

**King's Online Bible School**  
**Doctrine 101: Learning about God**

**17. The Goodness of God** (adapted from R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths*)

James declares: "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" (James 1:17).

God never changes. Shadows suggest darkness, and in spiritual terms darkness suggests evil. Since there is no evil in God, there is no hint of darkness in Him either. He is the Father of lights.

God's is absolutely good in His nature, character, and all His ways. He is consistently good. It is impossible for Him to be otherwise or even to entertain any evil suggestion. "God cannot be tempted by evil" (James 1:13).

Even pagan philosophers such as Plato equated ultimate goodness, the highest good, with God Himself. God's goodness refers both to His character and His behavior. His actions flow out of His being. He acts according to what He is.

The Law of God expresses and reflects His Own goodness. God does not obey some cosmic law outside of Himself that judges Him. But God does obey a law. The law He obeys is the law of His Own character. He never acts in a way that is inconsistent with this law because He cannot be at odds with Himself or false to Himself. He always acts according to His Own character, which is eternally, immutably, and intrinsically good.

James teaches that every good and perfect gift comes from God. He is the Source of all goodness and the ultimate standard of goodness.

One of the most popular New Testament verses is Romans 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." This text on divine providence is as difficult to comprehend as it is popular. If God is able to make everything that happens to us work together for our good, then ultimately everything that happens to us is good. We must be careful to stress here the word *ultimately*. On the earthly plane things that happen to us may indeed be evil. (We must be careful not to call evil "good.") We encounter affliction, misery, injustice, our own sin, and a host of other evils. Yet God in His goodness transcends all of these things and works them to our good.

**Summary**

1. There is no shadow side to God.
2. God is not under Law.
3. God is not apart from Law.
4. God is a Law unto Himself.

**Biblical passages for reflection:**

Exodus 34:6-7   Psalm 25:8-10   Psalm 100:1-5   Romans 8:28-39   James 1:17