

# The Goodness of God

Grace and Truth – part 9

June 11, 2023

## DAY 1: Ethical objections to Christianity. Is God good?

1. For centuries, objections to the Christian faith have always been intellectual objections. Issues include the evolution, the problem of evil and suffering. Is the bible reliable? Did Jesus really rise from the dead? Was Jesus an actual historical figure?

2. For years, skeptics held on to an intellectual objection in such a way as to make Christianity seem **implausible** to him or her.

3. However, in the last decade intellectual objections to Christian faith have largely faded from view, and have been replaced by **ethical** objections. It is some of these ethical objections to Christianity that now make Christianity implausible to this younger generation.

4. To a younger generation Christianity seems implausible because of what they think the bible teaches about sexuality, sexual laws, gender, women, a mixing of politics and the gospel, and past support of slavery, and race.

5. The question is no longer “Is Christianity true?” Now it’s “Is God good?” (particularly as regards ethical issues).

6. We’ll examine two questions this week. (1) Is God good? (2) Are His ethical laws good?

- **Is God good?**

7. The bible affirms the goodness of God through His creative acts: all were good.

*Genesis 1:4 ...God saw that it was good....<sup>10</sup> ...God saw that it was good....<sup>12</sup> ...and God saw that it was good....<sup>18</sup> ...and God saw that it was good....<sup>21</sup> ...and God saw that it was good.<sup>25</sup> And God saw that it was good....<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made and it was very good.*

8. Jesus spoke with the rich, young ruler.

*Mark 10:17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

<sup>18</sup> *“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.*

a. Jesus uses the word “good” here in the ultimate sense—perfect goodness.

b. Jesus told us to do good works. He means “good” in a different sense than pure goodness. Here, “good” means something that is beneficial to another. (Matt. 5:14-16; Galatians 6:9-10)

9. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

## DAY 2: Do we need moral laws? Can't we do fine without them?

1. Secular man assumes it can stand in judgment of God about God's goodness. Is God really good? Is He as good as the bible claims Him to be?

2. But from the bible's point of view, the reality is just the opposite. When it comes to moral goodness, God is not only "gooder" than humans, but comparatively speaking there is no human who is good in the highest sense.

*Romans 3:10 As it is written: "**There is no one righteous, not even one;** <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> **All have turned away,** they have together become worthless; **there is no one who does good, not even one.**" <sup>13</sup> "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." <sup>14</sup> "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."*

3. This doesn't mean that humans don't do "good deeds."

4. What the bible detects is something in human nature that is wrong, and needs fixing.

5. But the problem is infinitely compounded by a stubborn refusal to not only look at what might be wrong, but to even admit what might be wrong!

6. A very common example from the medical world is the middle-aged man who refuses to go the doctor to find out why he has pain. Why does he refuse to go?

a. He doesn't want to discover something that might be worse,

b. He doesn't want his life disrupted by what the doctor or surgeon might deem as necessary,

c. He hopes that whatever his malady, perhaps it will go away if he ignores it.

7. To his wife and family, this is nuts, even though it "makes sense" to the man.

8. Human beings don't want to believe they have something rotten in their nature that needs fixing. It's easier to pretend "we're fine," focus on our "good" intentions, and blame others for whatever hardships we may inflict on them through our malady.

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

### DAY 3: Substituting man's law for God's law

1. Christianity portrays a creator God who has a design for His creatures. That involves His moral law.
2. Our existence is not a lawless one. We mostly all agree that without laws, chaos and crime would be awful.
3. Our life is governed by laws of science, laws of physics, laws of logic, etc. This is true because we do not inhabit a world that got here by chance and randomness, but rather of order. Order is best explained by a creator's design, rather than random chance.
4. One of the reasons this generation may be rebelling against God's moral law is what they have experienced in church or church people.
5. For example, after I became a Christian in college I decided not to drink alcohol anymore. The reason was simple: I was afraid I was on the road to becoming an alcoholic. But one of the churches I attended taught that no one should drink alcohol. While there are good reasons not to drink alcohol, the bible does not lay down that law. The bible prohibits being a drunkard.
6. Unfortunately, the upspoken message I "heard" was drinking was a sin. This is an example of how Christians can take one of God's moral laws and make it more restrictive than God does!
7. Here is how Jesus approached that same kind of problem, in His day.  
*Mark 7:5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"*  
*<sup>6</sup> He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:*  
*" 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. <sup>7</sup> They worship me in vain; **their teachings are merely human rules.**'*  
*<sup>8</sup> You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."*
8. A few observations:
  - a. Jesus certainly saw the need for God's moral law.
  - b. However, it is a bad idea to essentially make man's law a higher law than God's, whether you are a Christian or not.
  - c. An example of this very thing happening is with cancel culture. Human rules are elevated to the level of "mandatory," and if you don't subscribe to those rules, you are an anathema.
9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## **DAY 4: We need God's law**

1. The bible tells us we are wayward children. We leave God's design for life and follow our own ways.

*Isaiah 53:6 All of us, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned, each one of us, to our own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

2. The bible illustrates, hundreds of times in the lives of people and nations that we need "mountain guardrails," stop signs, yield signs, traffic signals, speed limit signs, etc. Why? Because we are a mean society? It is for our protection and to provide a safer life for each person.

3. Here are some examples of the kinds of "traffic signs" God's law provides.

*Psalm 119:4 You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. <sup>5</sup> Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! <sup>6</sup> Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. <sup>7</sup> I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.*

*<sup>14</sup> I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.*

*<sup>15</sup> I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.*

*<sup>16</sup> I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.*

*<sup>18</sup> Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.*

*<sup>24</sup> Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.*

*<sup>27</sup> Cause me to understand the way of your precepts, that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds.*

*<sup>28</sup> My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.*

*<sup>29</sup> Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me and teach me your law.*

*<sup>30</sup> I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws.*

*<sup>31</sup> I hold fast to your statutes, LORD; do not let me be put to shame.*

*<sup>32</sup> I run in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding.*

*<sup>34</sup> Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart.*

*<sup>35</sup> Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.*

*<sup>36</sup> Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.*

*<sup>37</sup> Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.*

*<sup>45</sup> I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.*

4. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 5: The goodness of God is seen in His law

1. Psalm 19 shows that we can know something of the wonder of God by looking at creation. We can also discover God's goodness through His law!!!

2. In the following verses:

- a. Circle or bold each description of God's law.
- b. Underline each benefit of God's law.

(An example is done for verse 7).

*Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is **perfect**, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are **trustworthy**, making wise the simple.*

<sup>8</sup> *The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.*

<sup>9</sup> *The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.*

<sup>10</sup> *They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.*

<sup>11</sup> *By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

<sup>12</sup> *But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.*

<sup>13</sup> *Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.*

3. What strikes you from the benefits of following God's law?

4. It is also striking that human nature naturally **resists** God's law, man's law, being told by anyone that they have to do something, like your boss, a teacher, a parent, etc. This reality, in itself, demonstrates another reason why we need God's law!