



## GOODNESS AND MERCY FOLLOW ME.

“SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME  
ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE...”

**PSALM 23:6a**

### **BIG IDEA:**

Because my Shepherd pursues me with goodness and mercy,  
I have confidence for all the days of my life.

### OBSERVATIONS ON PSALM 23:

**1.** God’s goodness and mercy are the basis for our confidence.

**Surely** – This word drips with a feeling of *confidence*.

**Q:** What is his confidence rooted in?

**A:** God’s goodness and mercy.

**Goodness** and **mercy** – Two qualities of love that emanate from the Shepherd and distinguish his care for us.  
→ Goodness and mercy, though distinct qualities, are linked, and should not be separated.

**Goodness** - (Hebrew- love) means excellent, exceedingly valuable, what is most beneficial, best of the best, of highest moral good.”

“Goodness is in accordance with God’s nature. As it is in the nature of water to be wet or fire to be hot, it is the nature of God to be good... Not only *is* God good; he *does* good. The psalmist links the two when he writes, “Thou art good and doest good” (Ps 119:68).”<sup>1</sup> – **Leland Ryken**

→ His acts in Creation and the reflections we see.

→ His acts toward us, his people.

**Mercy** – steadfast love... God’s unfailing, unrelenting, covenant love toward us, his people.

**Exodus 34:6-7** – “The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty...”

**Deuteronomy 7:9** – “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.”

While God shows his goodness in creation (Gen. 1), most often it is that faithfulness shown in the covenant:

- redemption from Egypt and care in the wilderness (Exod. 18:9)
- the gift of the land (cf. Josh. 24:20)
- teaching and law (Jer. 6:16)
- forgiveness (Hos. 3:5)
- care for the needy (Ps. 68:10)
- strength in time of trouble (Hab. 1:7)
- and restoration and new life in Jesus Christ through the gospel (Tit. 3:4)<sup>2</sup>

**Psalm 89:1** – “I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever

Aim for the Heart: Why is the relationship between goodness and mercy relevant for me today?

→ *Mercy* is the fountain, *goodness* the stream.

→ *Mercy* is God’s loving heart, *goodness* is the open hand of God’s favor.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 344.

<sup>2</sup> Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 431.

<sup>3</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Psalms*, vol. 1, *The Pulpit Commentary* (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 166.

**2.** God lovingly pursues us-his people.

**Shall follow me** – Though often misread as passive following, this is an *active* following. The connotation is one of dedicated and determined pursuit. This word for follow is used elsewhere in the OT to talk about an army pursuing another army to hunt it down.

The author, here, is using language in an attempt to make your heart glad as you consider what he's saying. Here, where you would expect to read that David's enemies are following him, we read instead that God's goodness and mercy are pursuing him, unrelentingly pursuing him.

**He will surely pursue me with goodness and mercy.**

**Illustration:** Marriage covenant.

→ **Vows:** Covenant pledge to each other.

→ **Rings:** Signs of that covenant

→ **What this means:** the bride never has to worry about earning the husband's love. It has been willingly given, covenanted to, and signed with the ring. It is a covenant of pursuing love, a covenant to give goodness and mercy freely, no matter the circumstances.

But even human covenants between each other pale in comparison to the covenant that God makes with his church. He promises to pursue his children with steadfast love forever, under all circumstances, and with great intensity. As a bride feels secure in the love of the groom, so you can be secure in the love of your Shepherd, who pursues you with goodness and mercy.

**Q:** What does it look like to be pursued by the goodness and mercy of God?

→ For the Non-Believer: Saving Love.

→ For the Believer:

**1.** Attentive care for my needs.

**2.** Sustainment in the midst of difficult circumstances.

**3.** Commitment to His purpose for me in the midst of ALL things.

Forgiveness, care in our needs, strength in time of trouble, and a promised hope (Eph. 1)

**3.** God's pursuing love never runs out.

God's goodness and mercy are our lifelong companions.

**Q:** What types of days?

**A:** All days. Good days and bad days. Happy days and sad days.

**AIM FOR THE HEART:**

**1.** To the non-believer: trust in Jesus tonight.

**2.** To the worn-out believer: walk free from the weight of earning God's loving mercy and goodness. He already promises that they pursue you and rest upon you. This has been secured by Christ on the cross.

**3.** To the arrogant believer: remember that God loves you because He is faithful, not because you are.

**4.** To the straying believer: turn around. Repent. Be overcome with the goodness and mercy of God.

**5.** To the weary believer: goodness and mercy continue to pursue you.