

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide – Trail Markers Week #6

Goodness / May 16, 2021 / Pastor Paul Taylor



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | As the Holy Spirit empowers Christians with the fruit of goodness, they are given a new ability to appreciate excellence and beauty in the arts, nature, work, personal relationships, etc. Among these areas of your life, what is something you truly appreciate and find captivating? How has your understanding of God enriched this experience?¹

Genesis 1:31 (NIV) – God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2. As a church, we celebrated baptisms during our Sunday services. Rivers Crossing believes that baptism is a step of obedience that all Christians are called to take after making a decision to place their faith in Jesus Christ. Spend time as a group sharing about your personal baptism stories.

If you're a follower of Jesus but haven't yet been baptized, what's keeping you from taking this step?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Pastor Paul shared that Biblical goodness is more than just doing good, it's also being good (i.e., at a heart/motivational level). Reflect on something you did in the last week or two that you considered to be a good deed. Then reconstruct the complex motives behind it. How "good" actually was it, in your honest evaluation? How did others see it? How do you believe God saw it?¹

1. Questions adapted from the Ligonier Ministries study titled Developing Christian Character

4. The Bible teaches that apart from faith in God, human beings are not inherently good. Humbling right? Read the following Scripture passages and then discuss the corresponding questions.

Romans 3:9-12 (ESV) –⁹What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Isaiah 64:4-6 (NLT) – ⁴For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him! ⁵You welcome those who gladly do good, who follow godly ways. But you have been very angry with us, for we are not godly. We are constant sinners; how can people like us be saved? ⁶We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) – And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

a) How does the Bible’s teaching about humans compare with or challenge your own understanding? What do you believe the world teaches about the core nature of humans?

b) How does a Biblical understanding of humans impact your view of what God has done in providing salvation? How does the world’s teaching prevent many from grasping their need for salvation?

5. Read Psalm 145 together. Then reflect on this passage using the questions provided below.

Psalm 145 (NIV) – ¹I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. ²Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. ³Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. ⁴One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. ⁵They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. ⁶They tell of the power of your awesome works— and I will proclaim your great deeds. ⁷They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. ⁸The Lord is gracious and compassionate slow to anger and rich in love. ⁹The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. ¹⁰All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you. ¹¹They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, ¹²so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. ¹³Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. ¹⁴The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. ¹⁵The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. ¹⁶You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. ¹⁷The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. ¹⁸The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. ²⁰The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. ²¹My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

a) What aspects of God’s goodness do you see highlighted in this psalm?

b) Psalm 145 emphasizes celebrating and sharing the awesome works and goodness of God (verses 4-7, 10-12). How do you do this personally? How do you do this with your family, friends, and neighbors?

TAKING IT HOME

6. God's goodness toward us should propel us to display goodness in action to others. Read the Bible passages below and discuss the corresponding questions.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) – ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV) – ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NLT) – ¹¹So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. ¹²Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

- a) God created us in Christ Jesus to do good works. How have you seen this truth play out in your life since becoming a follower of Jesus? What good works do you feel a passion for and/or a longing to do, but have yet to see come to fruition?

- b) Christians are to be lights of the world, but we can neglect this if we're not intentional. Where might God be asking you to cut back or restructure your life so you can "let your light shine" even brighter?

- c) Are there specific people in your life who need to experience God's goodness through you? If yes, and if you're willing, share about that situation. How can you display goodness to this person?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. 2021 Men's Conference | There is a desire in all men to be better and do more, but an extraordinary life isn't found sitting on the sidelines. Men, hang out with us on Saturday June 12th at Men's Conference for a day of spiritual renewal, motivating messages from Mark Driscoll and yes, some manly fun. Lunch and dinner are provided with your ticket purchase. To learn more and purchase a ticket, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-mens-conference-tickets-143828790785?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>.