

# Worshipping a Good God

Psalm 52:1

## God's Goodness Is Seen in His P\_\_\_\_\_ for All of Our Needs

Psalm 145 is a classic passage on the goodness of God seen in His provision for our needs. Verses 6–7 say,

Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,  
And I will declare Your greatness.  
They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,  
And shall sing of Your righteousness.

And verses 14–16 declare,

The Lord upholds all who fall,  
And raises up all who are bowed down.  
The eyes of all look expectantly to You,  
And You give them their food in due season.  
You open Your hand  
And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Psalm 136:25 says that God “gives food to all flesh, for His mercy endures forever.” And Psalm 33:5 speaks summarily by saying, “The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” Think about the abundantly generous way in which God has exercised His goodness toward us in the earth. He could have provided a manna-like substance to meet our nutritional needs. Instead, He filled the earth with a variety of foods that are a delight to behold as well as to consume. God's creativity in meeting our needs is a hallmark of His generosity.

Think of the creation itself. It could have been fashioned so as to be consistent from one coast to the other, or from one continent to another. But instead, there is great variety in the handiwork and provision of God. We can actually choose the kind of geography in which we would like to live, so abundant are the different environments. It is a shame that we don't take the opportunity to fulfill the words of Psalm 34:8: “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.” Many of us live in or near areas of absolute beauty and grandeur that we rarely sample. We would get an incredible taste of the goodness of God in creation if we would move a little beyond our daily routines and sample what God has provided. The flowers, the scenery, the animal life, the acres of crops growing and waving in the wind—the evidence of God's goodness is everywhere we turn.

## God's Goodness Is Seen in His P\_\_\_\_\_ with Us

God's patience is mentioned in the context of His goodness probably more than any other attribute. The psalms look at the patience of God in terms of His mercy. Grace is getting something we don't deserve, and mercy is not getting something we do deserve. If we are not judged for our sins (judgment being what we deserve), it is because of God's mercy.

Psalm 107:1 says, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For his mercy endures forever.” And Psalm 100:5 says, “His mercy is everlasting.” So God is patient with us in that He does not give us what we deserve. Every person

David Jeremiah, *Knowing the God You Worship: Study Guide* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004).

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alive in this world should be praising and thanking God daily for His mercy. When I hear Christians talking about getting what is “rightfully theirs,” I am reminded of how thankful I am that God doesn’t give us what is rightfully ours.

Psalm 107:8–9 contains a refrain that is echoed throughout the psalm about the goodness of God:

Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness,  
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!  
For He satisfies the longing soul,  
And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

The phrase, “Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men,” is repeated in verses 15, 21, and 31. Over and over in this psalm is the message that God has dealt with us according to mercy. If you and I had been God, as far back as the Garden of Eden, we would not have been nearly so patient with our own sins as God has been. But God forgave us generously. He didn’t forgive with restrictions on our happiness; He forgave and gives us joy and freedom as if we had never sinned at all. We enjoy great extravagance and blessing from the hand of God, and yet still find time and reason to complain about His treatment of us.

Without hesitation or reservation that God is good. He provides for us, gives us every good thing we need, and is patient with us when we fail. We have no right to expect anything more than what God has given us.

Some people wonder why God blesses everyone—the good and bad alike. Here’s a simple way to remember how God dispenses His goodness: He gives some of His goodness to all the people, and all of His goodness to some of the people, while none of the people deserve any of His goodness. You will live a life angry at God because you don’t think you’re getting what you deserve out of life if you don’t remember God’s mercy—that you are not getting what you actually deserve. God really is a good God.

## God’s Goodness Is Seen in the Way He P\_\_\_\_\_ Us

Each of us has had some similar circumstance in life where we have been protected from harm by God’s grace. The psalmist, David, had apparently the same thought when he wrote, “I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living” (Psalm 27:13). The whole psalm is about God’s protection from fear and enemies and the dangers of war. In the opening verse he wrote, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

Anyone who doesn’t believe in the protective goodness of God thinks that way because they don’t know what they don’t know. If we could see behind the scenes all the times when God has protected us from harm, we would think differently. The children of Israel complained loudly when Moses led them through the wilderness of Sinai to get to the promised land. What they didn’t know was that God had spared them from a crushing defeat at the hands of the Philistines by taking the route they did (Exodus 13:17–18).

The next time you’re stuck in traffic or take a wrong turn, before you complain, stop and remember God’s goodness. Your delay might be just an exercise in patience-building, or it might have been God’s way of protecting you from something far worse.

## God's Goodness Is Seen in the Path \_\_\_\_\_ He Chooses for Us

Sometimes we get the mistaken idea that if God were really good, He wouldn't shackle us with restrictions and limitations on our lives. For example, we read in [Matthew 7:13–14](#), "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Rather than being a limitation on our lives, the path God has chosen for our lives is a demonstration of His goodness toward us. There are four sets of contrasts in [Matthew 7:13–14](#): two gates (wide and narrow), two ways (broad and difficult), two groups of people (many on one road and few on the other), and two destinations (destruction and life). If you were a non-Christian looking at the two options ahead of you, which would you choose? No doubt you would choose the broad way and the wide gate, right?

It's the last of the four sets of contrasts that puts the choices in perspective. If you're going through the wide gate on the broad way surrounded by a huge crowd of people, you think you're doing the right thing until you realize that the way you're on leads to destruction. And if you choose the narrow gate on the difficult way and you look around and there aren't many people with you, you are going to think you made a serious mistake—until you realize the difficult way leads to life.

In preaching on this passage, Pastor Bill Hybels called his message "Narrow Gate Theology." He says it sounds discriminating, politically incorrect, and un-American to talk about taking the minority view. Don't we believe in "majority rule?" We can thank God that Jesus did not fall into the "majority rule" trap. He would never have made it to the Cross if He had taken the broad way and wide gate along with the crowds in Jerusalem.

The broad way is a lifestyle unencumbered by moral guidelines and restrictions. There are no moral stop signs or speed limits to slow you down in your pursuit of pleasure and fulfillment in this life. You're free to pick and choose from whatever makes you feel good along life's way. "The broad way is wild and free and immortal and invincible." Who wouldn't choose the broad way, given the choice? Those who know the difference between life and destruction, that's who.

The narrow way is the difficult way where we are exhorted to "get a life," "live a little," and "color outside the lines once in a while." We are viewed as backward and weird and repressive. We are husbands and wives who stay together for better or for worse; parents who commit themselves to their children instead of chasing the dollar; and families who spend time in church and the community trying to make a difference. The narrow road, to the folks on the broad road, doesn't look like much of a way to live. But it's the only way to live if life, not destruction, is your goal.

Those on the narrow way are like children who, having grown up into successful and fulfilled adults, look back and thank God they had parents who established boundaries for their lives. Out of His heart of goodness, God has put boundaries along the narrow road to make sure those on it reach their destination: life eternal.

God's provision, patience, protection, and path are all evidences of God's goodness manifested in his love for you. If you haven't recently, take a moment to thank God for being so good.

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## APPLICATION

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1. Goodness in the Bible is defined in terms of the goodness of God. What are some distinguishing characteristics of goodness?
  - a. Psalm 34:8
  - b. Psalm 145:6–9, 14–21
  - c. Isaiah 54:1–17
  - d. Matthew 7:11
  - e. Luke 18:19
  
2. Read Psalm 33:5. What beautiful and natural things is the region where you live known for?
  - a. Around the world, what are some different awe-inspiring natural phenomena?
  - b. What different kinds of beauty go with different forms of water?
  - c. Describe the beauty of a waterfall, a river, a lake, an ocean.
  - d. Why do you think God made our world so beautiful?
  
3. The goodness of God is often associated with His mercy. Read the following verses:  
  
2 Chronicles 7:1–3  
  
Psalm 100:4–5  
  
Psalm 106:1  
  
Psalm 118:1–4  
  
Psalm 136:1–26
  - a. What do you personally know of the mercy of God?

4. Have you ever been saved from harm and realized you must have been protected by God? If so, what was the occasion?
- a. Read the following verses:
- Exodus 23:20
- Daniel 6:22
- Matthew 2:13
- Matthew 4:11
- Matthew 18:10
- b. What do you know about angels? Do you believe in them? What do you imagine these guardians and messengers look like?
5. God has chosen a path for us. Read Matthew 7:13–14. Name one aspect of the narrow gate which is difficult for you.
- a. What would most likely be the result if you took the broad way in this issue?
- b. What would most likely be the result if you took the difficult way in this issue?
- c. Read Psalms 52:1–9. According to this psalm, what does the wicked person do in his life?
- d. What are the results?
- e. What does the good person do? What are the results?
6. Think of some older people you know who have taken the narrow gate for most of their lives. What do you see happening as they near the end of their journey?
- a. Think of some older people you know who have taken the broad way. What is their life like in comparison with the people who chose the narrow gate?
- b. Do you believe part of God's goodness is seen in the path He has chosen for you? What is your response to that choice?