



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Character of God” Series Lesson 13 – October 30, 2016

Attribute of Goodness

I. Lesson Starters:

Last lesson we looked at the Communicable attribute of Truthfulness. *God’s truthfulness means that he is the one true God and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth. The word “veracity” is also sometimes used, which means truthfulness or reliability.*

Today we will continue our study by discussing God’s communicable attribute of Goodness.

II. Attribute of Goodness

The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.

Here, “good” can be understood to mean “worthy of approval.” But, that leads us to the question, approval by whom? In one sense, we can say that anything that is truly good should be worthy of approval by us. But in a more ultimate sense, we aren’t free to decide by ourselves what is worthy of approval and what is not.

III. God Alone is Good and the Ultimate Standard of Good

Ultimately, God’s being and his actions are perfectly worthy of his own approval and our own. He is therefore the final and only standard of good. Jesus states this clearly by what he says to the rich young ruler in Luke chapter 18.

Luke 18: 18-19 (ESV) ¹⁸ *And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”* ¹⁹ *And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.*

The Psalms also frequently affirm that “the LORD is good”

Psalms 100:5 (ESV) ⁵ *For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Psalms 34: 8 (ESV) ⁸ *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*

Psalms 106: 1 (ESV) ¹ *Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!*

But if God is himself good and therefore the ultimate standard of good, then we have a definition of the meaning of “good” that will greatly help us in the study of morals and ethics. When we ask what is “good?” We can answer “good” is what God approves.

We may ask then, why is what God approves good? The answer is because there is no higher standard of goodness than God’s own character and his approval of whatever is consistent with that character.

III. What God Does Is Good

Our definition of God's goodness also states that all that God does is good and therefore worthy of approval. We see evidence of this in the creation narrative...

Genesis 1:31 (ESV) ³¹ *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

The psalmist also connects the goodness of God with the goodness of his actions:

Psalms 119: 68 (ESV) ⁶⁸ *You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.*

Psalms 104 is also an excellent example of praise to God for his goodness in creation, while many Psalms, such as Psalms 106 and 107, give thanks to God for his goodness in all his actions toward his people.

Also, Paul encourages us in Romans to discover in practice how God's will for our lives is "good and acceptable and perfect"...

Romans 12: 2 (ESV) ² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

V. All Good in the World is Sourced from God

Scripture also tells us that God is the source of all good in the world.

James 1: 17 (ESV) ¹⁷ *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

Acts 14: 17 (ESV) ¹⁷ *Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."*

Moreover, God does only good things for his children.

Psalms 84: 11 (ESV) ¹¹ *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.*

Romans 8: 28 (ESV) ²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Romans 8: 32 (ESV) ³² *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

Mathew 7: 11 (ESV) ¹¹ *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

Sometimes, God may direct our lives in paths that feel unpleasant or painful. But, even then, it is for our ultimate good and consistent with His perfectly good nature.

Hebrews 12: 10 (ESV) ¹⁰ *For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.*

VI. As His Children, We Should Strive to also do Good

In imitation of His communicable attribute of goodness, we should ourselves do good (that is, we should do what God approves) and thereby imitate the goodness of our heavenly Father.

Galatians 6: 10 (ESV) ¹⁰ *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

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

Luke 6: 33-35 (ESV) ³³ *And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.* ³⁴ *And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.* ³⁵ *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.*

When we realize that God is the definition and source of all good, we will realize that God himself is the ultimate good that we seek. We will say with the psalmist,

Psalms 73: 25-26 (ESV) ²⁵ *Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.* ²⁶ *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

VII. Group Questions:

1. When the secular world says something is good, what does it typically mean? When we as Christians say something is good, what do we typically mean?
2. What does it mean to say that something serves as a final standard?
3. Why is it essential to have an ultimate standard of what good is?
4. What would our existence be like if we lacked an ultimate standard of good?
5. Paul tells us in Romans that God only does good to his children. Yet, we don't have to look far to see pain and hardship within the family of Christ. How can we reconcile this?
6. When we are experiencing difficult times in our lives, what can we take from today's lesson material that might be helpful?

Study material is primarily taken from Systematic Theology by Wayne Gruden, Chapter 10,-13; The Broadman Bible Commentary by the Southern Baptist Convention and Unger's Bible Dictionary.