

KNOWING GOD

STUDY 1: GOD IS GOOD

“That God is good is taught or implied on every page of the Bible and must be received as an article of faith as impregnable as the throne of God. It is a foundation stone for all sound thought about God and is necessary to moral sanity. To allow that God could be other than good is to deny the validity of all thought and end in the negation of every moral judgment. If God is not good, then there can be no distinction between kindness and cruelty, and heaven can be hell and hell, heaven.”

A.W. Tozer

READ TOGETHER:

- **Psalm 119:68 (ESV)** “You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.”
- **Psalm 145:9-13a (NIV)** “The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations.”
- **Joshua 21:45 (ESV)** “Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.”
- **Nahum 1:7 (NIV)** “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.”
- **Romans 8:28 (NIV)** “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.”
- **James 1:17 (NIV)** “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

ACTIVITY: *As you begin this study together, pray for each other: for the places where you lack trust in God, for the questions you have about God,... Invite the Holy Spirit to bring revelation in your hearts and minds through your time in this study.*

All Good (Psalm 145:9-13a) There is nothing in God that is NOT good. He is so very good that there is no flaw to be found in any part of God’s nature. No evil can touch him. God’s grace is fully good, His mercy is fully good, His patience is fully good. But what about when we consider some of His GREAT characteristics — that His justice is fully good, His power is fully good? Maybe, for you, those thoughts cast a shadow on the idea of God’s goodness. Yet, the truth remains that God IS good... in every way. There is nothing sinister about His power. There is nothing flawed about His justice. God is good. Completely.

Discuss: *Share a time that the goodness of God was so obvious to you that it was almost like you saw His hand reach in to your situation. In what ways do you struggle with believing that God is fully good? How might it be difficult to think of God’s goodness extending into areas like His justice and His power?*

DIG DEEPER: Can’t become “good-er”! (James 1:17) A good cup of tea could be good even though it might be better with milk; a good day might be good even though it still has some strong gusts of wind. Only our good God has no “even though”. God’s goodness is the absence of any “not-goodness” and God’s goodness can’t become “good-er”! This means that we are free to follow Jesus without any pressure to earn any favour from God. Our attempts to be good will not cause him to move toward us more than He already has. Our prayers will not cause him to turn His face toward us more than it already is. God will never be good because of you. God is always good because of himself. *Talk through the significance of this — You have*

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no sin so great that God has become LESS good toward you. You have no faith so great that God will become MORE good toward you. Share your reactions and responses to these thoughts. Consider Paul's own story in 1 Timothy 1:12-17 and Acts 7-9. How could God forgive the vilest of sinners who repents, whether a ruthless dictator or a Paul (who did an immediate 180-degree turn)?

Good in the not-good. (Genesis 37-50, Romans 8:28) God accomplishes good, even from other's evil motivations and evil actions. Old Testament Joseph teaches us this truth in rather profound ways. The short summary is this: Joseph, who wears a colourful robe as evidence that he is the favoured son of His father, rather foolishly tells His brothers about some dreams he had in which they were all bowing down to him. Unsurprisingly, they don't like hearing about those dreams. Some want to kill him and some want to leave him for dead, so they decide to sell their brother into slavery in Egypt. In spite of some downturns in the story (including time in prison), Joseph finds ultimate favour in each endeavour in Egypt. By the time he is the top administrator in all of Egypt, some of those brothers are driven by famine to seek help in the land where Joseph now lives. Fast forward to the big ending and we see His brothers cowering in fear when they realise the identity of this powerful man of Egypt. And then we hear Joseph say that what they intended for harm, God used for good in order to accomplish the saving of many lives. God's ultimate purposes are good. Always.

DISCUSS: *In what ways has God been faithfully GOOD to you in the midst of very not-good situations? Notice that Paul, in Romans 8, is not saying that all things ARE good. How is it possible to say that God is good when there is evil all around?*

DIG DEEPER: Good, even when we don't see (Psalm 119:68) Throughout the Bible, beginning on page 1, we see that God IS good and DOES good. God's actions are good in the big things – in creation, in redemption, in our future resurrection. And God's actions are good in the small things – the call from a friend who was nudged to reach out to you and they were clueless as to why; the rose bud that opened just when your heart was closing; the rain that patters on your windows and on your parched soul. May we have eyes to see His goodness all around us! *Consider this little project from today until you next meet for your Connect: Maintain a list of "God Glimmers." Each day, ask the Holy Spirit to awaken your mind and heart to be alert for God's acts of goodness in the big and small things of your day. Share your lists the next time you meet. Or, share messages with each other whenever you've noticed a glimmer from heaven.*

PRAY TOGETHER

Lord God! We magnify your name!

Thank You that GOOD is who You are. We praise You for Your unwavering goodness. In our lack of consistent behaviour — sometimes holy and sometimes so far from holiness, thank You that You will never be more good toward us or less good toward us. We are so grateful that You are that safe!

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

RESOURCES:

- **Book:** JI Packer, *Knowing God*
- **Book:** AW Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*
- **Podcast:** The Bible Project: *The Character of God:*
<https://bibleproject.com/podcast/series/character-of-god/>
- **Video:** The Loud Absence: Where is God Amidst Suffering and Evil? | John Lennox at Stanford;
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huw4cg_PYIA