



**GOD IS
GOOD**

KEVIN & DEBORAH MARTIN

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PREFACE

Despite men's choices, God is good! It is easy to believe that God is good, if all goes well. What happens when people make decisions that cause innocent children to suffer? Do we still think that God is good? Scripture says that God is good and His mercy endures forever. Since our choices harm each other, we need God's mercy and grace. Even the best of men and women say and do things that offend others. The love of God is eternal, patient and kind. Therefore, he does not destroy us when we hurt each other. None of us would last long, if God did not wait for us to repent and turn away from evil. About the time I wish that God would not be so patient and longsuffering with others is when I suddenly remember my sins. That's when I cry to God to please continue to forgive the unforgivable. God is good and His mercy endures forever. Thank God for that. Let's pray now that His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

It's important that we understand God's goodness. Our hope is that these lessons will help you trust God's goodness in times of desperation, so you can experience the blessings of faith, when it is most important to you.

GOD IS GOOD!

When we experience God at the core of our being we discover that God is good.

John 5:19, 20

¹⁹Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”

Acts 10:38 “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. “

Jesus never did anything that He did not see His Father do. He went about doing good because that was the Father’s will. That was the expression of God’s heart toward us; to do good to us (Hebrews 1:3). Many people do not believe it is God’s will to do good to them. Bad things happen in their lives and they believe God is in control of all that happens on the earth. The obvious conclusion is that God must want to do bad things to them.

We have a basic misunderstanding of how God’s will is released on the earth. And we do not understand why bad things happen. We have believed lies from the enemy, we have not understood God’s word and so we blame God for the bad and we take credit for the good.

James 1:13-17

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

The scripture says that all good things are from above; God’s kingdom and He is not tempted to do us evil. But we are tempted and drawn away by our own lust. We sin. The problems in our lives are not God’s fault. They either originated as the result of bad fruit from the seed of sin of previous generations, or they are the result of our sin. Instead of blaming God, Who is good in all things, we need to take responsibility for the results of the evil that originated in our hearts.

Luke 6:45 “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Psalm 145:9 The LORD *is* good to all, and His tender mercies *are* over all His works.

NO ONE IS GOOD EXCEPT GOD!

Jesus testified to the goodness of God. When the rich young ruler called Jesus, Good Master, Jesus made this statement which is more clearly understood in the Amplified Version. **“Why do you call Me good? No one is [essentially and perfectly morally] good except God only.” Luke 18:19.**

Of course, the ruler did not know that Jesus was God in the flesh, which explains why Jesus made this statement as He did. The word He used for “good” means “intrinsically good” or “good at the core.” Because Jesus is in fact, God, He is good at the core of His being, and so everything He does is good. But we need to see what Jesus said here. God the Father and all that God is; Spirit and Word is essentially and perfectly morally good. Everything God says and does comes out of this goodness at the core of who He is.

Because God is essentially good anyone that is connected to God at the core level will also be essentially good. When we are born again we are joined to God at the core level. For He is a spirit being at the core and we are also spirit beings at the core.

1 Corinthians 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

We become so joined to God’s Spirit that we become one with Him. We are joined with God spirit-to-spirit; core-to-core.

Ephesians 5:9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

The fruit of this joining to God’s Spirit is the nature of God manifest in us. **2 Peter 1:4** by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust. One aspect of the nature of God is His goodness. (Of course Peter is saying that through the promises we *may be* partakers of the divine nature. It does not say we will be. Our choices are still part of the equation. Will we trust the God Who promised?)

**Psalm 31:19 Oh, how great *is* Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!**

**Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!**

If we taste and see the Lord; if we experience Him at a personal level, we will discover that God is good. When we experience God at the core of our being we learn of His goodness.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Many of us agree that Jesus is good. We can readily understand His goodness because He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil – and the ultimate proof is that He gave His life for us.

Shortly after I received Christ as Savior, I had a dream I which Christ came to me and embraced me. I felt His love for me in a very powerful and personal way. It was not difficult to receive Him, His embrace or His love. I readily received.

Years later when Jesus began a process of introducing me to our Father in Heaven, it was extremely different. I was fearful and hesitant and tried to avoid this wonderful invitation. I knew then that God is good, even the Father. Yet, I did not trust that I could be accepted and loved by Him. To really know Jesus, you must also know the Father. Because I trusted Jesus at the core of my being, He was able to introduce me to our Father in Heaven. I found out that God the Father not only loved me enough to send Jesus to save us but He is good. He has always been good and loving and has only good plans for each of us.

At one time God's justice demanded that He respond in wrath toward man. Because we did not trust His goodness and His love, man became destructive and deadly toward one another. God was angry as He watched this and grieved because we rejected His love. But His wrath was stirred because we harmed the innocence in one another until innocence was lost.

God's ultimate answer to this was to send His Son. Jesus satisfied God's demand for justice by the sacrifice of His own sinless life. The Father poured all His wrath out on Jesus so He no longer needs to be angry. His judgment is satisfied for those

who believe and the law no longer has power to condemn them before Him. All we have to do is accept Jesus as our Redeemer and enter into the joy of the Lord. It is only those who reject the payment made by Christ who must therefore meet the law's demand for punishment by their own merit. Yet the scripture says, **There is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10; Psalm 14:3).**

Today, sadly, men still chose sin over trust in God. Therefore, sin still prevails in the world and God still retains wrath for the Day of Judgment. Sin's prevailing reign on the earth will end one day. But God is saying to the believer today, walk in My light and be led by My Spirit and you will reign on the earth today in righteousness. God is waiting for us to discover His goodness and walk in the revelation of His available victory in the righteousness of Christ now.

Romans 5:17-21

¹⁷For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. ²⁰Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

HOW GOOD GOD IS

God created the universe in all its glory and wonder and specifically designed this one planet, earth, for us. It's perfect for us to live and learn and grow. He filled our environment with beautiful plant life or great variety for our enjoyment and food. He added animals, birds and water creatures of such vast variety, beauty and interesting design and function. He created all of this just to create a wonderful home to place the object of His love – man.

When God created man He gave us the capacity to receive His love, to feel loved and to have love grow inside of us to return to Him and give to each other. Love was the paramount motive in God's creation of man.

However, God had to also give man free-will to choose to love Him or even to hate Him. You see love is not love, if it is forced. So God went to great lengths to ensure that we were free to choose. This is essential to understand.

To make man's ability to choose entirely valid God even permitted viable competitors for man's affections. Consider God's creation of Eve. He made her attractive to Adam in every way and Adam, likewise to Eve. Would man continue to love God if there were another viable candidate and a perceived need to choose? The perception of a need to choose was only that; a perception. Because God is good, He wanted man to receive His love fully and yet love others with like passion.

To facilitate the function of man's free-will God placed two trees in the Garden. Eating of the Tree of Life would enable man to live forever. Eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would result in man's death.

The question these two trees would answer is whether or not man would trust God's goodness. Choosing only the Tree of Life would be the result of that trust. Not trusting God's goodness would compel man to choose the tree that promised to give knowledge of good and evil so man could know for himself.

God was saying in this choice, *"I Am Good! The only source of information you need about good is Me. Will you trust Me?"*

God is asking the same question today, *"Will you trust Me?"* As we trust Him, He releases the knowledge of good to us as we need it. The result is that sin's reign in our life ends and we reign in life as we were designed by our Creator; in righteousness (We are in righteousness as we trust He, Who alone is righteous). God designed us to rule this planet in partnership with Him. As we trust Him and His ways, righteousness, justice and love and goodness prevail.

This is God's good plan for each of us alone and all of us together. God really is Good at the core!

THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD

Romans 11:22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

It is the goodness of God which leads us to repentance, not His severity or His wrath. What is the difference between God's goodness and His severity? In the simplest of terms:

Goodness equals gentleness and kindness. It is always associated with God's love and mercy as in **Jeremiah 33:11 (Amplified Bible)** “. . .Give praise *and* thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good; for His mercy *and* kindness *and* steadfast love endure forever! . . .”

Severity equals decisiveness or rigor. We want leaders to be decisive but we despise rigor. Both are imperative in a legal system if we expect the law to protect us from lawlessness.

God knew the outcome of man's sin and watched man descend into lawlessness after Adam sinned in the Garden. To keep man in a somewhat stable condition while waiting for Christ to pay the price for our sin, God gave us the law and eventually appointed judges. But men misunderstood and began to look to the law for redemption. It was never intended to provide man a way of redemption. The law only kept man from destroying one another, revealed our sin, and pointed us toward our coming Redeemer, Christ (Galatians 3:24).

Fear of wrath does not turn men from their sins either. If it did, the law would have worked well (James 1:20).

Seeing God's power over the Egyptians did not change the Hebrews though He delivered them in a mighty display of His power.

God's severity, His wrath and His power have caused some men to so marvel at God that they have bowed their heads in worship. But if we never come to know God the way Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel and the Disciples knew Him, then the changes in our lives will not result in the abundance of life Jesus came to give

us. **John 10:10** “. . . I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

Meeting God, so that a man sees His goodness, turns his heart toward God and causes him to hate anything which could separate him from such a good and loving God.

Romans 8:35, 38, 39

³⁵**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

³⁸**For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Then he will stop loving his sin and start hating it for he will see what his sin is costing him.

John 3:19 “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

1 Peter 4:1,2 (Amplified Bible)

¹**So, since Christ suffered in the flesh *for us, for you*, arm yourselves with the same thought *and* purpose [patiently to suffer rather than fail to please God]. For whoever has suffered in the flesh [having the mind of Christ] is done with [intentional] sin [has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God],**

²**So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by [his] human appetites *and* desires, but [he lives] for what God wills.**

Let's see if we can make this a little clearer. Jesus showed it to me this way:

SIN

Sin stores up wrath because of the law. Living by the law does nothing to atone for sin (Romans 3:20) nor gives the seeker any power to overcome sin (Romans 7:23). So without a remedy, sin stores up wrath until the Day of Judgment for those who live by or under the law (Romans 2:5).

FAITH

Faith that the sacrificial death of Christ was sufficient to atone for your sins is faith in God's goodness and willingness to rescue us from the power of sin. Our faith in

His finished work gives Him the liberty to bestow upon us His righteousness and the grace to live in righteousness by faith, thus eliminating wrath. His death in our place not only satisfies wrath, but eliminates wrath toward the believer and raises the believer to a place of divine favor with God. This all works in a believer's life according to his faith. What do I mean by that?

Jesus often said things like, **“According to your faith be it unto you.” (Matthew 8:13; 9:29)** Paul, as a New Testament prophet, often quoted an Old Testament prophet who said, **“The just shall live by faith.” Habakkuk 2:4.**

Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Many receive salvation to Heaven by faith and live in that assurance. At the same time they live under the law in their day-to-day lives not knowing the full provision of grace to live in the power of God's righteousness, by His Spirit. The law gives no power to overcome sin, yet leaves one accountable to answer for their sin under the law. Grace does not do away with the law, but gives one the power to fulfill the law (Romans 8:4) out of a new heart that obeys out of faith working by love (Galatians 5:6). God gives us His love so we fulfill the law out of hearts of love for God and for others and not out of human ability or power to obey the law.

Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Remember that Jesus did not do away with the law (Matthew 5:17). He gave us new hearts of love which cannot harm others because our new hearts have God's love for others in them. I think this is what the Spirit of God was saying to us through the prophets Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:33, 34) and Paul.

Hebrews 10:14-17

¹⁴**For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**
¹⁵**But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,** ¹⁶**“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,”** ¹⁷**then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”**

God's plan is that we live in righteousness by the power of His Spirit, not by our power or might (Zechariah 4:6). This keeps man in necessary fellowship and intimacy with God which is what He made us for.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

We need the Spirit of Christ to live righteously. God did not give man the ability to live righteous in the power of his own will alone. Jesus said, **“Without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5.**

Romans 8:3, 4

³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Many who know they have the certainty of Heaven do not know that grace is for today's living. They give up the struggle to live righteously because they do not know God's goodness releases His power to live in His righteousness today.

Psalm 27:13 *I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*

Knowing God's love, goodness and grace empowers one to receive and enjoy these benefits in day-to-day living by faith. So now we can experience God's goodness – His good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2) – everyday as we live by faith in His love, His grace and His righteousness. The just shall indeed live by faith!

THE LORD IS GOOD TO ALL

Psalms 145:9, 17-20

Psalm 145:9 The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.

All believers accept that God is good and at some level they know this is true. But not all believers know this as an experience. Many do not believe God is good to them.

Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

To understand, let's look at several more scriptures before we discuss this subject.

Genesis 50:20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God predestines good works not evil. And God never plans evil or sends evil or tempts men to do evil.

James 1:13-15

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

¹⁰For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. ¹¹For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the

nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

God's plans for us are good. The things He plans for us to do are good.

God does not plan evil and He cannot be tempted to plan evil. He is good and His plans are to bring us into good things. Psalm 23 reveals to us what happens in our lives when the Lord is our Shepherd. There is no lack in our lives; no fear; we can eat in peace in the presence of our enemies and goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives. This is what the Good Shepherd plans for us. Wow!

Yet, when bad things happen, people start saying that God allowed it or it is an act of God. We have it all turned around. It is time to stop blaming God for evil. We bring evil upon ourselves!

The only truth to the statement that God allows evil is that God allows us to choose His ways or our own ways.

When God created man He gave him free-will to choose life or death; God's will or man's will. Choosing God's will is always the choice for good things with good outcomes. Choosing our own will always results in death, even when the thing we choose is the thing God tried to get us to choose before we chose death.

When God was leading the children of Israel to the border of the Promised Land and told them He would be with them as they took the land, they chose not to believe God. They chose to believe the evil reports and submitted themselves to fear and unbelief. See Numbers 13 and 14.

So God told them they would not enter the land but die in the wilderness but their children would enter the land.

Once they heard that, they decided to trust God after all and enter the land. The problem was that it was no longer God's will to lead them into the land. Their hearts were hearts of unbelief and God knew they would be defeated by what was in their hearts. So He said through Moses, "*Do not go! You will be defeated.*" They went anyway and many of their men were killed.

Numbers 14:42 “Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you.”

God knows our hearts and what will happen if we obey Him, or what will happen when we do our own thing. He is always planning good for us, but He allows us to choose evil. The results are not God’s fault. They are the result of our foolish choices of unbelief and fear or pride and stubbornness.

Why does God allow us to choose evil and death? For the sake of love! God is love. He created us for love. But it must be chosen freely. For love to be a real option hate, mayhem, murder and death must be on the table to choose from. And these terrible things must be real with real consequences to those who choose them and upon those their choices can affect.

This is why God wants us to trust Him even when we cannot see the outcome. He is good and will lead us in wisdom and love and to a good outcome which sets the stage for generations to be blessed.

Our choices, in unbelief, even if they are initially a good thing, are actually evil because they are out of a fearful selfish heart. They set the stage for generations to be cursed, unless someone trusts God to take the steps to end the curse.

Psalms 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

Choices That Produce Good Fruit

Ephesians 5:9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

All goodness on the earth is the result of God’s Spirit. All good things come from above (James 1:17) and therefore originate with God’s Spirit. And when we seek the Lord, His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33), our choices will produce good fruit for they will be shown to us by God’s Spirit.

This is very different from the knowledge of good. When men choose based upon what they know to be good as opposed to evil, their choices do not produce the fruit of the Spirit; for they do not originate with God’s Spirit. They originate from their knowledge of good.

Knowledge of good comes from the same source as the knowledge of evil; the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The fruit of this tree always produces death to those who rely upon it, for it is separated from the source of life – Jesus Christ.

We must come to Jesus to find out what the life-producing choice is for us in each new situation. Only God knows all things and He knows what has changed since the last good choice was made. That choice may not be the good life-producing choice now. Therefore, if we choose because we know that was a good choice a moment ago, we have chosen based upon the knowledge of good. To know God's will, we must seek Him and not knowledge.

At a Power and Love Conference in Pennsylvania in September, 2010 Dan Mohler said, "Don't read the Bible for knowledge. Read it to know Him!"

Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

This is exactly what God wanted when He made man in the first place. That we not fear anything because we know Him and that He will never lead us to death. In every new situation we can turn to God and know He will show us the choice that is right for us; the choice which yields life-producing fruit for us, our children and their children.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

When God gave man authority in the Garden of Eden, He also gave man responsibility for his choices. God does not take back what He gives. He honored His word.

**Psalm 138:2 I will worship toward Your holy temple,
And praise Your name
For Your loving-kindness and Your truth;
For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.**

And He honored His covenant with man.

**Psalm 89:34 My covenant I will not break,
Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.**

The key question for us is: will we trust God?

AFRAID OF GOD'S WILL

**Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!**

**Jeremiah 31:3 (Amplified Bible) The LORD appeared from of old to me, saying:
“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you *and* continued My
faithfulness to you.”**

God's love is everlasting and He draws us with loving-kindness (goodness) to Himself. He is faithful and will always be this way.

**Psalm 27:13 *I would have lost heart, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
In the land of the living.***

How do we see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living? We trust that His will comes out of His goodness and love. Therefore, we trust Him and obey His word.

Jack Frost's Story

Jack Frost told the story of the transformation which led his wife to say, “Now I have a new husband.” This story is very enlightening. I had heard his cassette series on Restoring the Father's Love in the late 1990's. He told how he had become such a hard man, demanding perfection of himself and his family. As a fishing boat captain, he was very successful but also had the nick name Captain Bly. No crews who served on his boats were ever good enough for him. He fired whole crews after returning to port time after time.

Then he got saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. He left his fishing career and went into full-time ministry. As a minister he was just as hard on his wife and children as he had been on his boat crew. He did everything right according to what the church expected of him. He and his wife developed a successful deliverance ministry.

Though these were wonderful milestones in his life, he was losing his children and his wife was suffering. Then he encountered the Father's love and everything

changed. He began to share his wife's testimony that salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit were wonderful and important in their lives, but when Jack experienced the Father's love she got a new husband and life became great.

I remember hearing Jack Frost talk about two important dates in this journey in which he was so touched by the Lord that he ended up on the floor and could not get up for hours. Father God poured His love over Jack and the change began. I had always related Trisha Frost getting a new husband to these dates. Then in 2010 I read Jack's book "Experiencing the Father's Embrace." Those dates were powerful in his life, but they were not enough. Lives don't change for the better without our consent.

After these dates Jack would go home and for about a month all the religious legalism was gone. His love was like the Father's love; unconditional and self-sacrificing. His wife and children could relax around him and be amazed. But each time after 4-6 weeks the legalism returned and they thought he would never really change.

But God moved and one night Jack struggled through. The Lord showed him the key fear of his life was for his wife to know his fears of disappointing her and being exposed as a failure before her. He had a prayer partner to whom he could always share his darkest fears. He told God he would share this with him and they could pray together. But God said, "No! Confess this to your wife. She's the one who needs to hear this; not your prayer partner."

Jack feared this more than anything. He had to decide whether he really trusted God with this or not. What those previous encounters with the Father's love did for him was give him experience with God as Father that testified to him. He knew he could trust God. Still it was not easy.

When his wife woke up he told her everything. She wept and told him the secrets of her heart and her fears and they wept and prayed in each others' arms for hours.

After that day Trisha was able to say, "I have a new husband." The children who had been distant and rebellious slowly opened up and discovered they had a new father. This time Captain Bly did not return. They found out that God really is good. Most importantly, they learned that to experience His goodness requires us to choose to trust His ways.

Our ways may seem good to us but they keep us in bondage and lead to death.

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But its end *is* the way of death.

Proverbs 3:3-6

- ³ Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart,
⁴ *And* so find favor and high esteem
In the sight of God and man.
⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

My story: Confession of a former drug user.

Blindness of the Heart

Ephesians 4:18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

2 Corinthians 4:2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Sometimes we hide things from ourselves because they are too painful or too threatening to remember. Yet God in His mercy reveals them to us so nothing hidden can be used against us in those important times of promotion. It takes humility and trust in God's goodness when He chooses to bring these things to light. Submitting to Him at such a time prepares us for exaltation (1 Peter 5:6).

Before I believed in God and prior to joining the United States Air Force, I spent about a year and a half in which I got high on marijuana almost every day. During that time I also took an unknown white substance in a capsule three times.

When I applied to join the Air Force they asked about drug use. Not being a Christian I did not care enough about whether I told the truth about this or not. I told them I had tried smoking pot three times but had not experienced anything. I knew the physical examination might reveal marijuana in my system so I was covering for this possibility. They let me enlist in the Air Force and everything was fine.

During my training they did a background check because my job would require a top secret clearance. I did not know all this at the time I joined so I was not worried. Whatever the security check revealed I don't know, but they gave me a top secret clearance.

A year and a half later I completed my training and they sent me to my first duty assignment at Loring Air Force Base in upstate Maine. Debby would give birth to our three children during our 2 ½ years there. Our oldest daughter Jessica Lynn was born less than 2 months after we arrived. Two weeks before her birth I gave my heart to Jesus. And two days later, as I was being baptized at an Independent Baptist Church, Debby was accepting Jesus into her heart. Our children would never experience life in an unbelieving home.

It seems strange to me, but my lie to the Air Force about drug use never crossed my mind for the next seven years. We grew as Christians, taught Sunday school and God used us to lead people to Himself. Life was good.

Five years later, I finally had the right assignment to finish my college degree and at the nine year point I put together my application for Officer Training School (OTS). During that process, the forms I was filling out had questions about drug use. I discussed these questions with my commander and told him all that I remembered. He urged me not to tell all that because he felt that I was a good airman and this would hurt me and maybe my family. Well, I listened to him and only told about the marijuana. My application was not approved. So I enrolled for a two year masters program.

Three years later, with a Masters Degree and assigned to a new base, I filled out the paper work again. And this commander also urged me not to tell anymore than before. This time I determined to tell everything. I included the fact of the unknown white substance which was probably THC, a horse tranquilizer. Though, even today, that is only a guess. The Air Force approved my application; I went to OTS with the top secret clearance still in force.

After three years as a weather officer, the Air Force informed me it was time for a 5-year periodic security background check. For some reason they had not done one on me since my first one 15 years before. I made sure that my drug history was as thorough and honest as my memory of that time. Everything was fine, I thought.

My drive to and from work took about 20 minutes. I used that time to allow the Lord to bring up any subject He wanted to. The Lord has used this practice for a variety of issues in my life over the years. At this point in my life He started to clear away a fog bank in my memory of certain events that occurred in that year and a half while I was using drugs. I found myself becoming very fearful and not wanting to see the pictures He was trying to show me. Several days went by and I wrestled with myself. Finally, I remembered how the Lord had taken care of us and His faithfulness. I decided I could trust Him to clear away the fog. Slowly it cleared and I remembered preparing bags of marijuana to sell to people I knew and trusted. This meant that I had not only used drugs but sold them as a dealer. This only occurred once, which is why it was easy to hide this memory from myself. Still, it was a very threatening memory. If the Air Force knew this story it could mean going to prison for fraud and my family would have to make it without me. Now I was very afraid.

I asked the Lord if I should reveal this to the Air Force. I put fleeces before Him. He did not answer. I made up very detailed fleeces that only God could answer. He still did not answer. So many days went by I think it became weeks. No answer. Finally, I asked why He would not answer. Deep inside myself the thought was clear – “You know the answer.” He was right. I knew I had to report this as additional information. Though it put my family and my career at risk and could mean some form of punishment. I became certain God wanted me to trust Him and reveal the truth.

My unit chief at work was a believer. He understood and supported my decision. I added this information and waited. Nothing happened. I kept my top secret clearance and went on to my next assignment with complete peace in my mind and my heart.

But this is not the end of the story. The Air Force sent me to Korea for my only one-year unaccompanied tour of duty. While I was there the Air Force published a new version of their 5-year periodic background investigation. It had only a few more questions than the old version. They sent these out for all holders of security clearances to answer.

I looked over these new questions and saw they were asking the very questions I had recently given the answers to. I told my new commander. He was not happy that I would do this again. But I assured him that the Air Force knew already and the Lord had taken care of it.

The point I saw was that the Lord knew these new questions would be asked and He prepared me to take care of this ahead of time. If I had not trusted God and the Air Force discovered the lie, I could have blamed God all I wanted to. Yet the truth is that it would have been my choice to not trust Him. The results would have been my fault, not His.

If we will trust God, He will take care of us. When He challenges you to trust Him with old history or present opportunities to live honest and pure before Him – you can trust Him. He loves you and He is good.

BIBLE VERSES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

You may want to do your own study of this important subject. The Bible verses below are given to help. This is a small portion of verses on this subject. While most are contained in this text, there are some added for further illumination. I suggest a more complete study of God's goodness would lead one to also study God's love, mercy, kindness, compassion, patience, gentleness, grace, faithfulness and the life of Christ as an example of God's goodness.

As you study, ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you with revelation knowledge of God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is your guide into all truth.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Exodus 33:19 Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

1 Chronicles 16:34 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is good!*
For His mercy *endures* forever.

2 Chronicles 5:13 indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying:*

*"For He is good,
For His mercy endures forever,"*

that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,

2 Chronicles 7:3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, *saying:*

*"For He is good,
For His mercy endures forever."*

Psalms 25:8 Good and upright *is* the LORD;
Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

Psalm 27:13 *I would have lost heart, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
In the land of the living.*

Psalm 31:19 Oh, how great *is* Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!

Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

Psalm 52:1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God *endures* continually.

Psalm 86:5 For You, Lord, *are* good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

Psalm 100:5 For the LORD *is* good;
His mercy *is* everlasting,
And His truth *endures* to all generations.

Psalm 106:1 Praise the LORD!
Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

Psalm 107:1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

Psalm 118:1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

Psalm 118:29 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

Psalm 119:68 You *are* good, and do good;
Teach me Your statutes.

Psalm 145:9 The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.

Jeremiah 33:11 ‘the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the
bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say:

“Praise the LORD of hosts,
For the LORD *is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever”—

and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD.

Zechariah 9:17 For how great *is* his goodness, and how great *is* his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

**Luke 2:14 “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”**

Luke 18:18, 19 (*Amplified Bible*)

¹⁸ And a certain ruler asked Him, Good Teacher [You who are essentially and perfectly morally good], what shall I do to inherit eternal life [to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah’s kingdom]?” ¹⁹ Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me [essentially and perfectly morally] good? No one is [essentially and perfectly morally] good - except God only.

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Acts 10:38 “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Ephesians 5:9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.