



September 27th, 2015

Turning To God's Goodness

1. Reject the FALSE NARRATIVE:

THE GOD OF THE WOODSHED

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me – Exodus 20:5 ESV

2. Embrace the JESUS NARRATIVE:

GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME

- JESUS STORY #1: *Luke 13:1-5*
- JESUS STORY #2: *John 9:1-5*

The Goodness of God from A-G

A. GOD IS THE STANDARD OF GOODNESS

No one is good except God alone. – Luke 18:19 (see also, Jeremiah 9:24)

B. GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL GOODNESS

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. – James 1:17

C. GOD CREATED ALL THINGS GOOD

Everything created by God is good! – 1 Timothy 4:4 (see also, Genesis 1:4, 31)

D. GOD IS GOOD TO GOOD & BAD ALIKE

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. – Matthew 5:44-45 (see also, Luke 6:35; Acts 14:17; Psalm 145:9)

E. GOD WOOUS US BY GOODNESS

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? – Romans 2:4 (see also, Titus 3:4-5)

F. GOD WORKS GOOD OUT OF THE BAD FOR HIS PEOPLE

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. – Romans 8:28 (see also, Genesis 50:20; Psalm 84:11)

A QUOTE WORTH PONDERING

Augustine of Hippo: *We do not know why God's judgment makes a good man poor, and a wicked man rich. . . . Nor why the wicked man enjoys the best of health, whilst the man of religion wastes away in illness. . . . Even then it is not consistent. . . . Good men also have good fortune and evil men find evil fortunes. . . . So though we do not know by what judgment these things are carried out or permitted by God, in whom is the highest virtue and the highest wisdom and the highest justice, and in whom there is no weakness nor rashness nor unfairness, it is none the less beneficial for us to learn not to regard as important the good or evil fortunes which we see shared by good and evil persons alike. Rather we must seek out the good things peculiar to the good, and give the widest berth to the evils peculiar to evil men."*

G. GOD IS THE HEART OF GOODNESS

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! – Psalm 34:8 (see also, Psalm 73:25-26; 16:11; 42:1-2)

THE JESUS WHO BELIEVES IN ME!

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live in my body, I live by faith, indeed, by the faithfulness of God's Son, who loved me and gave himself for me. – Galatians 2:19-20 CEB

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. – John 16:33

I Will Turn To God by...

- Memorizing **Romans 8:28**
- Embracing His over-arching goodness for my life.
- Experiencing the personal presence of Jesus' heart for me.
- Surrendering my life, for the first time, to Christ as my savior.

WALK THE TALK A Growth Group Guide

1. What form of discipline did your parents use on you? Did you feel it was fair or not?
2. Have you ever felt that God was punishing you because of your misbehavior? Or has something bad happened to you and you wondered what you did to deserve it?
3. Why do we need to see who God really is through the eyes of Jesus? And why is the following a false narrative: "God is an angry judge. If you do well, he will bless you and if you sin he will punish you"? Why do you think we always want to assess the sinfulness of others when bad things happen?
4. Of the seven things (The Goodness of God from A-G) about God's goodness, which one or ones help to stir you more positively toward his goodness? Explain.
5. How does Augustine's quote, above, help you see better through the unfairness we find in life? What good have you experienced from doing good to someone else?
6. How does knowing that Jesus believes in you, at a personal level, help you face the setbacks in life?

SOUL TRAINING – SILENCE AND AWARENESS OF CREATION

A Personal Transformation Exercise

The Principle:

What can we do to help us know and experience the goodness of God? What can we do to become more aware of the God Jesus knows? There are two exercises this week aimed at helping us do this. The first involves slowing down, becoming quiet and learning to be present in the present moment. The second entails paying attention to the beauty that surrounds us.

We live in a world that is always moving. For most of us, it is rare that we ever stop to be still. It is because of our fast-paced, and non-stop, society that we need to be intentional about slowing down and being still. “Be still and know that I am God...” (Psalm 46:10)

The Plan:

This week, take time to do two things. The first is to take five minutes each day this week to be silent and still. Find a cup of something delicious, along with a comfy chair, and sit quietly, preferably alone. Here are some tips:

1. Look for, and try to create, small portions of free time in your day. Get up earlier, leave earlier, etc.
2. If you find your mind running, trying to remember things and solving problems, try jotting things down on a notepad as they come, so as to not dwell on them.
3. Try easing into the five minutes of silence by reading the Bible or praying for a minute or two.

The second thing to do this week is to take time to be aware of creation. Creation speaks to the goodness and glory of God through dazzling colors and intoxicating scents. Beautiful sunrises and sunsets happen twice a day and we rarely notice them. This week, spend some time outside. Take a note pad or blank piece of paper and either jot down or draw what you see. Doing this will help you focus on the details of what you are seeing. Avoid the temptation to take pictures or involve technology that would cause distraction and/or sharing what you are doing on social media. Let this time be between you, God, and creation.