

- I. Session 57: The Goodness of God Part 2: God’s Goodness in the New Testament
- a. Purpose: In this session we shall explore the attribute of the goodness of God as taught in the New Testament and also draw implication for the Christian life as a result of our study.
 - b. What is the goodness of God? The words in the New Testament:
 - i. *ἀγαθός* (*agathos*)
 1. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this word appears 600 times especially in Proverbs and often used to translate the Hebrew *Tob*.¹
 2. In the New Testament it appears about 125 times.²
 3. It appears in every book in the New Testament except for **1-2 John Jude and Revelation**.³
 4. Often used in Greek and Roman thought especially in philosophy for the highest good.⁴
 5. In the New Testament its general sense is “fitting, suitable” but has a range of meaning from “useful, advantage, useful” when referring to things, “able, competent” for persons and beneficent and being moral in the realm of ethics.⁵
 6. In the New Testament it is often pitted with words that refer to sinfulness as its opposite.⁶
 - ii. *καλός* (*kalos*)
 1. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this word was also often used to translated the Hebrew *Tob*.⁷
 2. In the New Testament it appears over 100 times.⁸
 3. It overlaps with *ἀγαθός* in its meaning but has more the shade of meaning with something beautiful as well.
 - iii. *χρηστός* (*chrestotes*)
 1. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this word was also often used to translated the Hebrew *Tob*.⁹
 2. This word has the general idea of kind or helpful.¹⁰
 3. Unlike the other terms for Good, this is appears less frequently in the New Testament, and as an adjective it only appears seven times and commonly is applied to describe food quality such as in **Luke 5:39**.¹¹

¹ “ἀγαθός” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 1:93.

² *Ibid*, 1:95.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ “*Ibid*, 1:94.

⁵ “*Ibid*, 1:97.

⁶ “*Ibid*, 1:100.

⁷ “καλός” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 2:608.

⁸ *Ibid*, 2:609.

⁹ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 366.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ “χρηστός” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 4:686.

- c. Remember our summarizing definition:
 - i. John Frame: “But by far the most common meaning of goodness in Scripture is ‘benevolence.’ A good person is one who acts to benefit others.”¹²
 - ii. John Feinberg: “When we look at the biblical concept of divine goodness, one major idea stands out. It is that God is concerned about the well-being of his creatures and does things to promote it.”¹³
- d. What does the Bible in the New Testament teaches about the goodness of God?
 - i. God alone is good: “*And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”*” (Matthew 19:17)
 - 1. Both Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19 record Jesus stating the same thing.
 - 2. The context is Jesus’ answer to the rich young ruler who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life.
 - 3. Jesus response challenges the man’s idea of goodness.
 - 4. Here the statement is that God alone is good (Greek= “*agathos*”).
 - 5. Paul would later affirm that only God is good and humanity is not good when he stated “*All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one.*” (Romans 3:12)
 - 6. Ultimately, there is only one who is perfectly Good: God Himself.
 - ii. Since God is good therefore His actions are good
 - 1. “*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*” (Romans 8:28)
 - a. The word for “good” here in the Greek is “*agathos*.”
 - b. Here we see God allowing all things to work together for believers.
 - c. This goodness of God as His purpose should be a source of comfort for Christians going through trials and tribulation.
 - 2. Sinners’ repentance is also a work of God’s goodness: “*Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?*” (Romans 2:4)
 - a. The word for “good” here in the Greek is “*chrestotes*.”
 - b. We see that God’s goodness, in the sense of Him being helpful to others, is what leads one to repent.
 - 3. God who is Good has created us to do good works:
 - a. “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*” (Ephesians 2:10)
 - i. The word for “good” here in the Greek is “*agathos*.”

¹² John Frame, *Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002), 410.

¹³ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 366.

- ii. Earlier in **Ephesians 2:8-9** Paul gives the classic verses that we are saved by God's grace!
 - iii. But God's good work didn't stop there; rather God's good work includes making us to do good works after our salvation and conversion.
 - b. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"* (**Galatians 5:22**)
 - i. The word for "good" here in the Greek is "agathos."
 - ii. Here the list of the fruits of the Spirit includes goodness. It is what the Spirit does.
4. God's good work will one day be completed! *"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."* (**Philippians 1:6**)
 - a. The word for "good" here in the Greek is "agathos."
 - b. This is a promise that His good work will not be abandoned!
 - c. We have hope from this verse!
- iii. God's goodness in the New Testament is often connected with Jesus Christ
 - 1. As we have seen above, a lot of God's goodness has to do with salvation and sanctification which foundation is based upon Christ's work on the cross.
 - 2. *"But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,"* (**Titus 3:4**)
 - a. The context here is talking about God's work of salvation of sinners.
 - b. The word for "kindness" here in the Greek is "chrestotes."
 - c. It is God's goodness in a sense of kindness to sinners that God has appeared to mankind in the person of Christ! The Incarnation shows God's goodness!
 - 3. *"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."* (**John 10:11**)
 - a. This is description Jesus gives Himself.
 - b. The Greek word for "good" here is *kalos*.
 - c. He is not just a shepherd but a good shepherd that's beneficial to His sheep whom He lays down His life for.
 - d. **John 10:14** also reiterates the theme that Jesus is the Good shepherd.
 - e. Given how Jesus is God, we are not surprised to see He is good!
- e. Implications
 - i. God is Good therefore imitate God by doing good: *"Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God."* (**3 John 11**). **Are you practicing good works towards others?**

- ii. Since God is Good therefore God wants us to not only do good but love what is good! “*but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,*” (Titus 1:8). Do you love that which is good?
- iii. Discouraged that it seems hopeless you will never do good? How can one be motivated to do good?
 - 1. Are you a believer? If so, remember God who is Good has created us to do good works (Ephesians 2:10)! Are you confident that God will cause good works within you to do towards others?
 - 2. Don't forget earlier that good is also beautiful. Be enraptured by His goodness to motivate you to seek doing good!
- iv. Remember God is good and sovereign. Have you trusted in God with the crisis and trials you are presently going through, knowing He wills it for your own good?
- v. Do you meditate on God's goodness through the person of Jesus Christ?