

DOCTRINE OF GOD:  
GOODNESS, PROVIDENCE &  
MERCY

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# Definitions

- Goodness – “God is the final standard of good, and [] all that God is and does is worthy of approval.” (Grudem 197)
- Providence – “Providence is that continuous agency of God by which He makes all the events of the physical and moral universe fulfill the original design with which He created it.” (Augustus Strong)

OR

“**Creation** explains the existence of the universe, **preservation** explains the continuance of the universe; **providence** explains the direction of the universe.”  
(Andy Snider)

- Mercy – “God’s goodness toward those in misery and distress.” (Grudem, 200)

# God's Goodness in the Bible

- God alone is good (Luke 18:19).
- God goodness merits worship (Psalm 106:1, 107:1).
- God's goodness is seen in what He creates (Genesis 1:31, James 1:17). Goodness would not come from an evil god (Psalm 119:68).
- God is particularly good to believers (Psalm 84:11, Romans 8:32).
- God is good to all His creation (Psalm 145:9), including the wicked (Matthew 5:43-45).

# God's Goodness: A Warning

- Many ask, “If God is good, why did \_\_\_\_\_ happen?”
- While such questions may come from God-honoring hearts and may lead to helpful discoveries, they have many times been asked from doubting hearts (Job 3:20-26) that seek to cast judgment on God (Job 40:8). We must ask such questions reverently.
- We recognize that all of God's goodness is undeserved (e.g. Romans 5:6-8).
- We can trust God's promises that all things believers experience (even the deepest tragedies) are guided for good by His hand (Romans 8:28).

# God's Providence in the Bible

## □ **The universe at large**

- Psalm 103:19 – “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.”

## □ **The physical world**

- Job 37:1-13 – Thunder, lightning, snowstorms, ice storms

## □ **Animal kingdom**

- Matthew 10:29 – “Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And [yet] not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.”

## □ **The affairs of nations**

- Ps. 22:28 – “For the kingdom is the LORD's and He rules over the nations.”

I am grateful to Dr. Andy Snider for compiling these verses and for the categorical headings. This is taken from his Theology 1 notes during his time at The Master'

# God's Providence in the Bible

## □ Birth & career of men

- Cyrus – e.g. Isaiah 44:28-45:3

## □ Human success/failure

- Psalm 75:6-7 – “For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert [comes] exaltation; But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another.”

## □ Spiritual good of the righteous

- Romans 8:28 – “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.”

# God's Providence in the Bible

## □ **Supplying the needs of the righteous**

- ▣ Philippians 4:19 – “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

## □ **Answers to prayer**

- ▣ Matthew 6:8 “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”
- ▣ Matthew 6:32-33 – “For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

# God's Providence in the Bible

## □ **Punishment of the wicked**

- ▣ Psalm 11:6 – “Upon the wicked He will rain snares; fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.”

## □ **Common grace on all alike**

- ▣ Matthew 5:44 – “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so 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.”

## □ **Trivial things**

- ▣ Matthew 10:30 – “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”
- ▣ Proverbs 16:33 – “The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the Lord.”

# God's Goals in Providence

- God's glory
  - ▣ Giving Christ first place in everything – Colossians 1:17-18
  - ▣ Revealing God's glory through redemption – Colossians 1:25-27
  - ▣ Proclaiming God's Name – Exodus 9:16, Romans 9:17
- Judgment
  - ▣ Judgment of the wicked – 2 Peter 3:7
- Salvation
  - ▣ Directing some men to seek Him – Acts 17:26-28
  - ▣ Conforming us to Christ's image – Romans 8:28-30
- Loving care
  - ▣ God directs our lives in the everlasting way – Psalm 139:16, 24

# God's Mercy in the Bible

- God's mercy is a principal attribute – Exodus 34:6
- We plead for God's mercy in distress – 2 Samuel 24:14
- Blind men begged for Christ's relieving mercy – Matthew 9:27
- God's mercy is distributed according to His sovereignty – Exodus 33:19
- God promises wisdom to all who believe without finding fault – James 1:5

# Praying According to These Attributes

- In everything, give thanks!
- Express trust that God is your good Father able to take care of His children.
- Ask for what you think you need; accept what God gives as good.
- Before you go to other resources, entrust your concerns to the matchlessly good God!
- Confess that each situation comes from God, in His goodness. Human actions may be sinful, but God guides them for good to His children.
- Seek the glory of Christ, which is one of His purposes.
- In any kind of circumstance, ask for wisdom (James 1:5) as a way of honoring the Lord (Proverbs 1:7) and as an entry point to His mercy.
- Don't be afraid to ask God for help in difficulty, but realize that He is at least as much, if not more, interested in refining you than changing your situations.