

The Goodness of God – Part 1

James 1:16-17 – December 11, 2016

What December Looks Like

DECEMBER @ GRACE FELLOWSHIP		
Date	Message or Event	Time
Dec 11 (Sun)	The Goodness of God – Part 1	8:45 & 10:45 am
Dec 18 (Sun)	The Goodness of God – Part 2	8:45 & 10:45 am
Dec 23 (Fri)	Kidz Family Christmas	5-8pm (Come & Go)
Dec 24 (Sat)	Candlelight Christmas Eve Services	1pm, 3pm, or 5pm
Dec 25 (Sun)	Christmas Day Family Worship	10:45 am only
Jan 1 (Sun)	New Year's Day Family Worship	8:45 & 10:45 am

What is God Like?

- If I were to ask you to draw a picture of God, what picture would you sketch?
- Some drawings that I have seen people draw:
 - God as **Police Officer** who is going to catch you doing wrong.
 - God as **Busy CEO** who does not have time for you.
 - God as **Angry Mobster** who is constantly bothered by you.
 - God as **Super Old Grandpa** sitting on a rocking chair and oblivious to everything that is going on.
 - God as **Chanting Yoga Man** sitting on a puffy cloud meditating and not relevant.
 - God as **Divine Butler** who exists solely to take orders from you.
 - God in a Box** as a wimpy nerd who stays inside the box you've made for him and doesn't venture into areas you don't want him to.
 - God as **Absent** who is, practically speaking, not there at all in any relevant way.
 - God **the Way Your Parent Was** who has the worst characteristics of your mom and dad combined.
- Your knee-ology versus your theology

Theology	Knee-ology
What you believe in your head	What you believe in your heart
Comes out in sentences	Comes out in drawings
What you say	What you pray

- AW Tozer: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

- Jeremiah 9:23-24** – This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.
- Sermon series in Fall 2013: "Knowing God" (14 attributes of God)
- Why truly understanding the goodness of God makes a difference in my life:
 - (1) It determines whether I will be a grateful person or not.
 - (2) It determines whether I will truly trust God or not.
 - (3) It determines how I respond to suffering.
 - (4) It determines whether I want to become more like God or not.
 - (5) It determines whether I will want to share my faith with others.

The Apostle James' Message about the Goodness of God in James 1:16-17

- 1) Don't let suffering deceive you into thinking that God is not good (v.16)**
 - Our tendency is to doubt the goodness of God when we see suffering, but James exhorts us not to be deceived into that thinking.
 - planao* = to roam from the truth; to err; to go astray; to be seduced in your thinking
 - Verse 16 is a comment about Verse 13.
 - Alistair Begg: "God is never the source of evil, but always the source of good."
 - Next to family of origin issues, I believe a wrong theology of suffering is the #1 contributor to wrong thoughts about God's character that cause us to doubt God's goodness.
 - Next Sunday (Dec 18) we will dedicate the message to this subject as we process King Herod's slaughtering of the babies of Bethlehem in Matthew 2 (Wise Men account).
 - "beloved" (v.16) = a deep term of endearment
- 2) All of God's gifts proclaim to us His goodness (v.17a)**
 - We know God is good by looking at all of His good gifts to us.
 - Matthew 7:11** (NLT) – So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him.
 - Psalms 33:5** (NKJV) – The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

- **Psalm 107:8** (NKJV) – *Oh that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.*
- **Psalm 106:1** – *Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.*
- **Psalm 34:8** – *Taste and see that the Lord is good.*
- **John 10:11** – *I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*
- A sampling of His good gifts to us:
 - (1) Creation
 - (2) People
 - (3) Provision
 - (4) His Word
 - (5) Jesus
- Christmas is the ultimate expression of God's goodness to us!
- **Luke 2:14** (NKJV) – *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*
- **2 Corinthians 9:15** – *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*
- Video: "First Christmas: Mary" [3:37] found at Skitguys.com

3) God is always good; He does not **change** (v.17b)

- AW Tozer: "Since God is immutable He never varies in the intensity of His lovingkindness. He has never been kinder than He now is, nor will He ever be less kind."
- God is not like fickle or moody human beings where you are never certain what mood you might catch someone in and how they will respond to you. God is consistently and unchangingly good.
- Maxie Dunnam: "God is good, all the time; and all the time, God is good."

- ✓ **Psalm 136:1** – *Give thanks to the Lord for He is good.*
- ✓ Idea: I'm going to sit down and write a simple letter of thanks to God for all of His good gifts to me.
- ✓ Video: "The Table" [1:44] found at sermonspice.com
- **FAITH** – I choose to trust God because He is good and worthy of my trust.
 - ✓ A.W. Pink: "The goodness of God is the life of the believer's trust."
 - ✓ Idea: I'm going to tell God that I trust Him with my life, my salvation, my family, my bills, my finances, my job, my marriage, my singleness, my sexuality, my children, my health, my loved ones, my future, my circumstances, my everything.
- **RIGHT THINKING** – With God's help, I choose to see my life with eyes of faith believing that God is good and that He is working ultimate good for my life and others.
 - ✓ **Genesis 50:20** – *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*
 - ✓ Idea: I'm going to put on faith glasses to see things with 50/20 vision.
- **IMITATION** – With the Holy Spirit's power, I want to be like my heavenly Father – I want to be and do good.
 - ✓ **Ephesians 5:1** – *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children.*
 - ✓ **Micah 6:8** – *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*
 - ✓ Idea: I'm going to help provide good gifts for others like my heavenly Father has done for me.
- **SHARING** – I am going to share this Good News with others.
 - ✓ **Matthew 10:8** – *Freely you have received; freely give.*
 - ✓ Idea: I'm going to invite someone to Christmas Eve services at Grace Fellowship.
 - ✓ Video: "Good News Christmas Invite" [1:42] found at sermonspice.com

My Next Step – My response to the Goodness of God:

- **GRATITUDE** – I choose to worship God with a thankful heart and to live a lifestyle of gratitude to God.