

**A Study in James**  
**Part 4 – “God is Good”**  
**James 1:16-18**

TAKE YOUR BIBLES PLEASE...

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (James 1:16-18 ESV).

Words are very important. In our title today I have used the adjective “good” to describe God. Perhaps the place to begin is with an understanding of a definition for the word. One online dictionary describes four basic definitions:

- morally excellent; virtuous; righteous; pious: a good man.
- satisfactory in quality, quantity, or degree: a good teacher; good health.
- of high quality; excellent.
- right; proper; fit: It is good that you are here. His credentials are good.
- well-behaved: a good child.

Certainly we can say that God is morally excellent. He is perfect in that regard. He is the essence of values. We can also say that God is *at least* satisfactory; that is, He is at least good in respect to the superlatives of good, better, and best. God is of high quality. He is after all the creator of all things and made them according to his image and will declaring them good. He must be good. He is right. And, of course he is well-behaved. That which God does is righteous and good. All of these are a given. The question remains then, “Why did James feel it important to make the declaration of God’s goodness?”

I am convinced it is because of the context of trial. It is always easy to recognize the goodness of God when things are going well. It is when they are difficult that we seem to have trouble recognizing His goodness. For his readers it was such a time. **In this truth James declares two great spiritual realities revealing the goodness of God. One involves His works, the other His will.**

**First, the Works of God Are Good.**

*He says, Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (vv. 16-17).*

***All of the good gifts that come into our lives are based in the work of God.*** God is the source of all good. Any goodness that comes into your life, regardless of the apparent giver, is ultimately a work of our God. ***Most of the time I don’t have a problem with that concept; however, James uses another phrase. He says, every perfect gift is from God.*** That makes it a bit more difficult. Corrie Ten Boom, great missionary to china, said:

Often I have heard people say, "How good God is! We prayed that it would not rain for our church picnic, and look at the lovely weather!" Yes, God is good when He sends

good weather. But God was also good when He allowed my sister, Betsie, to starve to death before my eyes in a German concentration camp. I remember one occasion when I was very discouraged there. Everything around us was dark, and there was darkness in my heart. I remember telling Betsie that I thought God had forgotten us. "No, Corrie," said Betsie, "He has not forgotten us. Remember His Word: 'For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.'" Corrie concludes, "There is an ocean of God's love available--there is plenty for everyone. May God grant you never to doubt that victorious love--whatever the circumstances."

It means God is at work constantly doing good things on our behalf.

*James also calls God, this giver of good gifts, the Father of lights.*" This is a reference to the creation of the sun, moon, and stars. All of the lights of the heavens come from him and are maintained by him. These lights in the heavens are constantly doing their works for us, but even they stand in contrast to the good works of God. Even with the Sun there is variation in the length of time it shines each day and it so works that it creates shadows on the earth. But with our God there is no such change. There are never any shadows, nor is there any change. He is always and only good in His works. Anything that is by nature evil that has come into your life must be blamed on someone else. Its roots cannot be found in God. All of his works are good.

## **Second, the Will of God Is Good.**

1. **The goodness of God is also seen in His will toward us.** James says, *Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.* (v. 18). Our redemption, our being born again into God's family is proof of this goodness of God. There can be no doubt that our being born of God originated in the will of God. Just as our physical birth did not originate with us, nor does our spiritual birth. We were born into this world physically by the will and purpose of our earthly mother and father. Just so, we were born spiritually by the will and purpose of our heavenly Father.
2. **God worked out this will through his word of truth.** This is the word of the Gospel that was preached to us and which we believed. It was the seed of life and as such will bring a living harvest.

Let me make a few observations. A.B. Simpson is reported to have said that the gospel...

- Tells rebellious men that God is reconciled...
- That justice is satisfied...
- That sin has been atoned for...
- That the judgment of the guilty may be revoked...
- The condemnation of the sinner cancelled...
- The curse of the Law blotted out...
- The gates of hell closed and the portals of heaven opened wide...
- The power of sin subdued... The guilty conscience healed...
- The broken heart comforted... AND
- The sorrow and misery of the Fall undone.

**I think that qualifies God as GOOD!**