

**HEALING THE PAST GOD'S WAY**  
**CHAPTER 8 TEACHING NOTES**  
**GOD IS GOOD**

**MEMORY VERSE:**

And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return.  
The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."  
Job 1:21

As you focus the attention of your class on God's goodness, take note yourself of the various angles we need to learn about perspective (each of us). When we began the lessons on God's character, our perspective was as a finite being trying to grasp an infinite God, who by nature, escapes our grasp. But the brush strokes of His being that we explored by using His Word, His creation and our experience of Him, helped us broaden our perspective on God. God grew exponentially in our eyes from a god we could fit in a small box to the God who measured beyond our ability to count or describe or even quantify. And as God grew in our understanding, or more realistically we grew in our understanding of God, our relationship with Him changed. Confidence in His might, faith in His faithfulness, comfort in His justice and joy in His grace are the new (or growing) hallmarks of our relationship with Him. Perspective, in this case, went from woefully ignorant to gratefully informed and thereby blessed. Faith flourishes in the reality of who God is by His declaration and by our experience of those truths.

But now, the perspective shift that we need in studying God's goodness is more a change in how we define things. Goodness can no longer be defined by my comforts, by my temporal focuses, by my needs met. Nor can I define a lack of God's goodness by my poverty, by my sickness or by my pain. Goodness can only be defined by who God is. God is the Author and Originator of goodness, just as He is the Author of justice. It emanates from Him and is not imposed from outside of Him. So, just as He decrees His standards of right and of wrong, He communicates by His actions, by His purposes what is *Good*.

Therefore, goodness, as defined by God, is fixed by Him. In that reality, we experience God's goodness in joy and in sorrow, in want and in fullness, in health and in sickness, in pain and in ecstasy.

In addition, God's goodness isn't neutral or benign. It is powerful and decisive. And just as God's might is directed by His purposes, God's goodness instructs those purposes.

**WRONG VIEWS OF GOD'S GOODNESS**

**FILTER GOD THROUGH MY CIRCUMSTANCES** (not circumstances through God)  
RESULTS IN A WEAK, PATHETIC god

**ABUNDANCE/COMFORT = BLESSING; NEED/TRIAL = PUNISHMENT**  
GOD CAN CHASTEN WITH ABUNDANCE AND BLESS IN NEED

## **RIGHT VIEWS OF GOD'S GOODNESS**

**GOD IS GOOD, ALL THE TIME; ALL THE TIME, GOD IS GOOD**

### **I EXPERIENCE GOD'S GOODNESS**

CREATION

SALVATION

SANCTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

GLORIFICATION

*God is good in my sorrow and need. . .*

But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Genesis 50:19 & 20

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified  
Isaiah 61:1 - 3

*God is good in my joy and abundance. . .*

Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. Job 2:9 & 10

No other route would have been as safe and as certain as the one by which we came. If only we could see the path as God has always seen it, we would have selected it as well.  
F.B. Meyer

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.  
Proverbs 3:5 & 6

A story to explore the goodness of God in the life of one of His children:

### **Martin Rinckart (Hymn-Writer)**

**Born:** April 23, 1586 - Leipzig, Saxony, Germany

**Died:** December 8, 1649 - Eilenburg, Saxony, Germany

Martin Rinckart was one of those provincial clergymen to whom Germany had so much reason to be grateful. The son of a poor coppersmith, he made his way at the University of Leipzig by dint of industry and his musical gifts. . . At the age of thirty-one (Rinckart) was offered the place of Archdeacon at his native town of Eilenburg in Saxony. He went there as the war broke out, and died just after the peace, and throughout these thirty-one years he stood by his flock, and helped them to the utmost under every kind of distress. Of course he had to endure the quartering of soldiers in his house, and frequent plundering of his little stock of grain and household goods. But these were small things.

The plague of 1637 visited Eilenburg with extraordinary severity; the town was overcrowded with fugitives from the country districts where the Swedes had been spreading devastation, and in this one year 8,000 persons died in it. The whole of the town council except three persons, a terrible number of school children, and the clergymen of the neighboring parish, were all carried off; and Rinckart had to do the work of three men, and did it manfully at the beds of the sick and dying. He buried more than 4,000 persons, but through all his labors he himself remained perfectly well. The pestilence was followed by a famine so extreme that thirty or forty persons might be seen fighting in the streets for a dead cat or crow. Rinckart, with the burgomaster and one other citizen, did what could be done to organize assistance, and gave away everything but the barest rations for his own family, so that his door was surrounded by a crowd of poor starving wretches, who found it their only refuge.

After all this suffering came the Swedes once more, and imposed upon the unhappy town a tribute of 30,000 dollars. Rinckart ventured to the camp to entreat the general for mercy, and when it was refused, turned to the citizens who followed him, saying, "Come, my children, we can find no hearing, no mercy with men, let us take refuge with God." He fell on his knees, and prayed with such touching earnestness that the Swedish general relented, and lowered his demand at last to 2,000 florins. So great were Rinckart's own losses and charities that he had the utmost difficulty in finding bread and clothes for his children, and was forced to mortgage his future income for several years.

Yet how little his spirit was broken by all these calamities is shown by his best known hymn "Now thank we all our God" and others that he wrote; some indeed speaking of his country's sorrows, but all breathing the same spirit of unbounded trust and readiness to give thanks.

Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.  
O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;  
and keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed;  
and free us from all ills, in this world and the next.  
All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given;  
the Son, and him who reigns with them in highest heaven;  
the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;  
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

***GOD IS GOOD; ALL THE TIME; ALL THE TIME GOD IS GOOD***

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.  
Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;  
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.  
Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.  
Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,  
and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,  
because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.  
“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
Isaiah 55:1 – 9

**ETERNAL VIEW**

**GOD IS BRINGING ALL THINGS TOGETHER**

**Ephesians 1, Isaiah 61:1 – 3, 2 Corinthians 4 & 5**

Nothing wasted – God uses everything for His glory, my good and the blessing of others

I want pain and fears to go away; God wants me to *trust* Him as I go through the pain and fear

**QUESTION: DO I BELIEVE *IN* GOD or DO I BELIEVE GOD?**