

The Goodness of God

When we say that God is “good” what do we mean? To whom is He good? Under what circumstance is He good? How is His goodness manifest?

I. The Goodness of God

- a. The goodness of God is his inclination to deal well and **bountifully** with his creatures. In His goodness He wills there should be something besides Himself for His own glory.
- b. The goodness of God is also reflected among the names of God. For example, El-Shaddai means God Almighty. **Shaddai** signifies one who nourishes, supplies, and satisfies.
- c. It is God as El who helps, but it is God as Shaddai who **abundantly** blesses with all manner of blessings. Gen 28:1 *"May God Shaddai bless you, make you bear fruit and make you many, so that you become a host of peoples."*
- d. The goodness of God relates to the perfection of His nature. There is such an absolute **perfection** in God's nature and being that nothing is wanting to it or defective in it; and nothing can be added to it to make it better. 1 John 1:5 *"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all"*
- e. The goodness of God includes all His attributes. All the acts of God are nothing else but the effulgence of His goodness. God's goodness is His glory and Godhead, as much as it is delightfully **visible** to His creatures. Ex 34:6-7 *And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. KJV*
- f. He is originally good, good of Himself, which **nothing** else is; for all creatures are good only in the sense that God has by creation of them, imparted some measure of goodness to them. Matt 19:17 *And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: KJV*
- g. He is essentially good; not only good, but the embodiment of goodness itself. His goodness is underived; the creature's good is a superadded quality, in God it is His **essence**. Ps. 52:1 *The goodness of God endureth continually*
- h. He is **infinitely** good; the creature's good is but a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of good.
- i. He is eternally and **immutably** good, for He cannot be less good than He is; as there can be no addition made to Him, so no subtraction from Him.

II. How Does God Manifest His Goodness?

- a. God was **eternally** good before there was any expression of His goodness, or any creature to whom it might be imparted or upon which it might be exercised.
- b. Thus, the first manifestation of this divine perfection was in giving **being** to all things. Gen. 1:31 *And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good"*
- c. All that **emanates** from God—His decrees, His creation, His laws, His providences—cannot be otherwise than good. Thus, the "goodness" of God is *seen*, first, in Creation. Ps. 119:68 *Thou art good, and doest good"*
- d. The more closely the creature is studied, the more the beneficence of its Creator becomes apparent. For example, everything about the **structure** of our bodies attests to the goodness of our Maker. Ps 139:14 *I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well*
 1. How good of the Lord to appoint **sleep** to refresh us!
 2. What goodness is expressed in giving us the pleasures of **tasting** the food which nourishes us!
 3. How does one calculate the extent of the goodness of Him who has given us **eyes** with which to enjoy His creation!
- e. God is necessarily good, yet also **freely** good. The necessity of the goodness of His nature does not hinder the liberty of His actions. This goodness is poured out on His creation with the greatest pleasure. Ps 104:31 *The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works. KJV*
- f. What God gives out of His goodness, He gives with joy and gladness. He did not only will that we should be, but rejoices that He had brought us into being; He **delights** in the creation of His hand. Prov 8:30-31 *Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, 31 rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. NIV*
- g. In His goodness He is prompted to deal bountifully and kindly with **all** His creatures. It is God's attribute of goodness that underscores his condescendence toward His creation. Ps 107:8 *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! KJV*

III. Transformed by God's Goodness

- a. The great purpose of man, especially the believer in Christ, is to **glorify** God. Essential to our ability to glorify God is that we possess a personal knowledge of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31 *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"*
- b. Glorifying God is made possible by our knowledge of Him (as revealed by Him), and by our knowing God personally (expressed by our response to Him). When we **truly** know God we praise, thank, obey, revere, and serve Him for who He is and what He does. Ps 107:1 *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. KJV*
- c. Gratitude is the return justly required from the objects of God's beneficence; yet it is often withheld from our great Benefactor simply because His goodness is so constant and so abundant that it goes **unnoticed**. Ps 65:10-11 *Thou waterest the ridges thereof*

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abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. 11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. KJV

- d. It is this excellency of goodness in God that is the source of the believer's **trust**. Because His goodness endures and is proven trustworthy over time, it transforms us in our deepest held attitudes and beliefs. Nahum 1:7 *The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him*
- e. This inward transformation is wrought in the believer as the goodness of God is at work in and through him. Whatever goodness a saint may have and exercise is the product of the divine goodness. We are conduits of God's goodness toward **others**. Eph 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. KJV*
- f. When the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit, his hearts' desire is to glorify God and to reflect His goodness. One reflects God's goodness when his **attitudes** towards his own experiences and circumstance are transformed. Rom 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. KJV*
- g. This transformation of attitude **moves** one:
1. From negativism to **positivism** Phil 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. KJV*
 2. From dissatisfaction to **thankfulness** Col 3:14-15 *And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. KJV*
 3. From a fear of lack to the experience of **fullness** Phil 4:12 *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. KJV*
 4. From the fear of uncertainty to **trusting** in El Shaddai Col 2:2-3 *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. KJV*
 5. From a feeling of scarcity to the experience of **abundance** 2 Cor 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: KJV*
 6. From natural covetousness and hoarding to **generosity** toward others 2 Cor 9:7 *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. KJV*
- h. Attitudes are not the only change. The behavior of the believer is also transformed because he begins to **emulate** the goodness of Christ. This is seen in three particular ways:
1. **Abandonment** of self to God 2 Cor 8:5-6 *And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.*
 2. **Actively** receiving and excelling in the grace of giving. 2 Cor 8:7 *But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. NIV*
 3. **Liberally** sharing whatever we have with those who have need. 2 Cor 8:1-4 *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. KJV*

IV. Acting Out The Goodness of God

- a. Because God is good and we wish to glorify Him, when we recognize a need, we should **seek** the leading of the Spirit as to what our role ought to be in meeting that need.
- b. We should comprehend that the **quality** of giving is always more important than the quantity of giving. 2 Cor 9:6-7 *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. NIV*
- c. We should know that God always **provides** whatever He requires Ex 35:22-29 *All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the LORD. 23 Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or hides of sea cows brought them. 24 Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the LORD, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it. 25 Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun — blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. 26 And all the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair. 27 The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. 28 They also brought spices and olive oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. 29 All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the LORD freewill offerings for all the work the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do. NIV*
- d. We should acknowledge that it **all belongs** to God: He gives us everything that we possess that we should return it with interest to Him. Matt 25:24-27 *"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 'His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. NIV*

V. Application

- a. In every respect God's goodness ought to make us all the more thankful, as we consider our station in life, our condition, our bodies, our great salvation in Christ and the eternity that is our inheritance. To what extent are you thankful?
- b. True belief is transforming belief. As we are transformed by His goodness we become imitators of God: Of His holiness; and also of His goodness. To what extent do you see the goodness of God expressed in your attitude toward giving?