

The Implication/Application of the Excellencies of God

Lesson 10 – Wise, Good, and Loving

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Review

We are studying the excellencies of God. God has made us true worshipers (John 4:23) for the purpose of declaring His excellencies (1 Peter 2:9).

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, **so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9)

His excellencies are the perfect, full manifestation of characteristics that describe His intrinsic eminence, His nature. They are what God has stated and/or exhibited in His self-revelation, the Scriptures. We are studying the excellencies in order to know God better (have correct, true knowledge) and be impacted by that knowing (grow in sanctification).

We started with excellencies that deal with God's transcendency and belong to Him alone – the *absolute* or *incommunicable* or *divine* excellencies.

- **Transcendence** – God is distinct, far above, greater than His creation.
- **Immanence** – God remains in His creation and is intimately involved in it.
- **Perfection** – God lacks nothing in type or quality of excellency.
- **Beauty** – God is the possessor and the sum of all desirable qualities.
- **Blessedness** – God delights fully in himself. He is self-happy, self-content, self-fulfilled.
- **Aseity** – God does not need anything, He is perfectly independent and self-sufficient.
- **Glory** – the composite of His excellencies; He is so magnificent that He shines.
- **Immutability** – God is unchanging in being, excellencies, eternal purposes, and promises.
- **Omniscience** – God perfectly knows all things actual and possible in a simple, eternal act.
- **Omnipresence** – God is present at every point of space at every point of time.
- **Omnipotence** – God is able to effortlessly do all His holy will.
- **Sovereignty** – God's exercise of His rule over His creation using His absolute power.

Now we are studying excellencies that God is working to build to some degree in us through the Spirit's work of sanctification – *relative* or *communicable* or *personal* excellencies.

- **Holiness** – God is pure and separated from sin.
- **Wrath** – God intensely hates all sin.
- **Righteousness** – God always acts rightly and is Himself the final standard of what is right.
- **Truthfulness** – God is the true God; all His words are true and the final standard of truth.
- **Faithfulness** – God will always do what He has said and fulfill what He has promised.

❖ **Are you striving to allow the truth of these excellencies to impact your life?**

Introduction

During our last study, we looked at faithfulness and coupled that with sovereignty (and His other excellencies) to think about how God is working in the difficulties of life and how believers should respond in those difficulties. Many of God's excellencies provide comfort and strength during difficulties. God's communicable attributes also provide a standard to be striving for in sanctification and as we interact with others – either those in the world or those in the body of Christ.

Today, we will look at the excellencies of wisdom, goodness, and love. Sometimes, goodness is studied with several other attributes like love, mercy, grace, patience, and compassion as manifestations of God's goodness to individuals. We will study them separately.

Wisdom

We have studied God's omniscience (God perfectly knows all things actual and possible in one simple, eternal act), omnipotence (God is able to effortlessly do all His holy will), and sovereignty (God's exercise of His rule over His creation using His absolute power). Related to these is God's wisdom.

God's wisdom means that that God always acts skillfully so that all His perfect will is accomplished in accord with all His perfect excellencies. God is always wisely working in His perfect sovereignty, goodness, love, mercy, grace, patience, compassion, etc. He always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals. His actions are always the best for His glory and His children's sanctifying good.

¹³“With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding. (Job 12:13)

²⁷to **the only wise God**, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 16:27)

³³Oh, **the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!** How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (Romans 11:33)

God's word describes wisdom.

¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷But **the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.** ¹⁸And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18)

We find wisdom in God's word.

⁷The **law of the Lord** is perfect, restoring the soul; The **testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.** (Psalm 19:7)

⁹⁸Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. ⁹⁹I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. ¹⁰⁰I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts. (Psalm 119:98-100)

❖ **Where do you go for wisdom?**

God provides wisdom to those that ask in humility.

²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵**But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.** (James 1:2-5)

❖ Who do you ask for wisdom?

Implications of wisdom

- Because God is wise, we trust Him in the good and bad times.
- Because God is wise, there is purpose to all of life's events.
- Because God is wise, there is no need to worry about life's circumstances.
- Because God is wise, He gives wisdom to His children who humbly ask.
- Others?

Goodness

God's goodness means that God is the final standard of good (wholesome, helpful, conducive to well-being, beneficial, and worthwhile) and all that God is and does is worthy of approval.

⁶**Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,** And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23:6)

⁸**Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.** ⁹He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way. (Psalm 25:8-9)

¹³*I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living. ¹⁴Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:13-14)

¹⁹**How great is Your goodness,** Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men! (Psalm 31:19)

¹Incline Your ear, O Lord, *and* answer me; For I am afflicted and needy. ²Preserve my soul, for I am a godly man; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. ³Be gracious to me, O Lord, For to You I cry all day long. ⁴Make glad the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. ⁵**For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.** (Psalm 86:1-5)

¹**Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.**

²Let the redeemed of the Lord say *so*, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary (Psalm 107:1-2 – This phrase is used 10 times in the OT.)

⁹**The Lord is good to all,** And His mercies are over all His works. (Psalm 145:9)

⁷**The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble,** And He knows those who take refuge in Him. (Nahum 1:7)

God is good to all people (the model for His children being good too all). But He is particularly good to His redeemed (the model for love and goodness in the body of Christ).

⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (Matthew 5:44-46)

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷**Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights**, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. ¹⁸In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures. (James 1:16-18)

God's interaction with His redeemed always has an underlying purpose of our good.

²⁸And 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. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; (Romans 8:28-29)

¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness**. (Hebrews 12:10)

God's moral will (His word) is good.

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

The most mature among us (elders) are called to love what is good. This character quality is something we should all be striving for.

⁸but hospitable, **loving what is good**, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, (Titus 1:8)

Goodness flows from a Spirit-filled walk.

⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; **walk as children of Light** ⁹(**for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth**), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8-10)

²²But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Believers are to walk in good works.

¹⁰For 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)

Good deeds show that salvation has occurred and demonstrates our relationship with God.

¹⁶They profess to know God, but **by their deeds they deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. (Titus 1:16)

¹¹Beloved, 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 1:11)

Believers will be judged by their works, whether good or bad.

¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that **each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.** (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Believers are to cling to good.

⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. **Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.** (Romans 12:9)

Believers are to overcome evil with good.

¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰“But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** (Romans 12:17-21)

Believers are to dwell on good.

⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, **whatever is of good repute**, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **dwell on these things.** (Philippians 4:8)

Believers are to do good to all, but especially fellow believers.

¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity, **let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.** (Galatians 6:10)

❖ **Does your life show (in what ways) that you are a lover of good? Or the opposite?**

Implications of goodness

- Because God is good, you know that everything that occurs in your life (apart from your own sin; and even that God uses) is for your sanctifying good.
- Because God is good, you can trust Him in times of trouble.
- Because God is good, you know that His words are wholesome, helpful, conducive to well-being, beneficial, and worthwhile. No one else has the words of life (John 6:68).
- Because God is good, you know He will only ask you to do that which is good.
- Because God is good, you should love what is good and do good.
- Others?

Love

God’s love means that God eternally gives of himself to others.

⁸The one who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.** (1 John 4:8)

¹⁵Yet on your fathers did **the Lord set His affection to love them**, and He chose their descendants after them, *even* you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. (Deuteronomy 10:15)

¹⁶“For **God so loved the world, that He gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Looking at how God loves we can define love as the sacrificial commitment of my will to another's needs and best interests regardless of the cost to myself. Love seeks another's highest good, even if it costs a great deal; even if there is no response of love or gratitude. Love is not an impulse from the feelings. It does not always run with the natural inclinations nor does it spend itself only upon those whom we like or deem worthy to receive love. It is an act of the will, so we can choose to love even if we do not feel like doing it.

God's love is significant in that it is the motivation for our love for God and others people.

¹⁹We love, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, **if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.** (1 John 4:7-11)

¹⁶We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16)

❖ Do you walk in love (in the Spirit)?

In 1 Corinthians, the Spirit through Paul gives the most amazing and comprehensive description of agape love. In the Greek, all of these descriptions are verbs describing what love does. We should not "feel" these descriptors, we should DO them.

⁴Love is **patient**, love is **kind** *and* is **not jealous**; love **does not brag** *and* is **not arrogant**, ⁵**does not act unbecomingly**; it **does not seek its own**, is **not provoked**, **does not take into account a wrong** *suffered*, ⁶**does not rejoice in unrighteousness**, but **rejoices with the truth**; ⁷**bears all things**, **believes all things**, **hopes all things**, **endures all things**.

^{8a}Love **never fails**; (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

Exercise

⁴[My name] is patient, [My name] is kind *and* [My name] is not jealous; [My name] does not brag *and* [My name] is not arrogant, ⁵[My name] does not act unbecomingly; [My name] does not seek its own, [My name] is not provoked, [My name] does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶[My name] does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but [My name] rejoices with the truth; ⁷[My name] bears all things, [My name] believes all things, [My name] hopes all things, [My name] endures all things. ⁸[My name] never fails;

❖ How do you stack up?

Love is significant in the body life in that it demonstrates tangibly that you belong to Jesus.

³⁴"A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵"**By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**" (John 13:34-35)

⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because **love covers a multitude of sins.** (1 Peter 4:8)

❖ Whom do you sacrificially love? Whom do you intentionally choose not to love?

The world's idea

The unfortunate thing regarding love is that the world has appropriated a Biblical truth and corrupted it with worldly wisdom (James 3:13-18).

³⁶“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷And He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:36-40 see also Galatians 5:14)

¹²“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

The connection here is:

“love your neighbor as yourself” = “treat people the same way you want them to treat you”

This is a correct connection, but the world corrupts this to say that love is the feeling of accepting other's sins.

Remember the context of the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5-7 is about kingdom life – what does it mean to live under the rule of the King and what does it mean to relate to one another within the kingdom. Previously in chapter 7 (Matthew 7:1-5), Jesus taught that we are not to judge others by our own standard, but holding ourselves and other kingdom citizens accountable to God's standard is the right thing to do. A kingdom citizen “wants” to be treated like a kingdom citizen. They “want” to be held accountable for their sin and have truth brought to bear when/if in rebellion against their King. Therefore, love is relating to people in a way that ministers to their real need not an emotional felt need.

¹⁴We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but **always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.** (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15)

A significant demonstration of love between believers is be concerned about each another's walk and therefore enter into difficult conversations and actions that are best for each other. Both formative and corrective discipline are expressions of love within the body Christ.

“Formative discipline” is the process of bringing people to maturity through positive instruction and teaching. This is the “teaching to observe all that I commanded” part of disciple making. This is accomplished through corporate and individual ministry. It is occurring all the time within the body of Christ as the natural outflow of Biblically organized and functioning local bodies comprised of individuals who are walking in the Spirit.

¹⁶Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, **with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another** with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

“Corrective discipline” is the specific reproof (to expose or confront sin) or rebuke (stronger than reprove and includes a sharp, severe reprimand with possibly of impending penalty) of a particular member of the body because of sin. Sometimes corrective discipline is informal when one member of the body tells another that what they are doing is sin and calls them to repent. Other times it is formal, following a prescribed Biblical pattern (Matthew 18:15-17).

²preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort**, with great patience and instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2)

¹⁵“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

❖ **Do you love your siblings in Christ and does it drive you to those hard conversations?**

What about the unbeliever? Remember the definition of love – commitment of my will to another’s needs and best interests regardless of the cost to myself. What an unbeliever “wants” is irrelevant, because they have suppressed their true “want” (really a need) in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). Their true “want” is their need for the gospel.

Implications of love

- Because God is love, you are no longer dead in your trespasses and sins.
- Because God is love and does love you, you can love others (multi-faceted) – examples?
- Others?

Conclusion

We are studying God’s excellencies in order to know Him better and be impacted by that knowing. God is wise, good, and loving. May we be impacted by those excellencies.

Additional Study

- Each day this week, reread the passages that we looked at today.
- After reading the passages, spend time in prayer adoring God. Ask Him to build godly responses to His goodness and love into your life.
- Memorize 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

^{8a}Love never fails; (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)