

God is Really Good

By Pastor Alan Utting

'The goodness of God leads us to trust Him, even when we don't understand His ways.'
Joni Eareckson Tada (a quadriplegic)

With all the suffering and pain in the world - war, loss of jobs, serious hunger, relationship breakdowns and isolation issues do you ever wonder if the all-powerful, loving God is really good?

It appears that most missionaries in the 1800s had it really tough and Allen Gardiner was no exception. After the death of one of his daughters he first went to Africa as a missionary, but due to various circumstances he later made his way to South America. Unfortunately, he and his team were stranded on an island where food supplies ran out six months later. Eventually they all died of starvation and he was the last to die. Gardiner kept a diary which was discovered next to his body. His last entry recorded the words of Psalm 34:10 'The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing'. This brief comment followed; *'I am overwhelmed by the goodness of God'*. In the face of death, this was Allen's experience of God. Is God good all the time? Yes!

Bible Perspective

Scripture endorses repeatedly that God is good. As humans we do not understand the full picture as in the case of Job. It was only after his deep suffering Job got a different perspective. Twice Jesus said, 'I am the *good* shepherd' to emphasize the point (John 10:11-14).

David wrote many of the Psalms while suffering great pressure yet he often expressed 'God is good!' It takes a step of faith to do this but lift your vision like David and speak faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, 'it is impossible to please God without faith'. Here are some other verses:

'Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good'
Psalm 25:7.

Taste and see that the 'Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him'
Psalm 34:8.

'You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you' Psalm 86:5

Give thanks to the 'Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever' Psalm 107:1.

'Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways' Psalm 25:8.

'I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, Lord, for it is good' Psalm 54:6.

'For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations' Psalm 100:5.

'You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees' Psalm 119:68.

Observations

1. There's an African proverb 'God is good all the time, all the time God is good'. True.
2. Sometimes I rush in with my plans and they don't work out in the way I want. I feel frustrated but I notice God often comes through later with something far better. Do you have a similar experience? It endorses the fact that God is good and has the best in mind for us.
3. We have a banner hanging in our kitchen, 'Today I will choose joy'. This is something believers must choose to do as an act of the 'will'.
4. Many have learnt the power of praise in terrible situations. You may have found this truth for yourself. This is not thanking God for the evil incident, but even in horrible circumstances praising God for who He is. This is very difficult but important. This is faith in action as in Hebrews 11:6 'And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him'.
5. It is good in the evening to reflect on the day's activities around a meal table as a family, and to mention 2-3 things we are grateful for. It teaches us to be mindful of God's goodness.
6. C. S. Lewis said, 'God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God'.
7. Matthew 6:33 – 'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well'. We can't always see it God's way at the time but seeking Him first is a key to discerning His goodness and walking in joy.
8. As Bill Bright says, 'There are no unhappy obedient Christians, and there are no happy disobedient Christians.' Get this conviction of 'God's goodness' into your spirit and you will do well.
9. It is important not to be controlled by what we see 2 Corinthians 4:18 'So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal'.
10. Finally, a word from St Ignatius (50-108 AD) 'We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a more loving response to our life forever with God. Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me.'

Resources

Terry Law and Jim Gilbert, *The Power of Praise and Worship*.
Song – *Blessed be your name*. <https://youtu.be/PnWKehsOXu8>