

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

**God is Good** (adapted from Wayne Grudem's *Bible Doctrines*, 90-92)

Definition: The goodness of God means not only that all that God is and does is worthy of approval, but also that God is the original and final standard of what is good.

He Himself personifies goodness. He is the Source of all good.

**1. Who decides what is good?**

The word "good" can be understood to mean "worthy of approval." But this begs the question, "Approval by whom?" We all have our own ideas of what is good and bad, but as creatures we are not ultimately free to make that decision. God's approval is the original and final standard of good because He is absolute goodness and He knows Himself perfectly. The essence of all that He approves is already recognized by Him in His Own character and actions.

When we say that God is good, we are really saying that Who He is and what He does and what He says are worthy of His Own approval. The only proper and safe response for creatures is to agree with His assessments rather than to make our own.

Because He is absolutely good and the Source of all good, anything that is different than His will is evil by the very fact that it is different. This is what evil is and how it exists: it is whatever is different than the will of God.

Sin entered the world when man was tempted to make his own autonomous assessments as to what was good and to challenge God's declarations. We see this in Genesis 3:1-6. God had made it plain that it was not His will for man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17). He warned that it would bring death and disruption into a perfect world.

The temptation that came to the woman was asking her to decide what was good. "Is it good for God to impose limitations? Is it right for Him to decide? Is it certain that He is good? Is it acceptable that He withholds knowledge from you? Is there something better? You should think about this. You should decide." All the words that follow in the temptation are suggestions that the tree might be good after all.

The woman was fooled into evaluating. She decided to assess the fruit of the tree. When she did, she saw that "the tree was good for food, and a delight to the eyes, and desirable to make wise" (3:6). Then she made the judgment that what she thought was good was to be trusted more than what God said. The man also decided in favor of eating what God had forbidden. This was the beginning of sin in the world. Ever since, every one of us has been trusting our ideas of what is good more than we trust what God says.

**2. God is good.**

He is good in Himself. This infinite, personal goodness is the determining and final standard of all that is good.

When a ruler came to Jesus and addressed Him with the words "Good teacher," Jesus questioned his presumption in ascribing "good" so lightly and freely. He called the man back to the reality that only God is good (Luke 18:19).

The simple and obvious statements we find in the psalms are important, wonderful, and essential.

Give thanks to Him; bless His name,  
For Yahweh is good (Ps 100:4-5).

It may help us realize what is being said if we change the wording to, "Yahweh is goodness." Good exists in Him. Good exists because He exists. Good is whatever conforms to His character.

**3.** God always only does good.

**a.** What God does is worthy of approval.

At the end of each day of creation God stepped back, observed His work, and saw that it was good (Gen 1). We see how important and satisfying it is to Him that this is so.

**b.** All that God does is good.

Jesus uses the fact that even men know how to do good to emphasize that, because of His nature, God cannot do anything other than good (Matt 7:11).

When God disciplines us, we find it hard, but He is only doing it because He is good and it is for our good (Heb 12:10) He cannot do less because He is faithful. He will not withhold from us anything that is good for us.

We must adjust to all that God has revealed because it all is good.

It is good for me that I was afflicted,  
That I may learn Thy statutes (Ps 119:71).

**c.** All that is good comes from God.

"Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow" (James 1:17).

**d.** Because God is only good we know that He is good to all His creatures.

The Lord is good to all,  
And His tender mercies are over all His works (Ps 145:9).

**4.** God's goodness is expressed in a variety of ways and is closely related to several other characteristics of His nature.

**a.** God's *mercy* is the expression of His goodness to those in misery or distress.

"His mercy (lovingkindness; steadfast covenant love) endures forever" (Ps 136).

The Lord sustains all who fall,  
And raises up all who are bowed down (Ps 145:14).

**b.** God's *grace* is the expression of His goodness toward those who don't deserve it; in fact, it is His determination to be good toward those who actually deserve His punishment. We receive the opposite of what we deserve.

"But God demonstrates His Own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:23-24).

**c.** God's *love* is the means by which He eternally gives Himself to others for their benefit and blessing.

God's nature is love (1 John 4:8). He was loving before ever there were humans to love. This is seen in the self-giving nature of the relationships within the Trinity. Jesus prays, "Father, Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). Speaking of His death, He says it is "that the world may know that I love the Father" (John 14:31).

This same self-giving nature is also expressed toward sinful people. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"He Who did not spare His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom 8:32).

It is God's nature to act in such a way as to give freely and generously of His goodness for the blessing of those upon whom He has set His love.

**5.** God's goodness is our model. Christ's goodness is our source.

We are told to "do good." "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal 6:10).

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).

"Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God" (3 John 11).

**6.** When we recognize that God is the definition and source of all good, we see that God Himself is the ultimate good that we seek.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee?  
And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.  
My flesh and my heart may fail;  
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.  
.....  
As for me, the nearness of God is my good (Ps 73:25-26, 28).