

Step #3 – Becoming a Good Person

Through Jesus Christ man can live a life of moral rightness, truth, and justice.

(Psalm 37:3-6, Romans 7:24-25, Galatians 5:22-23, II Timothy 1:7)

After Jesus rose from the dead He sent the Holy Spirit to live in every Christian, to begin the process of giving us a new heart and a new mind, so that we could better obey God's law. The Holy Spirit empowers every Christian to live a life that is morally right, true, and just.

- 1.) If you are a Christian, how have your thoughts, feelings, and actions changed?
- 2.) Is your character becoming more like the Lord Jesus?

Through Jesus Christ our acts of goodness can result in good effects, and reflect good character.

(Luke 6:27-36, Romans 8:28)

Unlike those who do not know Jesus Christ, the Christian has God's promise that our lives will have a final good result, and that our character will one day be perfectly good. Because of God's love, even the bad things that happen, even our mistakes and sins can be redeemed.

- 1.) Since you became a Christian what are the results of your changed behavior?
- 2.) How have your relationships and actions changed?

God expresses His goodness through us in the forms of grace, mercy, discipline, and justice.

(Proverbs 28:5, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 5:8-10, II Thessalonians 1:11-12)

Jesus Christ is the ultimate expression of God's grace, mercy, discipline, and justice. Without Jesus we would be eternally punished for our sins.

- 1.) Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord?
- 2.) How is your life becoming an expression of God's grace, mercy, discipline, and justice?

God's Character & Man's Ethics, Study #2 **The Goodness of God & Man**

What does it mean to be a good person? Most people think of goodness from a negative point of view such as, "Not doing bad things." For others goodness is more generic. We wish our loved ones a "good day." Or we tell our children as they run off to school, "Be good today," which is another way of saying, "Stay out of trouble."

According to theology professor Dr. Robert L. Reymond, "God defines his goodness in terms of sovereign mercy and compassion." God's goodness, the kind that He wants to have reflected in our character, is both positive and proactive. This means that being good is more than "not doing bad things," or "staying out of trouble." The Bible describes God as *proactively initiating* good acts to bring benefit to mankind (Matthew 5:45), but especially to those whom He has called His people.

How often have you struggled with a problem in your life where you knew the right thing to do, but did not seem to have the will to do it (sin)? Everyone has experienced this. It is a testimony to the scripture's teaching that man is not naturally good; we are sinners. We have the desire and even the capacity to *do* good things – but we often avoid good, or intentionally do the wrong thing, whether out of weakness or rebellion.

In this study we will learn about the differences between God's goodness and our goodness, and how every Christian can discover the power available to him or her to become the kind of good person that reflects the good character of Jesus Christ.



Step #1 – The Goodness of God

God’s goodness is that quality of his character that always approves of what is morally right, true, and just.

(Exodus 33:19, 34:5-7, Psalm 33:4-5, 51:6, Proverbs 11:1, 12:22)

Foundational to God’s attribute of goodness is His rightness. All of God’s thoughts, feelings, and actions are always right, truthful, and just. It is impossible for God to be wrong, false, or unjust. Therefore, God always approves of all that He does, and of all that is done by man that is also morally right, true, and just.

- 1.) Think about these three important attributes of goodness: Moral rightness, truth, and justice. Describe ways in which your life meets or fails God’s standard.

God’s goodness is always demonstrated by His beneficial actions.

(Psalm 119:68, Romans 8:28, James 1:17-18)

Theology professor Wayne Grudem describes God’s goodness this way: “God’s mercy is His goodness toward those in distress; His grace is His goodness toward those who deserve only punishment; and His patience is His goodness toward those who continue to sin over a period of time” (*Systematic Theology*, “The Communicable Attributes of God,” page 198). God’s goodness is *proactive*. He does not need to be appeased to be good, as if He were some false god or evil spirit. He is by nature always unceasing in His goodness all of the time.

- 1.) God initiates good on behalf of even the undeserving. We call this “grace.” How has God been gracious to you, even when you have not given recognition to Him, His acts, or given Him your obedience?

God’s goodness is expressed to His creation through grace, mercy, discipline, and justice.

(Psalm 86:5, 145:9, II Corinthians 4:17, Titus 3:3-5, Hebrews 12:10, Revelation 3:19)

Since God always acts and approves of that which is morally right, true, and just, then we can say that it is right for God to show mercy and give grace; and that His discipline and justice are both true and just.

- 1.) God always expresses Himself to us with goodness. How do you express yourself to God, and to others?

Step #2 – The Goodness of Man

God created man to reflect His character of moral rightness, truth, and justice. Instead, man has embraced sin: Moral corruption, personal deception, and injustice.

(Leviticus 20:26, Luke 18:19, Romans 8:29, Galatians 5:19-21)

Though God originally created man good (Genesis 1:31), man rebelled against God’s perfect goodness – sin. Man’s character no longer reflects God’s perfect goodness.

- 1.) Explain some ways that your character is different from God’s character.
- 2.) How do you think God views your character attributes?

Because man is sinful his actions do not always have good results, or reflect good character.

(Ecclesiastes 7:20, Luke 6:45, Romans 7:14-24, 8:7-8, James 3:10-13)

Sometimes we do good, sometimes we have good intentions but use wrong behavior to achieve our goals. And sometimes our actions are wrong from conception to execution. We create many problems because of these sins.

- 1.) If a person has many bad results from bad behaviors in his or her life, what does that tell you about that person’s character?
- 2.) Would you say your life is illustrated by good character, bad character, or character mixed with good and bad?

Since the expression of man’s goodness is marred by sin, God’s grace, mercy, discipline, and justice is required.

(Psalm 51:1-6, Romans 5:6-8, Hebrews 12:5-8)

The Bible teaches that even our best intentions and efforts cannot please God since we have character flaws that are not good. God therefore decided to do the right thing by showing us mercy and grace by sending Jesus Christ to die as the punishment for our sins.

- 1.) We deserved punishment for our sins. How was God’s good justice served by Jesus dying in our place?

