

Living in Hope with the One Leader Study Series

Title: *Living Above the Chaos, Part 2 – “Good”*

Instructions: This Bible study is provided for personal or group use. Please copy, print, or share with anyone.

(Please note: this study has four parts based on the scripture in Matthew 25:21, 23 – “Well Done,” “Good,” “Faithful,” “Servant.”)

Observations on “Good” in Today’s World

The world’s perspective is: 1. Humans are inherently good, and it is the outside factors or environment that moves us away from good. 2. In human beings, “good” and “evil” are fluid. People can be a combination of “good” and “bad” qualities. Some people who behave cruelly and brutally can be rehabilitated and eventually display “good” qualities. And rather than being intrinsic, most cruel or brutal behavior is due to environmental factors. People are good, and our environment conditions them to be bad. Other good/bad observations include:

1. Most of us lie somewhere between the extremes of Gandhi or Mother Teresa and Hitler on the spectrum of human behavior. Thus, life should be measured by good versus bad. This is where we gain entrance into heaven: the good outweighs the bad.
2. The end justifies the means, so a good outcome makes a questionable process okay.
3. Eye for an eye. If I have been wronged, then I can wrong you—it is justified. Others embrace a victim mentality.
4. Good is calculated by how it makes you feel; it’s relative. I deserve to be happy, and life is about having pleasure.
5. Something is good if it serves me. I have little regard for others.
6. Having the attitude of “no harm, no foul” means that if you were not hurt, then my bad action is inconsequential.

These result of these perspectives is expressed in Isaiah 5:20-21, which says, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!”

1. Good is evil, and evil is good.
2. Character and outcome (power, privilege) have never been farther apart.
3. Possession is esteemed almost regardless of the process.
4. There’s a lack of moral, personal responsibility and owning our actions. If we do wrong, we blame others instead of being sorry.
5. “Good” is a relative term because there are no absolutes of right and wrong.
6. If it feels good, do it.

Teaching text: Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus commenting on the servant being “good” was a criteria or reflection of what He was looking at and judging. “Good” in the context of the parable means “useful,” “worthwhile,” and “of high quality.” It is a reflection of character, of doing good and following through on what was asked. It is to be helpful and serve others. This is the initial look at good, and one that we can apply to our lives in our attitudes, actions, and motives. We need to step back and take a bigger look at the concept of “good” if we are to live above the chaos of today—to make a difference in this world.

What is the biblical basis for living out of the concept of good?

Who defines good? If good is relative, does anything go? Who lives consistently even to their own standard? Jesus was the only human who was good (without sin and expressing unconditional love). Good should define who we are, what we do, and why we do it. It gives us a moral and absolute standard independent of what others think or do. (See Matthew 7:3.)

1. Good vs. evil – Why is there so much suffering and pain?

This excerpt from a message by Ravi Zacharias sheds some light – *“The one thorn in the side of the theistic framework is the problem of evil, the problem of pain, the problem of suffering. It’s the most real question, frankly. How can an all-powerful, all-sovereign and all-good God allow so much pain and suffering in this world? What’s the answer? How can there be a ‘good God’ in a world which plays host to such abject suffering at every turn?”*

“When we acknowledge the presence of good and evil in the world, we are invoking a moral law in order to differentiate between the two. The very nature of good and evil cannot be defined without an ultimate moral law as the yardstick. So, who is behind this all-encompassing framework? You cannot invoke a moral law without a moral lawgiver,” Zacharias explained, noting that many try to disprove God by insisting that He could not feasibly exist considering the tremendous suffering in the world. *“The argument, therefore, contradicts itself. If there’s no God, then there’s no ultimate moral law—so how do you define good and evil?”*

Good and evil exist. The Lord is over it all, and evil does not deny His power or presence.

2. Origin and source of good is God.

Psalm 100:5 says, *“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations”* (NIV). The only one who is good is God. Good is found in Christ: both who He was and what He did (death on the cross for our evil and for our righteousness). God/Christ are good. This goodness is more than being useful or productive; it is found in His nature, which is love. Is there goodness in man? **Matthew 19:16-17** reflects on the rich young ruler, *“And someone came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?’ 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.’”* (See also Mark 10:18.)

There is no good in man apart from God. We are created in His image and valued, yet we are not good in and of ourselves. Our value and uniqueness come from the fact we are made to reflect Christ. Yet, much like a car without gas, when we are without the Lord, we are not useful nor can be used by Him. Only in

accepting forgiveness of sin and having the Spirit indwelling us are we good. That goodness comes from the righteousness of Christ (identity) that is imputed to us, and then our actions are growing to reflect His life in us.

3. *God's purposes and the power of good.*

- **Romans 8:28** says, *“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.”*
- **Psalm 73:28** says, *“But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of Your works.”*
- **James 1:17** says, *“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.”*

God is in control to work things for the good of His kingdom and for our eternal good. God makes goodness available to all. Good is powerful—it can overcome evil. **Romans 12:21** says, *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

4. *Description of man.*

- **Genesis 1:26, 31** says, *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”*
- **Genesis 3:4-5** says, *“The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”*
- **Luke 6:43-45** says, *“For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”*

Originally, we were created good and declared very good. Sin entered into man and forever separated man from God. Good in man can only be derived from Christ’s work on the cross and our receiving it.

5. *Description of good works – This should be the fruit of our lives.*

- **Matthew 5:16** says, *“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”*
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** says, *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*
- **Luke 6:35** says, *“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.”*
- **Ephesians 2:10** says, *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”*

When we receive Christ, we are transformed. We are also made for good works—Kingdom works of God flowing through us.

6. Description of what is good.

- Micah 6:8 says, “*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, “*But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.*”
- Galatians 5:22-23 says, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*”

Good is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

7. Doing good has an impact.

It glorifies the Lord, builds up others, and has a reward.

- 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “*For 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.*”

All of our actions and attitudes will be judged on the basis of good or bad. We will be given an eternal wage or reward.

Application:

1. The quality of each man’s work will be tested. Motive is equal to or more important than the product of our work! The Lord will judge us accordingly.
2. Do the next, best, good thing.
3. Finally, GOOD is best defined by LOVE—God’s love for us, Christ’s death on the cross.

Conclusion: If we are to stand before the Lord and hear “Well done, good and faithful servant,” being good will be an examination of our heart, our motives, and our love for the Lord, our neighbors, and even our enemies.

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