

# Who Is Like Our God: Omnibenevolence – Week 12

## INTRO

A.W. Tozer – “What comes into our minds when we think of GOD is the most important thing about us.”

- Our view of GOD shapes our words, actions, and thoughts, and purpose.
- Like Moses, we cry out, “Show me your face.”

There are two categories of God’s attributes:

1. **God’s greatness** – Attributes of His infinite power.
2. **God’s goodness** – Attributes of His perfect personality.
  - a. These are the attributes which He shares with mankind.
    - i. Ex. Wisdom, Justice, Holiness, Love – **Tonight: Goodness**

“God is good, all the time. And all the time, God is good... because that’s His nature.”  
– Father Mike

His goodness is a vast subject because it is inherent in every one of His attributes. His love is good. His justice is good. His wisdom is good. His wrath is good. His omnipotence is good.

When we study God’s goodness there are two aspects to it. There is His moral goodness AND His benevolent goodness.

**1) Moral Goodness** - His perfect uprightness seen in His holiness and justice. Beginning with His moral goodness, we’ll have to push back against the cultural voice that says morality is subjective for each person.

- “The sky is blue” (objective) **VS.** “The sky is pretty.” (subjective)
- There is either a standard of right and wrong (objective) **OR** right and wrong is solely based on opinion and perspective (subjective/relative).

## HOOK

**Philip Chism Trial** – 14 y/o – Attacked, stripped, raped, murdered, robbed, and transported in a trash can the unconscious body of Colleen, a 24 y/o teacher in Massachusetts, out to the woods where he posed her bloody body, set up a canvas and painted a portrait of it. Because he committed the crime as a minor, the law was unclear how to charge him. Should he be tried as an adult because of how heinous his crime was? Does he deserve the insanity plea?

Defense attorney, Denise Regan, argued he suffered an “acute psychotic episode brought on by early schizophrenia.” “When Philip Chism followed Ms. Ritzer into the bathroom ... he was not himself ... **he didn’t choose to do this. What other than an overpowering mental illness could have caused Philip Chism to do these acts?**”

- He must be psychotic to have done this. = A logical fallacy (circular argument) – He must be crazy to have done this. Because he’s done this, he must be crazy.
- She’s claiming the only explanation for the extreme brutality of his crime is if an outside force caused it like mental illness or voices in his head. **“What other than an overpowering mental illness could have caused Philip Chism to do these acts?”**
  - She denies that anyone in their right mind could commit evil. But it doesn’t take an outside force to commit atrocities only an inward one = sin.

Prosecuting Attorney, Kate MacDougal - “We think we understand prejudice.... But let me suggest to you there is a different kind of prejudice. One far more appealing, and one we hold a lot closer to our hearts. And that is our view of the world, our hope, the idea that things are predictable.... There is **not one single person in this courtroom that wants to believe that a 14-year-old boy could have done this and not be crazy.** But **doing something so awful does not make you crazy**.... Ladies and gentleman, let me respectfully suggest to you that Philip Chism is no more entitled to your prejudice of hope... There is overwhelming evidence in this case beyond any reasonable doubt that Philip Chism was not suffering from a mental disease or defect on Oct. 22, 2013, that Philip **Chism knew right from wrong and could choose right from wrong.** He did it repeatedly over the course of that afternoon. **He just didn’t do it when it mattered.** He had a goal, a terrible, terrible purpose.”

- **What is the house of cards the defense attorney is trying to build?** Evil is an external force, therefore he’s not responsible for his actions.
- So, the prosecutor pulls the rug out from under that proposal by revealing a common prejudice. The faulty view that humans (Chism) are inherently good. Evil exists within a person without the need for insanity to do wrong.
- Further, she made the claim that he chose to do wrong.
  - **Does everyone agree he did wrong? How can you know that without assuming there is an objective standard of decency, of goodness, which he violated?**

Objective Morality – The belief there’s an external consistent, complete, and unwavering moral standard by which our actions are compared to know right from wrong.

- **How do you know when you’re succeeding with a puzzle?** You look at the picture. It’s the standard. How do you know when it’s finished?
- If there is objective morality, it must come from outside humanity to be applicable to everyone like a common puzzle picture, which when violated, we all innately know.

Subjective/Relative Morality – The belief there is no such thing as right and wrong. Everyone can have their own moral standard by which they judge their actions. (“Everyone doing what is right in their own eyes.” – **Proverbs 12:15**)

- “Do whatever seems good to you. It’s all relative.”

**C.S. Lewis – Mere Christianity** – Opening chapters give 8 reasons for believing in an objective moral standard. Here are two.

1. Human History – All civilizations have agreed that certain behaviors are decent and some are reprehensible (ex. Hurting the innocent for pleasure). Humanity seems to conform to a consistent objective standard of ethics.
2. Human Offense – Even a person claiming to be a moral relativist will be offended and act like there’s an objective standard when they are wronged.
  - a. (Ex. Stealing the stereo.)
    - i. **Student** – “Why are you so afraid of subjective moral reasoning?”
 

**Speaker** – “Do you lock your doors at night? Are you concerned a moral relativist will come into your house while you’re sleeping?”
  - b. People like subjective morality as long as it allows them to do what they want. They are suddenly inconsistent when someone’s subjective morality mistreats them or imposes their morality on them.
  - c. **Alycia Wood** (degree in criminal justice and masters in social justice) – “If we remove objective morality, we need to do away with out criminal justice systems and prisons and all punishments.”

**Why do people fight so hard for relative morality?** According to C.S. Lewis, if morality is objective then it cannot be from within a person. It must come from outside a person to be consistent over time and cultures. If it comes from outside of us, then it must be above us. If it is above us, then there must be a higher orchestrator of creation – a God. If there is a God, they must surrender their desires and conform to His desires.

- In short, they don’t get to do whatever they want to do.
- The question must be asked, “What’s more important to an atheist? The truth or what they want to believe is true?”

## BOOK

BUT, there IS objective goodness.

**Deuteronomy 32:4** - “The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.”

**James 1:17** - *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

**Mark 10:18** - *No one is good except God alone.*

## LOOK

He is the Creator of space, matter, time, AND the moral laws inherent in His creation. He will always act in accordance to what is right, true, and good. There is no evil in Him. His intentions, motivations, actions, and the outcomes of His plans are always perfect. **Therefore, everything which He does is worthy of praise and the highest approval.**

He is not good according to our understanding of what goodness is. **All right and wrong is measured against Him because He IS perfect goodness.**

- Like the puzzle example, EVERYTHING is more or less “good” by how close it is to God’s character. **Evil is rebellion against God’s perfect and holy standard.**
- **Isaiah 64:6** - *We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.*
  - Against His goodness, we are in open rebellion, evil to the core from the inside out.
  - This brings us to the second aspect of His goodness. The only way Adam and Eve didn’t disintegrate like a Thanos snap at their first sin, is because God gives goodness that isn’t deserved = grace.
  - This brings us to the second aspect of His goodness, His omnibenevolence.

## **2) Omnibenevolence** – His kindness and graciousness toward us, the undeserving!

All goodness is of Him. He is a perpetual fountain of goodness. There are waves of goodness descending from His throne to His creation.

**Psalm 34:8** – *Oh, taste and see that the LORD is **good**! Blessed are those who take refuge in Him!*

**Psalm 106:1** – *Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is **good**, for His steadfast love endures forever!*

He is worthy of continual thanksgiving as we recognize the goodness He showers down on us. He is merciful, charitable, generous, giving, caring, and lavish with His gifts towards us.

## Categories of His Goodness

1) God is good to ALL His creation (even the animal kingdom).

- **Psalm 145:9,15-17** - *The LORD is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made. 15 The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. 16 You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing. 17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His works.*
- **Matthew 6:26** - *Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.*
- **Psalm 104:25-27** - *Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. 26 There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. 27 These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.*
  - The last words of God in Jonah – “What about the cows?!”

2) God is good to unbelievers. Theologians call this common grace.

- **Acts 14:17** – *In past generations He allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Yet He did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.*
- God blesses unbelievers with marriage, children, accomplishments, talents, discoveries, friendships, enjoyment of creation, the ability to feel loved, and the patience of allowing them wake up in the morning and take another breath. = common grace

He does this for two reasons:

- **1)** To lead them to repentance.
- **2)** To leave them without excuse, so their punishment is just.
  - **Romans 2:4-5** - *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

### 3) God is good to His people (with physical blessings and spiritual blessings)!

- **Physical** - **Matthew 7:9-11** - *Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*
- **Spiritual** - **1 Peter 2:9** - *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*
- **Psalm 34:10** - *Those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*
- **Psalm 84:11** - *For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.*
- God delights in meeting our needs. He delights in giving good gifts. And He blesses us according to His sovereign will.

### Expressions of His Goodness to His people

**1) The ultimate expression of His goodness** is His redemption of His people through giving Himself as a sacrifice to pay the penalty and appease His own wrath against sin. It was His omnibenevolence, His unimaginable grace that He would transform unworthy sinners into the image of His son.

- **Romans 5:8** - *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**2) His goodness allows and even ordains trials and sufferings** to shape His people.

- **Romans 5:3-5** - *We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*
  - Ex. Michelangelo, on the statue of David – “All I did was chip away everything that didn’t look like David.”
    - God is chipping away everything in us that looks like His son. Most of the time, at the top of our prayer list is, “Lord, take away the hammer. Take away the chisel.” – Loui Giglio
    - These sufferings are the very tools He’s using to mold us.

**3) His goodness transfers through us to others.**

- **Matthew 5:44-45** - *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*
  - “God’s kind to the wicked and the righteous. Be like God.”
- **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.*

THIS is a God we can trust.

One of our enemy’s greatest strategies is to get us to doubt the goodness of God. May we never shrink back, cave in, or be deceived. May we repel those lies with the shield of faith and cut through lies with the sword of His word.

**Deuteronomy 32:4** - *“The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.”*

**Psalms 34:8** – *Oh, taste and see that the LORD is **good**! Blessed are those who take refuge in Him!*

## RECAP

- God’s goodness is expressed in His moral perfection AND His undeserved blessings on creation.
- Because He is the source and standard of all goodness, morality IS objective, unwavering, and consistent.
- We are not good. In fact, we stand in gross rebellion to Goodness (God).
- Because of His omnibenevolence, He withholds judgment and even gives gifts to creation, believers, and even unbelievers.
- He expresses His goodness in 1) forming His people, in 2) loving through His people, and His ultimate expression of goodness was 3) at the cross of Jesus Christ where He redeemed His people.

## TOOK

Challenge: Who is undeserving of your goodness? (All goodness is of God, so it isn’t yours.) Go and be good to them.

- **Luke 6:27-28** - *Love your enemies, do **good** to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.*