

You, Good and God
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Ever wonder how much we use the word "good"? When we wake up we are greeted by "Good Morning". We kiss our spouses as we leave for work and one of us says, "Have a good day". Then as we approach the interstate we say, "Oh good gosh". Entering the office building we pass our acquaintances with a nod of the head as we say, "Good day". As we weave ourselves through the endless office cubicles we are patted on the back and hear, "Good job on that Johnson account". The administrative assistant says, "The president wants to see you in his office" and we think, "Uh oh, that can't be good". You head pass the break room and smell the coffee. Your response is "Mmm, that smells good," and it's not even 9 am. As we start our work day and greet our associates with the usual "Good to see you." We end even more telephone conversations with "Good bye."

After lunch you are going to say "Good Afternoon" a dozen times. You will say a couple of "Good evenings" and when you kiss your loved ones at bedtime you will say with affection "Good night". But that is only after you have said "Those were good grades." "It's a good thing you remembered..." "It was good of you to..." "Now you be a good little girl." "Good boy son." "Good little doggie." "Boy that sure was some good ice cream". Our lives are saturated by good. The good book. Good cop bad cop. The tree of good and evil. The Good Ship Lollipop. "He's a good guy." "That was a good game." "I'm not feeling so good." "If you know what's good for ya." "Good for you!" "No news is good news." "Remember the good times?" "He's a good friend."

Remember the old saying, "Good, better, best never let it rest, until your good is better and your better is best?" Good is the standard. Good is the beginning. Good is everywhere.

Where is Good?

Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville is often quoted as saying, "America is great because she is good. When she ceases to be good she will cease to be great." When we move into a new neighborhood what is our primary question? "Is this a good neighborhood? Does this neighborhood have good schools? Are there good kids for my kids to play with?" We ask our friends "Do you know of a good restaurant? Do you know a good mechanic? I'm looking for a good employee. Do you know where I can find a good church?"

What is at the core of our motive for asking friends for referrals? We want to know if they are honest and trustworthy. Do they have integrity? So where do we find good? Anywhere we need Honesty. Anywhere we need Integrity. Anywhere we need Trust. Without good, Trust would not exist. Without Trust, Integrity would not exist. If there were no integrity, honesty would cease to exist. Good is more than the bedrock of a great nation. It is the oxygen of humanity.

History

Good is one of the oldest terms in the world. In fact good is older than man! Good is mentioned in the very first paragraph, of the very first chapter in the very first book of the Bible. As you remember the order, it is Heaven, Earth and light and in the 4th verse it says "...and God saw the light, that it was good." The last verse of the first chapter of

Genesis says, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." (1:31) After God made Adam He mentions Good's enemy, evil, by describing the tree of good and evil. And in the 18th verse of the second chapter God says, "It is not good for man to be alone." I guess he was having too much fun. (Just kidding, ladies).

From this we can conclude that the concept of good was God's idea. It was His invention. It was not created one weekend in a motivational speaking engagement. Good is intangible yet everyone is touched by it. Good is to man what Light is to the world.

What Good Is

Good is so much more than simply the opposite of evil. Good is the foundation of faith, the essence of hope, the atom of salvation, the nucleus of belief and the very conception of love. Good is the fabric of life woven to connect man to God. Good is the reason we can live. Good is the fuel that keeps us going. Think about it. Why does a fireman run into a burning building to save a life? To win employee of the month award? For a raise? For a promotion? He risks his life because to save a life isgood. Why does a mother protect her young children in the face of great adversity? To wind up on Oprah? To win a contest? Because she loves her child? Yes, because she loves her child. Why does she love her child? Because it is good. Yes, good trumps evil because good trumps everything. Good is God's gravity to bring glory to Himself. No sonnet in the entire world conveys this message better than Romans 8:28 *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*

Foundation of Faith

The foundation of our faith is that God is good. How can it not be? I used to think that since God is all powerful and He controls everything that when things went wrong in my life He was punishing me because He had the power to stop my pain but chose not to. That was stupid. God is not good when things go well in my life and bad when things go rotten in my life. My circumstances do not determine God's Goodness. I did not believe in God's complete goodness. Sure things might go wrong in my life but it may be for the greater good. Not just my good but the better good of everyone. It is that faith of goodness that I need to have. Not the faith that He's my private genie in a bottle of wishful thinking.

Essence of Hope

Hope is pretty lame without the assurance of God's goodness. If we doubt God's goodness, how can our Hope be based on anything solid? If we allow a sliver of doubt to cloud our minds with the thought that God can be anything but good, we are no better off than the agnostic. We might as well say to ourselves: "Well things may work out if there is a god out there and he's not in a bad mood today."

The Atom of Salvation

Recently I was visiting a Sunday school class in a large denominational church. The topic of Salvation came up and there was mass confusion. "Can you lose your salvation?" "Are we the children of God or not?" That was the question. Their answer: "Well, if we behave and follow His commandments we are His. If we rebel we are not." Makes sense if you believe in a God that bases His love and promises on our goodness and faithfulness. But what kind of world would we be living in if our God was that wishy-washy? If good was based on our action?

The atom of our temporal and eternal salvation is that God is good.

The Nucleus of Belief

Would you walk across a gorge on a bridge that someone said was good some of the time? Would you go into a jungle with a gun that was good some of the time? Would you trust a gas gauge that was right part of the time? Then how can you benefit from belief if you doubt God's goodness? When do you need belief? Not when things are going well! It's in the face of adversity when you need to call on belief. And what is the catalyst of that belief? Goodness.

The Very Conception of Love

The difference between love and lust is centered on the giver. If we give to get, we are selfish and manipulative. But if we give what we have been given we are sharing. And if we share what God has given we reflect His glory to the recipients. Secular society would call this "One good turn deserves another". The bible says, *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."* John 15:13

A Picture of Good

Picture yourself in a beautiful garden. You are walking on fine soft green grass along a bubbling brook. You can smell the light mist of lilacs in the air. You faintly hear the chirping of birds singing their souls out in the trees. There is a cool breeze like the oxygen filled air right before a rain. The skies fill your eyes with great diverging colors. Bright, bright blues contrasted by giant puffs of white and on the horizon the most stunning burnt orange against the backdrop kaleidoscope of an amazingly radiant spectrum of colors. You take an inventory of your emotions and all are in top form. Excitement is high. Energy is high. Confidence is high. Self esteem is stellar. Your senses are exploding from the sheer majesty of creation. You are in love with life. Life is good. Then you see God come out around a bush and with a sheepish grin he asks, "So, how is it going?" Your heart begins to pound as you realize that the creator and originator of everything good is admiring you and taking pleasure in your pleasure. And right then and there you realize it's you, good, and God. It's you, good, and God. You, good, and God. You keep repeating it in your head. You simply can't believe it's true. You, good, and God. This is what I believe happened in the Garden of Eden. Adam, good and God. Man was never designed to deal with anything other than good. Then the fall came. It changed man. It changed creation. Good did not change. God did not change, but man did. He had to deal with bad. Even though bad entered the world it is no match for good. Good will always triumph. Now thousands of years later it is still the same: You, good, and God.