Jesus came to earth:

1 John 3:8

“The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil”.

Jesus taught us how to recognize the works of the devil and then modeled how we destroy them. Do we have the right to set a new way of life and ministry that doesn't do what Jesus commanded us to do? No. Absolutely not! It is time to re-examine our belief system and find out what the Bible really teaches about the nature of God. It really comes down to this—many have rejected the clear revelation of the nature of God that is seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

Johnson, Bill (2016-10-17T22:58:59). God is Good (Kindle Locations 349-363). Destiny Image, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

A friend of mine sent me this quote: Christa Black Gifford once who said **“If you are not anchored in the goodness of God you will lower your theology to match your pain”**

Today we will explore what the word says about God's goodness and what some of the wrong concepts of God are. We will then highlight how one can have faith toward this good God.

I. Why do some people struggle with the concept of the “goodness of God”?

Many believers struggle in their walk with God and even having faith in God because they do not see Him as a “good” God. Many believers are trying to have faith in God but they are inhibited by a wrong view of God. There are several possible reasons for this.

People struggle to have the right concept of God because:

- A. Because they have had poor role models in the authority figures of their life.
- B. Because they have had some terrible life experiences that they have attributed to God or acts of God.
- C. Because they have been taught improperly (often for the purpose of manipulation) and see God as an angry judge who is very demanding and impossible to please.

II. What are some of the wrong concepts about God’s goodness?

A. Wrong Concept: God’s goodness cannot be experienced.

What the Bible says:

1 Pet. 2:3

...if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Ps. 34:8

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

B. Wrong Concept: God’s nature is not necessarily good.

What the Bible says:

Ps. 100:3-5

Know that the LORD, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

Lk. 18:19

So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

C. Wrong Concept: God only wants to give me bad things which don't satisfy.

What the Bible says:

Ps. 103:5

Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Ps. 84:11

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Mat. 7:11

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Jm. 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

God gives us good gifts; these are gifts which are fitting and suitable for us. What is suitable for one person might not be suitable for another.

God's gifts are good because He knows us better than we know ourselves.

D. Wrong Concept: God has evil intentions for my future.

What the Bible says:

Gen. 50:20

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

Jer. 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Rom. 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

E. Wrong Concept: God only has good plans for others but not for me.

What the Bible says:

Ps. 145:9

The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.

Many people struggle in faith toward God because their minds have been programmed to more readily receive failure than success, disaster than blessing. When we understand the character and nature of God, having faith in Him becomes easier.

F. Wrong Concept: God disciplines me because He is angry with me.

What the Bible says:

Heb. 13:6-8

“For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

G. Wrong Concept: God created some bad things to bring evil to the world.

What the Bible says:

Gen. 1:31

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Everything God created was good but the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy by perverting things God created.

God did not bring evil into the world. Man did. The consequence of Man's original sin was sin entering the world. Why did God give man the choice if He knew man was going to fall? Love is not love without the choice to not love. Obedience is not obedience without the choice to disobey. He knew. He made a plan to rectify the inevitable disobedience even though it would cost Him dearly.

H. Wrong Concept: God is angry with me for my sin.

What the Bible says:

Ps. 103:8

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

Ps. 103:9-12

He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

III. Will God ever change His mind about being good?

The following is adapted from *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer

God is unchanging!

A. His life does not change.

Mal. 3:6-7

“For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts.

Heb. 1:12

Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.

B. His character does not change.

Jm. 1:17-18

Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above, who created all heaven's lights. Unlike them, he never changes or casts shifting shadows. In his goodness he chose to make us his own children by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his choice possession.

Heb. 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

C. His truth does not change.

Ps. 40:7-8

The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Ps. 119:89, 152

Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven...Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever.

D. His ways do not change.

Heb. 3:6

He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting.

E. His purposes do not change.

Num. 23:19

God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

Ps. 33:11

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.

IV. Do I qualify to benefit from the goodness of God?

Yes you do! Often we understand many wonderful things about God but somehow we think they are for someone else. God is not remote; He is not impersonal but in Christ He has fully adopted you so you can experience Him as your Father.

A. You have been adopted by Father God.

Rom. 8:15-17

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

B. Your needs are already known by Father God.

Matt. 6:26-33

*Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom***

of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

C. You can experience Him personally as a God with feelings.

A lot of people find it difficult to connect with God’s goodness because they see God as impersonal and unfeeling. However, the Bible is clear that God has both positive and negative emotions when He thinks about his people.

Zeph. 3:17

The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

Eph. 4:30, NLT

And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

D. You can experience Him personally as a God who identifies with you.

Heb. 4:15

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

E. You can enter His throne room boldly whenever you want.

Heb. 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

V. Why is faith toward God necessary?

A. It is impossible to please God without faith.

Heb. 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

B. Faith and repentance are inseparably linked together. They are mutually dependent upon each other.

Acts 20:21

... testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:14-15

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

C. Faith is part of the foundation for victorious Christian living

Heb. 6:1

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God...

Rom. 1:17

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

VI. What is the meaning of faith?

- A. The Bible defines faith in Hebrews 11:1 " Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
- B. Faith is agreeing with God's Word through our confession and lifestyle of obedience to it.

- C. The dictionary defines faith as “trust, firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction, confidence in another and another’s word.”
- D. R.A. Torrey states, “To believe God is to rely upon or have unhesitating assurance of the truth of God’s testimony, even though it is unsupported by any other evidence, and to rely upon or have unfaltering assurance of the fulfilment of His promises, even though everything seen seems against fulfilment.”
- E. Faith doesn’t deny a problem’s existence, it just denies it a place of influence. Bill Johnson:

- What do I do if I am believing God for healing and it hasn’t manifested?

Was there ever a time Jesus turned someone away who wanted healing and said something to them like, “no, I can’t heal you, you need that sickness as discipline?”.

- What do I do if I am believing God for a spouse who is a Christian and that hasn’t manifested?
- What do I do if I am believing God for something and it hasn’t manifested?

Have faith toward God.

Keep believing, standing, hoping, waiting.

Eph. 6:13

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Can I explain why bad things happen to good people? Can we always understand why some breakthroughs take longer for some people? Do we understand why some people die prematurely?

An understanding of the nature of God is critical because it is the foundation for us having faith towards Him. It is very difficult to have faith toward God if we do not believe that He will keep His word to us, or we do not believe that His intentions are good, or that He is healer and wants to heal. And so forth.

Unfailing faith and trust in God comes from a trust in His nature and who He is. Living by faith requires an understanding of His nature.

Lesson

Reflection Questions

1. What are some of the wrong concepts you have had about God?
2. How does knowing that God is unchanging affect your daily walk of faith?
3. Do you sometimes feel like you don't qualify to be a beneficiary of God's goodness? If so, when do you feel this way?
4. What can you start doing to ensure that your faith in God grows and keeps growing?
5. Have you had any wrong concepts of faith in the past? If so, what are these?
6. What are some of the promises that God has given you on which you need to stand in faith?