

Goodness: "The Lord Is Good"

PSALM 100, ROMANS 7:18-20; 12:9,21

Good and *goodness* are two of our most popular words. As children we are encouraged to "be good," and as adults we like to think we are "doing good." We all know that evil is the opposite of good, and there is broad agreement that the path of goodness is the right way to go. But for a long time there has been a debate on what constitutes goodness. Is it the experience of pleasure and the eradication of pain? Is it the acquisition of knowledge? Is it doing to others what you want them to do to you? Is it the greatest good for the greatest number? Is it having lots of good things?

Before being good and doing good, we first need to define *goodness*. Any consideration of the goodness of Spirit life, while being aware of human concepts of goodness, must have a different point of reference. God, not man, is the measure of all things, including goodness.

1. Do you think you are a "good" person? Why?

READ PSALM 100.

2. What is affirmed about God's character in this psalm?
 3. How do God's actions reflect his goodness?
 4. Note the psalmist's joyful response. How do you usually respond to God's goodness in your life?
 5. How does God's goodness determine the meaning of ultimate good?
- READ ROMANS 7:18-20.**

6. What is affirmed about human nature in this passage?

7. What is the battleground for the fight between good and evil?
8. Can you relate to Paul's struggle? Why or why not?

How do you handle the tension he describes?

9. How does this struggle in us affect our ability to exhibit goodness?

READ ROMANS 12:9,21.

10. What different aspects of goodness and doing good are implied in Paul's two statements?

✧ 11. What are some evils in our society?

What does it mean to *hate* them?

✧ 12. Give an example of clinging to good in the midst of evil.

✧ 13. What might be involved in overcoming evil with good?

Is this an active or passive process? In what way?

14. What part does the Holy Spirit play in developing goodness in our lives?