

Day 1

Is God Really Good?

"God is good." Everyone who's been a Christian for a while has heard this statement a thousand times. In fact, we hear it so often it can start to sound kind of cliché-ish. We hear it. We say it. We sing it. But do we really believe it?

For the next 21 days we are going to be exploring what the Bible has to tell us about the goodness of God. My prayer for you is that God would reveal His goodness to you in fresh and life-giving ways. Knowing the goodness of God is truly transformative.

David wrote in Psalm 34:8, "Taste and see that the Lord is good..." Interesting choice of words don't you think? The goodness of God is so real, so profound, we can actually taste it within our soul. It is more than something we hear about and read about and sing about; it's something we can personally experience and take in and enjoy.

A.W. Tozer once wrote, "What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." I don't believe Tozer is overreaching. How we view God will influence all of our thinking. One of the most important things about maintaining healthy perspective on life is to make sure that we have a biblically accurate view of who God is. And the best way to do that is to regularly, systematically read and meditate on scripture.

As you begin this 21-day journey, I invite you to pray a simple prayer with me asking God to reveal His goodness to you in a deep, personal, meaningful way. Your confidence in the goodness of God must be authentic. It must come from deep within, for when it is real to you it will change your life.

Psalm 34:1-22

1) I bless God every chance I get; my lungs expand with his praise. 2) I live and breathe God; if things aren't going well, hear this and be happy: 3) Join me in spreading the news; together let's get the word out. 4) God met me more than halfway, he freed me from my anxious fears. 5) Look at him; give him your warmest smile. Never hide your feelings from him. 6) When I was desperate, I called out, and God got me out of a tight spot. 7) God's angel sets up a circle of protection around us while we pray. 8) Open your mouth and taste, open your eyes and see—how good God is. Blessed are you who run to him. 9) Worship God if you want the best; worship opens doors to all his goodness. 10) Young lions on the prowl get hungry, but God-seekers are full of God. 11) Come, children, listen closely; I'll give you a lesson in God worship. 12) Who out there has a lust for life? Can't wait each day to come upon beauty? 13) Guard your tongue from profanity, and no more lying through your teeth. 14) Turn your back on sin; do something good. Embrace peace—don't let it get away! 15) God keeps an eye on his friends, his ears pick up every moan and groan. 16) God won't put up with rebels; he'll cull them from the pack. 17) Is anyone crying for help? God is listening, ready to rescue you. 18) If your heart is broken, you'll find God right there; if you're kicked in the gut, he'll help you catch your breath. 19) Disciples so often get into trouble; still, God is there every time. 20) He's your bodyguard, shielding every bone; not even a finger gets broken. 21) The wicked commit slow suicide; they waste their lives hating the good. 22) God pays for each slave's freedom; no one who runs to him loses out.

Day 2

The Lie

The lie of all lies is the lie that God is not good. The serpent not only deceived Eve into questioning the word of God, but also questioning the goodness of God. Questioning the goodness of God led Adam and Eve to search for a better life for themselves in the exact place where God had warned them they would find death. Questioning the goodness of God is exactly what the devil wants us to do.

The Bible is full of teaching, stories, and examples of the goodness of God. It is an essential truth that is vital to your spiritual health. As we journey through this reading plan, we will be exploring what the Bible reveals about the goodness of God. This is a truth the devil doesn't want you to know.

As you begin this journey, ask the Lord to reveal the truth of His goodness to you. Look intently into His word and discover His goodness. Know His goodness not just as biblical truth, but as a life-changing revelation.

Genesis 3:1-12

3 The serpent was clever, more clever than any wild animal GOD had made. He spoke to the Woman: "Do I understand that God told you not to eat from any tree in the garden?"

²⁻³ The Woman said to the serpent, "Not at all. We can eat from the trees in the garden. It's only about the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'Don't eat from it; don't even touch it or you'll die.'"

⁴⁻⁵ The serpent told the Woman, "You won't die. God knows that the moment you eat from that tree, you'll see what's really going on. You'll be just like God, knowing everything, ranging all the way from good to evil."

⁶ When the Woman saw that the tree looked like good eating and realized what she would get out of it—she'd know everything!—she took and ate the fruit and then gave some to her husband, and he ate.

⁷ Immediately the two of them did "see what's really going on"—saw themselves naked! They sewed fig leaves together as makeshift clothes for themselves.

⁸ When they heard the sound of GOD strolling in the garden in the evening breeze, the Man and his Wife hid in the trees of the garden, hid from GOD.

⁹ GOD called to the Man: "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He said, "I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid."

¹¹ GOD said, "Who told you you were naked? Did you eat from that tree I told you not to eat from?"

¹² The Man said, "The Woman you gave me as a companion, she gave me fruit from the tree, and, yes, I ate it."

GOD said to the Woman, "What is this that you've done?"

Day 3

Goodness and Grace

We have been conditioned to believe that good things come to us only if we are worthy of them. Our minds have been trained toward karma thinking. While it is true that the principle of sowing and reaping is fairly consistent in life, we also need to know that God's goodness toward us is founded solely upon His grace and not our performance. Even when we are not good, God is and will always be good.

Many times, we talk ourselves out of believing that God has something good for us because we are painfully aware of our unworthiness of His goodness. Today's scripture is a powerful reminder that while none of us are worthy of God's goodness, we are recipients of His unmerited grace. Titus 3:4-5 says, "...when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy."

The powerful reality of God's goodness based solely upon His grace and not our performance is both mind blowing and life changing. Today, I invite you to receive God's grace and goodness, not because you deserve it, but because God is good. Take time to meditate on the goodness of God. Bask in His kindness and rejoice in His grace.

Titus 3:1-8

¹⁻² Remind the people to respect the government and be law-abiding, always ready to lend a helping hand. No insults, no fights. God's people should be bighearted and courteous.

³⁻⁸ It wasn't so long ago that we ourselves were stupid and stubborn, dupes of sin, ordered every which way by our glands, going around with a chip on our shoulder, hated and hating back. But when God, our kind and loving Savior God, stepped in, he saved us from all that. It was all his doing; we had nothing to do with it. He gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people, washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit. Our Savior Jesus poured out new life so generously. God's gift has restored our relationship with him and given us back our lives. And there's more life to come—an eternity of life! You can count on this.

Day 4

Goodness and Declaration

Life and faith are released when we speak forth the truth of God's word. Psalm 145 is packed full of truth about the goodness of God. This great Psalm also encourages us to declare God's goodness in a variety of different ways. Verses 4 through 7 say,

"One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."

Read through this section again and take note of the various ways we can declare the goodness of God.

Commend Tell Speak Proclaim Celebrate Joyfully sing

Wow! Imagine the power of putting this into practice! I want to encourage you today to do just what this Psalm is telling us to do. Declare that God is good. Think about His goodness. Speak of His goodness. Maybe even get really crazy and sing about His goodness. The power of God's goodness is released upon our lives and the lives of others as we confidently declare it!

Psalms 145:1-21

I lift you high in praise, my God, O my King!
and I'll bless your name into eternity.

² I'll bless you every day,
and keep it up from now to eternity.

³ GOD is magnificent; he can never be praised
enough.

There are no boundaries to his greatness.

⁴ Generation after generation stands in awe of
your work;

each one tells stories of your mighty acts.

⁵ Your beauty and splendor have everyone
talking;

I compose songs on your wonders.

⁶ Your marvelous doings are headline news;
I could write a book full of the details of your
greatness.

⁷ The fame of your goodness spreads across the
country;

your righteousness is on everyone's lips.

⁸ GOD is all mercy and grace—
not quick to anger, is rich in love.

⁹ GOD is good to one and all;
everything he does is suffused with grace.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Creation and creatures applaud you, GOD;
your holy people bless you.

They talk about the glories of your rule,
they exclaim over your splendor,

¹² Letting the world know of your power for
good,

the lavish splendor of your kingdom.

¹³ Your kingdom is a kingdom eternal;
you never get voted out of office.

GOD always does what he says,
and is gracious in everything he does.

¹⁴ GOD gives a hand to those down on their luck,
gives a fresh start to those ready to quit.

¹⁵ All eyes are on you, expectant;
you give them their meals on time.

¹⁶ Generous to a fault,
you lavish your favor on all creatures.

¹⁷ Everything GOD does is right—
the trademark on all his works is love.

¹⁸ GOD's there, listening for all who pray,
for all who pray and mean it.

¹⁹ He does what's best for those who fear him—
hears them call out, and saves them.

²⁰ GOD sticks by all who love him,
but it's all over for those who don't.

²¹ My mouth is filled with GOD's praise.
Let everything living bless him,
bless his holy name from now to eternity!

Day 5

The Good Life

David understood what “the good life” really was. He knew it had nothing to do with wealth, position, or power. It has everything to do with a real relationship with a loving God. Long before David enjoyed life in the palace, he had experienced the goodness of God out in the fields tending the family sheep. As he was doing his best to be a good shepherd, his heart was at peace knowing that he was under the watchful eye and loving care of the Great Shepherd.

These early lessons about the goodness of God would serve as a source of faith and strength for David’s entire life. When he needed courage, God was there. When he needed wisdom, God was there. When he needed forgiveness, God was there. When he needed hope, God was there. The Great Shepherd was always there for David and He is always there for you!

Read through this Psalm again, making a mental list of all the ways the Great Shepherd is good to you. Meditate on His goodness. One by one, thank Him for all the wonderful ways He demonstrates His goodness towards you.

Psalm 23:1-6

¹⁻³ God, my shepherd! I don’t need a thing. You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from. True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.

⁴ Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I’m not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd’s crook makes me feel secure.

⁵ You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies. You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.

⁶ Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life. I’m back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.

Day 6

We Don't Have to Wait

Don't get me wrong, I believe in heaven and I'm looking forward to it. Heaven is the eternal destiny and ultimate reward awaiting every Christ-follower. Our hearts long for the sovereign rule of God and the sweetness of unencumbered intimacy with our Lord. It is, however, a big mistake to think that we must wait until we are in heaven to experience the goodness of God. David fully expected to experience the goodness of God in the present as well as the future.

"I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." - Psalm 27:13

Perhaps you've seen the bumper sticker that says, "Life is hard. And then you die." It's kind of sarcastically humorous, but unfortunately, it is a lie that many people have bought into. If we choose to see the evil around us, we can. If we choose to see the goodness of God, we will see it all around us. We often miss God's goodness because we're just not paying attention or we're too focused on the struggles and difficulties of life. David wraps up this Psalm with this word of advice:

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." – Psalm 27:14

If you happen to find yourself in the midst of one of life's storms right now, hold on tight to the Lord. This storm will pass. They all do. Keep your eyes fixed upon Jesus and remain confident that you will see and know the goodness of God.

Psalms 27:1-14

Light, space, zest—that's God! So, with him on my side I'm fearless, afraid of no one and nothing.

² When vandal hordes ride down ready to eat me alive, Those bullies and toughs fall flat on their faces.

³ When besieged, I'm calm as a baby. When all hell breaks loose, I'm collected and cool.

⁴ I'm asking God for one thing, only one thing: To live with him in his house my whole life long. I'll contemplate his beauty; I'll study at his feet.

⁵ That's the only quiet, secure place in a noisy world, The perfect getaway, far from the buzz of traffic.

⁶ God holds me head and shoulders above all who try to pull me down. I'm headed for his place to offer anthems that will raise the roof! Already I'm singing God-songs; I'm making music to God.

⁷⁻⁹ Listen, God, I'm calling at the top of my lungs: "Be good to me! Answer me!" When my heart whispered, "Seek God," my whole being replied, "I'm seeking him!" Don't hide from me now!

⁹⁻¹⁰ You've always been right there for me; don't turn your back on me now. Don't throw me out, don't abandon me; you've always kept the door open. My father and mother walked out and left me, but God took me in.

¹¹⁻¹² Point me down your highway, God; direct me along a well-lighted street; show my enemies whose side you're on. Don't throw me to the dogs, those liars who are out to get me, filling the air with their threats.

¹³⁻¹⁴ I'm sure now I'll see God's goodness in the exuberant earth. Stay with God! Take heart. Don't quit. I'll say it again: Stay with God.

Day 7

Goodness and Justice

Isaiah 61 is a beautiful display of God's goodness as He reveals His intentions for future blessing and total restoration of all things. In particular, a huge part of God's future restoration will be the establishment of perfect justice. God demonstrates His goodness by administering justice for all. We see glimpses of justice now but, one day, God's justice will prevail and be put into full effect.

Speaking in the first person, God says,

"For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them." – Isaiah 61:8

As Christians we are to do more than simply wait for future justice, we are to stand for and practice justice now, particularly when it comes to orphans, widows, the poor, the neglected and abused, and those who are being treated unjustly. Let's not only be thankful for the goodness of God, let's determine to be reflections of that goodness. Let's put justice into practice. Who do you need to pray for? Who do you need to stand up for? Who do you need to serve? Allow God's good justice to flow through your life to the world around you.

Isaiah 61:1-11

¹⁻⁷The Spirit of GOD, the Master, is on me
because GOD anointed me.
He sent me to preach good news to the poor,
heal the heartbroken,
Announce freedom to all captives,
pardon all prisoners.
GOD sent me to announce the year of his
grace—
a celebration of God's destruction of our
enemies—
and to comfort all who mourn,
To care for the needs of all who mourn in Zion,
give them bouquets of roses instead of ashes,
Messages of joy instead of news of doom,
a praising heart instead of a languid spirit.
Rename them "Oaks of Righteousness"
planted by GOD to display his glory.
They'll rebuild the old ruins,
raise a new city out of the wreckage.
They'll start over on the ruined cities,
take the rubble left behind and make it new.
You'll hire outsiders to herd your flocks
and foreigners to work your fields,
But you'll have the title "Priests of GOD,"
honored as ministers of our God.
You'll feast on the bounty of nations,

you'll bask in their glory.
Because you got a double dose of trouble
and more than your share of contempt,
Your inheritance in the land will be doubled
and your joy go on forever.
⁸⁻⁹"Because I, GOD, love fair dealing
and hate thievery and crime,
I'll pay your wages on time and in full,
and establish my eternal covenant with you.
Your descendants will become well-known all
over.
Your children in foreign countries
Will be recognized at once
as the people I have blessed."
¹⁰⁻¹¹ I will sing for joy in GOD,
explode in praise from deep in my soul!
He dressed me up in a suit of salvation,
he outfitted me in a robe of righteousness,
As a bridegroom who puts on a tuxedo
and a bride a jeweled tiara.
For as the earth bursts with spring wildflowers,
and as a garden cascades with blossoms,
So the Master, GOD, brings righteousness into
full bloom
and puts praise on display before the nations.

Day 8

Goodness and Thanksgiving

I love Thanksgiving Day! Family, food, football – what could be better? It's a huge celebration for our family, but not just because of all of the traditional festivities. Thanksgiving is special because it's a great reminder of everything we have to be thankful to God for. For a Christ-follower, Thanksgiving is not simply a date on the calendar; it's a lifestyle. The goodness of God is something to celebrate. Honestly, it's something to be in awe of.

Let's face it - we live in a culture of entitlement. It's far too easy for us to slip into a mindset that tells us we deserve all the good things of life and more. A great antidote for a spirit of entitlement is to be intentionally thankful, as the writer of Psalm 118 was.

Read through this Psalm again. This time take note of all the things the Psalmist is thankful for. Can you identify with any of them? Take some time today to simply be in awe of the goodness of God toward you.

Psalms 118:1-29

¹⁻⁴ Thank GOD because he's good,
because his love never quits.
Tell the world, Israel,
"His love never quits."
And you, clan of Aaron, tell the world,
"His love never quits."
And you who fear GOD, join in,
"His love never quits."
⁵⁻¹⁶ Pushed to the wall, I called to GOD;
from the wide open spaces, he answered.
GOD's now at my side and I'm not afraid;
who would dare lay a hand on me?
GOD's my strong champion;
I flick off my enemies like flies.
Far better to take refuge in GOD
than trust in people;
Far better to take refuge in GOD
than trust in celebrities.
Hemmed in by barbarians,
in GOD's name I rubbed their faces in the dirt;
Hemmed in and with no way out,
in GOD's name I rubbed their faces in the dirt;
Like swarming bees, like wild prairie fire, they
hemmed me in;
in GOD's name I rubbed their faces in the dirt.
I was right on the cliff-edge, ready to fall,
when GOD grabbed and held me.
GOD's my strength, he's also my song,
and now he's my salvation.
Hear the shouts, hear the triumph songs
in the camp of the saved?

"The hand of GOD has turned the tide!
The hand of GOD is raised in victory!
The hand of GOD has turned the tide!"
¹⁷⁻²⁰ I didn't die. I *lived!*
And now I'm telling the world what GOD did.
GOD tested me, he pushed me hard,
but he didn't hand me over to Death.
Swing wide the city gates—the *righteous* gates!
I'll walk right through and thank GOD!
This Temple Gate belongs to GOD,
so the victors can enter and praise.
²¹⁻²⁵ Thank you for responding to me;
you've truly become my salvation!
The stone the masons discarded as flawed
is now the capstone!
This is GOD's work.
We rub our eyes—we can hardly believe it!
This is the very day GOD acted—
let's celebrate and be festive!
Salvation now, GOD. Salvation now!
Oh yes, GOD—a free and full life!
²⁶⁻²⁹ Blessed are you who enter in GOD's name—
from GOD's house we bless you!
GOD is God,
he has bathed us in light.
Festoon the shrine with garlands,
hang colored banners above the altar!
You're my God, and I thank you.
O my God, I lift high your praise.
Thank GOD—he's so good.
His love never quits!

Day 9

Goodness and Adoption

In looking for a word to aptly describe God's goodness toward us in adopting us as His children, John employs the word "lavished". As a verb, lavish means to "bestow something in generous or extravagant quantities on." What a great description of God's goodness – "generous" and "extravagant". The goodness of God is plentiful. It abounds. Don't think trickling stream; think roaring river. In truth, there is no limit to God's goodness and love.

Our human experience tells us that goodness is carefully meted out as a reward for our good behavior. In God's economy, however, the process is reversed. Knowing and experiencing God's great unconditional love toward us is what leads us to desire to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Take a few minutes to meditate on this scripture. Think deeply about the goodness of God toward you. Allow the river of His love and kindness to flow over you and thank Him for His undeserved favor.

1 John 3:1-3

What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognize us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to.

²⁻³ But friends, that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him—and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own.

Day 10

One of the beautiful word pictures the Bible employs to express the heart of God for His people is the picture of a good shepherd, lovingly caring for His sheep. Jesus uses that picture here of himself. In contrast to the devil - a thief who steals, destroys, and kills - Jesus, the good shepherd, comes to give life – a full life.

In John 10, Jesus gives some specific examples of His shepherd's heart for the sheep.

- He knows the sheep personally and is known by them.
- He stays with them in the face of the attacking wolf.
- He calls His sheep by name.
- He lays down His life for the sheep.

What a good shepherd Jesus is! There is nothing He wouldn't do for us. The entire purpose of Him being born into this world and dying on the cross was to save us from ourselves. He loves us that much! We can trust in His goodness. He is the good shepherd that is always leading, always guiding, always caring, and always guarding.

John 10:7-18

⁶⁻¹⁰ Jesus told this simple story, but they had no idea what he was talking about. So he tried again. "I'll be explicit, then. I am the Gate for the sheep. All those others are up to no good—sheep stealers, every one of them. But the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture. A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

¹¹⁻¹³ "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary. A hired man is not a real shepherd. The sheep mean nothing to him. He sees a wolf come and runs for it, leaving the sheep to be ravaged and scattered by the wolf. He's only in it for the money. The sheep don't matter to him.

¹⁴⁻¹⁸ "I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own sheep and my own sheep know me. In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father. I put the sheep before myself, sacrificing myself if necessary. You need to know that I have other sheep in addition to those in this pen. I need to gather and bring them, too. They'll also recognize my voice. Then it will be one flock, one Shepherd. This is why the Father loves me: because I freely lay down my life. And so I am free to take it up again. No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own free will. I have the right to lay it down; I also have the right to take it up again. I received this authority personally from my Father."

Day 11

All The Time

Most of us can manage to be good, at least for a while. Unlike us, God is always good. God never changes. We learn in the book of Hebrews that Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” God’s character is unwavering and unchanging. He is the epitome of consistent. God is uber-faithful!

In His goodness, God never fails. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, who understood full well what it was like to suffer for being a Christian,

“I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” – Romans 8:38-39

To sum it all up, God is unwaveringly committed to His children and nothing can change that. Life changes. People change. Our circumstances change. We even change. But one thing that will never change is God’s love toward us. His goodness and love are as certain as the rising of the sun.

I encourage you, today, to take everything that may be coming against you and lay that at the feet of Jesus. Trust Him with every problem and thank Him for His consistent, unfailing goodness.

Romans 8:18-39

¹⁸⁻²¹ That’s why I don’t think there’s any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what’s coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens.

²²⁻²⁵ All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it’s not only around us; it’s *within* us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We’re also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don’t see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

²⁶⁻²⁸ Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God’s Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don’t know how or what to pray, it doesn’t matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That’s why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

²⁹⁻³⁰ God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.

³¹⁻³⁹ So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn’t hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn’t gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with

21 Days of God's Goodness

God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.

We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

Day 12

Good, Good Father

Being confident of the goodness of God is essential to praying prayers of faith. For many, the image of God as a good Father is difficult to believe. For those who have had an earthly father who was detached or absent or even abusive, the goodness of God may be hard to accept. Jesus however, who knows the Father intimately, always spoke of God as a good Father. Our Heavenly Father is not abusive or absent or even inattentive. In fact, Jesus taught us that our Heavenly Father is perfect in every way. Imagine the most perfect father you could ever hope for and that's what God is, only better.

How would being confident in the goodness of God change the way you pray?

If we see God as uncaring or unconcerned, we will pray weak prayers that are tainted by an unbiblical image of God. When we see God as good, we will pray with sincere confidence and faith, believing that we are praying to a good Father; a Father who is interested, a Father who is caring, a Father who is on our side.

Matthew 7:7-11

⁷⁻¹¹ "Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This isn't a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in. If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So don't you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better?"

Day 13

Goodness and Trust

Even as God's dearly loved children, we will all go through times of difficulty and hardship in this life. In the first four verses of Psalm 13, David is pouring out his heart and being painfully honest about the hardships he had been experiencing. Evidently, things had been pretty tough. David is to the point where he's even wondering if God had forgotten him. He's wrestling with his thoughts and his heart is filled with sorrow. To add insult to injury, his enemies are gloating over him and celebrating the possibility of his demise.

Then, in verse 5, the entire tone of the Psalm changes as David declares "I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation." David is making a faith declaration that, no matter how things may appear or even how he feels, he is choosing to put his trust in the goodness of God.

When we experience difficulties and trials, we need to keep coming back to what we know to be true about God. Experiences can be discouraging. Feelings can be deceiving. So we keep coming back to the truth of God's word and what we know to be true about the character of God. David declares, by faith, "I trust in your unfailing love," and "He has been good to me".

What faith declaration do you need to make today? What truth about God's character do you need to stand on? We may not always understand why we're going through the difficulties we're facing, but we can always know that God is good and will always work things out for our good.

Psalms 13:1-6

¹⁻² Long enough, GOD—

you've ignored me long enough.
I've looked at the back of your head
long enough. Long enough
I've carried this ton of trouble,
lived with a stomach full of pain.
Long enough my arrogant enemies
have looked down their noses at me.

³⁻⁴ Take a good look at me, GOD, my God;

I want to look life in the eye,
So no enemy can get the best of me
or laugh when I fall on my face.

⁵⁻⁶ I've thrown myself headlong into your arms—

I'm celebrating your rescue.
I'm singing at the top of my lungs,
I'm so full of answered prayers.

Romans 8:28

²⁶⁻²⁸ Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

Day 14

The Power of Praise

Let's mine another gem from the Psalm that we read yesterday. As we saw in the first four verses of Psalm 13, David is pouring out his heart and being painfully honest about the hardships he had been experiencing. Evidently, things had been pretty tough. David is to the point where he's even wondering if God had forgotten him. He's wrestling with his thoughts and his heart is filled with sorrow. And to add insult to injury, his enemies are gloating over him and celebrating the possibility of his demise.

Then, in verse 5, the entire tone of the Psalm changes as David declares "I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation." David is making a faith declaration that, no matter how things may appear or even how he feels, he is trusting in the goodness of God. But then notice what he does next. He continues in verse 6, "I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me."

David is making a choice to rejoice.

We all love those times in life when rejoicing comes naturally – celebrating a win, conquering that mountain, experiencing a great blessing. We can and should celebrate all the good things that come our way, but it shouldn't stop there. Sometimes we celebrate by faith. When rejoicing doesn't come naturally, it needs to come supernaturally. Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians, "Rejoice in the Lord always!"

I encourage you to pause right now. Think of something you can celebrate, and make a choice to rejoice.

Psalm 13:1-6

¹⁻² Long enough, GOD—

you've ignored me long enough.

I've looked at the back of your head

long enough. Long enough

I've carried this ton of trouble,

lived with a stomach full of pain.

Long enough my arrogant enemies

have looked down their noses at me.

³⁻⁴ Take a good look at me, GOD, my God;

I want to look life in the eye,

So no enemy can get the best of me

or laugh when I fall on my face.

⁵⁻⁶ I've thrown myself headlong into your arms—

I'm celebrating your rescue.

I'm singing at the top of my lungs,

I'm so full of answered prayers.

Day 15

Goodness and Righteousness

An important aspect of the goodness of God is His righteousness. Some mistakenly equate God's kindness for permissiveness. Nothing could be further from the truth. God's goodness is expressed in His kindness towards us, but it is also expressed in His demand for righteousness. David writes in Psalm 25,

"Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant." - Psalm 25:7-10

David's perspective was that God's goodness causes Him to give loving guidance. Just as a loving father guides and corrects, our Heavenly Father gives His children guidance and correction. In God's great love toward us He leads us toward holiness and righteousness because He knows that sinful behavior is destructive behavior.

With this scripture in mind, let's go to the Lord in prayer right now. Ask God if there is anything He wants you to repent of and make right. God is good and righteous and compassionate. Trust Him to love you through your failures and allow His goodness to guide you into His righteousness and holiness.

Psalm 25:1-22

¹⁻² My head is high, GOD, held high;
I'm looking to you, GOD;
No hangdog skulking for me.

³ I've thrown in my lot with you;
You won't embarrass me, will you?
Or let my enemies get the best of me?

Don't embarrass any of us
Who went out on a limb for you.
It's the traitors who should be humiliated.

⁴ Show me how you work, GOD;
School me in your ways.

⁵ Take me by the hand;
Lead me down the path of truth.
You are my Savior, aren't you?

⁶ Mark the milestones of your mercy and
love, GOD;
Rebuild the ancient landmarks!

⁷ Forget that I sowed wild oats;
Mark me with your sign of love.
Plan only the best for me, GOD!

⁸ GOD is fair and just;
He corrects the misdirected,
Sends them in the right direction.

⁹ He gives the rejects his hand,
And leads them step-by-step.

¹⁰ From now on every road you travel
Will take you to GOD.
Follow the Covenant signs;
Read the charted directions.

¹¹ Keep up your reputation, GOD;
Forgive my bad life;
It's been a very bad life.

¹² My question: What are God-worshippers like?
Your answer: Arrows aimed at God's bull's-eye.

¹³ They settle down in a promising place;
Their kids inherit a prosperous farm.

¹⁴ God-friendship is for God-worshippers;
They are the ones he confides in.

¹⁵ If I keep my eyes on GOD,
I won't trip over my own feet.

¹⁶ Look at me and help me!
I'm all alone and in big trouble.

21 Days of God's Goodness

¹⁷ My heart and kidneys are fighting each other;
Call a truce to this civil war.

¹⁸ Take a hard look at my life of hard labor,
Then lift this ton of sin.

¹⁹ Do you see how many people
Have it in for me?
How viciously they hate me?

²⁰ Keep watch over me and keep me out of
trouble;
Don't let me down when I run to you.

²¹ Use all your skill to put me together;
I wait to see your finished product.

²² GOD, give your people a break
From this run of bad luck.

Day 16

Goodness and Peace

It's so easy for us to focus on what's wrong in our lives and forget all the good things that God has done for us. It's human nature to allow our minds to gravitate toward negativity and this weakness in our approach to life is a sure formula for increased stress, anxiety, and fear.

A great biblical and healthy practice is to consciously remind ourselves how blessed we are and how good God is. Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" Now, Paul was not advocating for some Pollyanna, "pie in the sky" trip into the world of Neverland. In his letters, Paul was very forthright about the challenges he faced personally. What Paul is advocating for is the powerful choice that followers of Jesus can make to rejoice in the goodness of God, even when our circumstances don't seem to warrant it.

Paul further writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." The antidote for anxiety is prayer; specifically, prayer that includes giving thanks. It just makes sense that as we remind ourselves of how good God has been to us, we realize we have no reason to fear.

Don't try to carry what you were never meant to carry. I invite you to take all of those burdens and fears that have been weighing you down and place them at the feet of Jesus. Leave them there. His shoulders are big enough and strong enough to carry them for you. It's actually something He loves doing for His children.

Philippians 4:4-8

⁴⁻⁵ Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, *revel* in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

⁶⁻⁷ Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

⁸⁻⁹ Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

Day 17

Goodness and Generosity

One of the expressions of God's goodness is His commitment to being our provider. Throughout scripture we find God being a willing provider for the needs of His people.

The expected response to God's generous provision is that we will, in turn, express thankfulness and be generous also. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul paints a beautiful picture of the flow of God's generosity. The flow looks like this:

- God provides.
- We respond by being generous.
- God provides even more.
- We respond by being even more generous.

In this way we don't hoard the goodness of God for ourselves; we share the goodness of God generously and joyfully. Now this scripture is referring specifically to finances, but there are many other ways that God has been generous with us and we can be generous with others – forgiveness, kindness, grace – to name just a few.

How can your life more completely reflect the goodness of God? Ask the Lord to show you some ways you can become a more generous person.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

⁶⁻⁷ Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving.

⁸⁻¹¹ God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done. As one psalmist puts it,

He throws caution to the winds,
giving to the needy in reckless abandon.
His right-living, right-giving ways
never run out, never wear out.

This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.

¹²⁻¹⁵ Carrying out this social relief work involves far more than helping meet the bare needs of poor Christians. It also produces abundant and bountiful thanksgivings to God. This relief offering is a prod to live at your very best, showing your gratitude to God by being openly obedient to the plain meaning of the Message of Christ. You show your gratitude through your generous offerings to your needy brothers and sisters, and really toward everyone. Meanwhile, moved by the extravagance of God in your lives, they'll respond by praying for you in passionate intercession for whatever you need. Thank God for this gift, his gift. No language can praise it enough!

Day 18

God is Good, Even When Life is Hard

Many years earlier, Joseph's brothers, being full of jealousy and spite, sold him to a gang of slave traders. Joseph was enslaved in Egypt for a good part of his life, including a period of time when he was falsely accused and imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit.

In time, God delivered Joseph from prison and sovereignly promoted him to a position of power, wealth, and honor. Through it all, Joseph was able to maintain his faith, trusting in the purposes of God and believing in the goodness of God. He was able to forgive his brothers and declare to them, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." – Genesis 50:20

When faced with the difficult trials of life, it is our firm belief in the goodness of God that will keep us grounded and encouraged. We may not like or even understand the circumstances that we find ourselves in, but as we confess the goodness of God our faith will endure and we will come through every fiery trial.

Genesis 45:1-28

¹⁻² Joseph couldn't hold himself in any longer, keeping up a front before all his attendants. He cried out, "Leave! Clear out—everyone leave!" So there was no one with Joseph when he identified himself to his brothers. But his sobbing was so violent that the Egyptians couldn't help but hear him. The news was soon reported to Pharaoh's palace.

³ Joseph spoke to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Is my father really still alive?" But his brothers couldn't say a word. They were speechless—they couldn't believe what they were hearing and seeing.

⁴⁻⁸ "Come closer to me," Joseph said to his brothers. They came closer. "I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. But don't feel badly, don't blame yourselves for selling me. God was behind it. God sent me here ahead of you to save lives. There has been a famine in the land now for two years; the famine will continue for five more years—neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me on ahead to pave the way and make sure there was a remnant in the land, to save your lives in an amazing act of deliverance. So you see, it wasn't you who sent me here but God. He set me in place as a father to Pharaoh, put me in charge of his personal affairs, and made me ruler of all Egypt.

⁹⁻¹¹ "Hurry back to my father. Tell him, 'Your son Joseph says: I'm master of all of Egypt. Come as fast as you can and join me here. I'll give you a place to live in Goshen where you'll be close to me—you, your children, your grandchildren, your flocks, your herds, and anything else you can think of. I'll take care of you there completely. There are still five more years of famine ahead; I'll make sure all your needs are taken care of, you and everyone connected with you—you won't want for a thing.'

¹²⁻¹³ "Look at me. You can see for yourselves, and my brother Benjamin can see for himself, that it's me, my own mouth, telling you all this. Tell my father all about the high position I hold in Egypt, tell him everything you've seen here, but don't take all day—hurry up and get my father down here."

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Then Joseph threw himself on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. He then kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Only then were his brothers able to talk with him.

¹⁶ The story was reported in Pharaoh's palace: "Joseph's brothers have come." It was good news to Pharaoh and all who worked with him.

21 Days of God's Goodness

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'This is the plan: Load up your pack animals; go to Canaan, get your father and your families and bring them back here. I'll settle you on the best land in Egypt—you'll live off the fat of the land.'

¹⁹⁻²⁰ "Also tell them this: 'Here's what I want you to do: Take wagons from Egypt to carry your little ones and your wives and load up your father and come back. Don't worry about having to leave things behind; the best in all of Egypt will be yours.'"

²¹⁻²³ And they did just that, the sons of Israel. Joseph gave them the wagons that Pharaoh had promised and food for the trip. He outfitted all the brothers in brand-new clothes, but he gave Benjamin three hundred pieces of silver and several suits of clothes. He sent his father these gifts: ten donkeys loaded with Egypt's best products and another ten donkeys loaded with grain and bread, provisions for his father's journey back.

²⁴ Then he sent his brothers off. As they left he told them, "Take it easy on the journey; try to get along with each other."

²⁵⁻²⁸ They left Egypt and went back to their father Jacob in Canaan. When they told him, "Joseph is still alive—and he's the ruler over the whole land of Egypt!" he went numb; he couldn't believe his ears. But the more they talked, telling him everything that Joseph had told them and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him back, the blood started to flow again—their father Jacob's spirit revived. Israel said, "I've heard enough—my son Joseph is still alive. I've got to go and see him before I die."

Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ After burying his father, Joseph went back to Egypt. All his brothers who had come with him to bury his father returned with him. After the funeral, Joseph's brothers talked among themselves: "What if Joseph is carrying a grudge and decides to pay us back for all the wrong we did him?"

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ So they sent Joseph a message, "Before his death, your father gave this command: Tell Joseph, 'Forgive your brothers' sin—all that wrongdoing. They did treat you very badly.' Will you do it? Will you forgive the sins of the servants of your father's God?"

When Joseph received their message, he wept.

¹⁸ Then the brothers went in person to him, threw themselves on the ground before him and said, "We'll be your slaves."

¹⁹⁻²¹ Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid. Do I act for God? Don't you see, you planned evil against me but God used those same plans for my good, as you see all around you right now—life for many people. Easy now, you have nothing to fear; I'll take care of you and your children." He reassured them, speaking with them heart-to-heart.

Day 19

God's Goodness, Our Contentment

When we are fully convinced in our hearts that God is good, fear is replaced by peace and anxiety is replaced by contentment.

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’

So we say with confidence,

‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.’” - Hebrews 13:5-6

Because God is good, we can trust that He will be attentive and faithful. All our striving is halted in the restful knowledge of His kindness. Read this scripture through a few times, giving thoughtful consideration to what it is saying about who God is and what peace we can take from that.

Are there any fears you need to let go of? Anxious thoughts you need to release? Imagine your worries, fears, and anxious thoughts being carried up and away on the promises of God's word. Allow these precious promises to guard your heart and mind today.

Hebrews 13:5-6

⁵⁻⁶ Don't be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have. Since God assured us, “I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you,” we can boldly quote,

God is there, ready to help;
I'm fearless no matter what.
Who or what can get to me?

Day 20

The Goodness of God's Presence

I was recently asked, "Tim, if you could do anything, what would you do?" My response was, "Climb Mt. Everest." Now, at this point, I'm tempted to say that ship has sailed, but to be honest I don't think that ship was ever really in the water. But the fact remains, every photo I've ever seen of Mt. Everest and every movie I've ever watched of people ascending its face has absolutely inspired and enthralled me. To me, there would be no more exciting place to be standing than at the top of the world.

Well, actually, I can think of one place that I am even more drawn to – the presence of God. Wherever that is – that's where I want to be. There is a deep longing within the human heart for the presence of God. The author of Psalm 84 felt that same desire. Verse 2 expresses this deep longing,

"My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God."

The good news for us is that we don't need to travel to a temple somewhere to enjoy God's presence. He has given us His Holy Spirit. We can enjoy His good presence wherever we are, whenever we want. Take time today to let your soul rest in the presence of our good, good God.

Psalm 84:1-12

¹⁻² What a beautiful home, GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies!

I've always longed to live in a place like this,
Always dreamed of a room in your house,
where I could sing for joy to God-alive!

³⁻⁴ Birds find nooks and crannies in your house,
sparrows and swallows make nests there.
They lay their eggs and raise their young,
singing their songs in the place where we worship.
GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies! King! God!
How blessed they are to live and sing there!

⁵⁻⁷ And how blessed all those in whom you live,
whose lives become roads you travel;
They wind through lonesome valleys, come upon brooks,
discover cool springs and pools brimming with rain!
God-traveled, these roads curve up the mountain, and
at the last turn—Zion! God in full view!

⁸⁻⁹ GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies, listen:
O God of Jacob, open your ears—I'm praying!
Look at our shields, glistening in the sun,
our faces, shining with your gracious anointing.

¹⁰⁻¹² One day spent in your house, this beautiful place of worship,
beats thousands spent on Greek island beaches.

21 Days of God's Goodness

I'd rather scrub floors in the house of my God
than be honored as a guest in the palace of sin.
All sunshine and sovereign is GOD,
generous in gifts and glory.
He doesn't scrimp with his traveling companions.
It's smooth sailing all the way with GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies.

Day 21

God's Loving Guidance

"Teach me to do your will,

for you are my God;

may your good Spirit

lead me on level ground." – Psalm 143:10

There are a myriad of voices and views beckoning for our attention and allegiance. Listening to the wrong voice, following the wrong lead can result in disastrous consequences. As a pastor, it always breaks my heart to see people suffering needless pain due to the poor choices they have made.

In God's goodness, His desire is to guide us along paths that lead to life and blessing. Trusting in the perfect goodness of God will give us confidence to follow His lead, even when we don't fully understand His guidance.

In his book, *Knowing God*, J.I Packer writes, "Guidance, like all God's acts of blessing under the covenant of grace, is a sovereign act. Not merely does God will to guide us in the sense of showing us his way, that we may tread it; he wills also to guide us in the more fundamental sense of ensuring that, whatever happens, whatever mistakes we may make, we shall come safely home. Slippings and strayings there will be, no doubt, but the everlasting arms are beneath us; we shall be caught, rescued, restored. This is God's promise; this is how good he is."

As we bring our study to a close, I encourage you to continue to pursue God with all your heart. He really is good and He really does want good things for His children.

Psalm 143:1-12

¹⁻² Listen to this prayer of mine, GOD;
pay attention to what I'm asking.

Answer me—you're famous for your answers!

Do what's right for me.

But don't, please don't, haul me into court;
not a person alive would be acquitted there.

³⁻⁶ The enemy hunted me down;
he kicked me and stomped me within an inch of my life.

He put me in a black hole,
buried me like a corpse in that dungeon.

I sat there in despair, my spirit draining away,
my heart heavy, like lead.

I remembered the old days,
went over all you've done, pondered the ways you've worked,

Stretched out my hands to you,
as thirsty for you as a desert thirsty for rain.

⁷⁻¹⁰ Hurry with your answer, GOD!

I'm nearly at the end of my rope.

Don't turn away; don't ignore me!

That would be certain death.

21 Days of God's Goodness

If you wake me each morning with the sound of your loving voice,
I'll go to sleep each night trusting in you.
Point out the road I must travel;
I'm all ears, all eyes before you.
Save me from my enemies, GOD—
you're my only hope!
Teach me how to live to please you,
because you're my God.
Lead me by your blessed Spirit
into cleared and level pastureland.

¹¹⁻¹² Keep up your reputation, God—give me life!
In your justice, get me out of this trouble!
In your great love, vanquish my enemies;
make a clean sweep of those who harass me.
And why? Because I'm your servant.