

The Good and Beautiful God

Part 1, Chapter 3 – God is Trustworthy

SUMMARY

Just because someone has attributes, it does not automatically equate to their intent and treatment toward you. A wise man might give his thoughts or keep them to himself, a wealthy man could give or keep money, a violent man may choose or not to rob you. Knowing God's Character is foundational, but trusting Him and His response is another issue.

Beginning Chapter 3, we start to have a look at how trust works, why it develops, where it can fall off of the rails, and why it is important to consider our stance before Father. His intent is to show and convince us that He is Trustworthy.

KEY POINTS

Understanding someone's character is an important issue. Knowing what to expect from that character and trusting it is a whole other issue.

Perhaps one of the main, universal drivers shared by every human is a desire for the avoidance of pain. Beginning at that premise, we can possibly trace the beginnings of every behavior, decision and hope. And perhaps this is because the existence we experience in life is the polar opposite of the state of existence for which we were intended – one of peace surrounding a perfect God Who knows no deficiency. We just weren't made for this fallenness.

Found both in Scripture and the hopeful tales spun by mankind, in 'Heaven' there is no need, pain, loss – only joy, gladness, provision, peace. It seems in the end, we are all drawn to this. Even the Lost hope for the dead to be 'in a better place'.

A correct understanding of Scripture will repair the fallacies we attribute to God. Yet, the Goal of God and His Word are not simply to rescue us from Hell – it is to move us increasingly into relationship with the God with Whom we will reside, once the wrath we're due has been addressed.

The report of Creation heralds perfection. Everything began "very good" ([Gen 1.31](#)). Scripture is replete with assurances of God's goodness. We are told He is right, fair, full of mercy, even good intent. There is little room for argument concerning His Character. However, to varying degrees we are faced with a disconnect between God's Character and how we trust He will respond to us. Now, 'varying degrees' is an enormous understatement. As we consider Jesus' trust of Father and learn to compare it to our own warped state and outlook, we face a seemingly bottomless chasm of mistrust. Father understands this, and His work is to continually invite us to bridge that ravine with Truth and confirmation. We are His workmanship ([Eph 2.10](#)), and the works He brings us to walk in only succeed as we

engage these works trusting Him (Jn 15.5). These exercises build our trust in His Character and response.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. **Eph 2.10**

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **Jn 15.5**

Father calls each and every human towards a primary Goal, and every Believer participates in their progress towards that Goal.

Father of course understands this, and goes to endless lengths to help and to accommodate us towards the Goal. Laying a foundation of Who He Is through Scripture, the next course of bricks begins. He teaches us to trust that He will not keep these attributes to Himself, but instead work to in us to “taste and see that the Lord is good”.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! **Ps 34.8**

God’s goodness is a given, yet not until we would taste and take refuge are we blessed. Why? Because knowing of His Character is one issue, while trusting His Character as directed towards us is a whole other issue.

In the same way that an expert in a field who doesn’t have hands-on experience is incomplete, so too are we if we thoroughly know the reports of God in Scripture yet lack a trust borne out of an engaging experience with Him.

How will we grow to know what to expect from Someone Who is unseen?

So herein lays the problem: How would we hope to grow in our understanding of and trust in an invisible Person? Without reservation, we can agree that a knowledge of Him through the Scriptures is essential, lest we would know of and believe in a God other than the One written of. But remember, we all begin this Walk ignorant of Him, and ignorant of the Scriptures.

Consider the universal progression every human is called to tread:

- Recognize there is a God
- See the Scope of His presence and involvement
- See our core opposition to Him and His ways
- Hear His call and His demand to repent and return to Him
- Acknowledge our need for Him
- Ask for Rescue from our fallen state
- Recognize this newly reconciled relationship
- Cooperate towards a progressively changed ‘heart’
- Patiently help others to realize the same you’ve learned
- Prepare to meet Him

Notice that this cycle applies to us across the spectrum – whether we're not yet Saved, or if we've followed Him all of our life since Salvation. The Lost finds rescue in the cycle; the Saved finds progressing Sanctification. In both scenarios, the participant is called to and learns to trust Him.

The cycle of knowing, understanding and trusting Him is an upward ascending and increasing spiral, like a spring small at the bottom growing larger at the top. As He nurtures us, all steps of this cycle are played over and over again in an expanding success. We can even locate ourselves in this progression before or after receiving Salvation – the cycle number you're on might be different, but the process repeats and remains the same because the Goal remains the same. It is a lifetime-long road, but He is caring and patient.

To increasingly engage in the above requires trust in God, yet a God we are to progressively know better. And so the question was posed: Consider other people in your life who represented an influence over you. For instance, what characteristics did (presumably) your Dad have, and how do you recognize the effects your view of God the Father? Why? Because we begin life ignorant of God, perhaps first learning about influencing characteristics from our Dads. In traditional families, we will first know more of our Dad's/Influencer's character before learning Father's. This foundation preemptively colors our understanding and attitude about authority, grace, God, and how we can expect Him to respond. Not intended in the least to be psycho-babble, nor an excuse for our choices, we cannot seem to escape what even Sesame Street teaches toddlers – to know something new, build upon something similar you already understand.

From Scripture, we are also instructed to learn from parallels in the same way – Moses' instructions of the Tabernacle and Laws were a shadow ([Heb 8.4-5](#)), sound leaders are to be imitated ([Heb 13.17](#)), and we have Jesus' example to follow ([1 Pet 2.21](#)).

Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. 5 They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." **Heb 8.4-5**

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. **Heb 13.17**

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. **1 Pet 2.21**

The Influencers in our lives, good or bad, can be a blessing – take care to test your narrative and weigh it against the true Model.

We trotted out the question concerning our Dads' influence on our view of Father, and got answers across the spectrum – good characteristics leading us to God, bad traits informing us of a problem in contrast to His traits, and even a neutral influence neither good nor bad. In our group's case, they all influenced our path to God. Perhaps we all know of someone whose Influencers have helped to spin them off into destruction, or even a very good person who has still failed to embrace God.

If we agree that the universal progression every person is called to tread listed above is true, and that our view of God is effected by our Influencers, then we can acknowledge it is imperative to run all influences – what we read, hear, associate with, believe – through the sieve of Scripture. We must derive what is called right by the Truth, and repair our perceptions. On the topic of trusting Father, what things are snagging you?

A personal experience.

I was gently asked, “I notice you refer to God the Father as “Father”. Would you please explain that?”

After more thought, my answer is that I conclude it is Scriptural ([Rom 8.14-17](#)), a term of glad submission and endearment, and an expression of a personal relationship He beckons me to.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. **Rom 8.14-17**

I perceive a godly Dad as one who strives to be wise, provides instruction and direction, protects, and insists on God’s way in patience and love. Imitating Jesus, he would do everything he could to live up to his role in the world (not just in the home, and beyond being only a ‘spiritual leader’) as prophet, priest, and king. All of these attributes and responses are perfectly declared and demonstrated by Father God. I love His Pure dealings with me, and His forging of these same attributes in me as His child.

Those who have influenced me throughout my life have not been many of these things – both persons of bad character overall, and even fellow fallen Believers who are learning holiness like I am. But in a clear and absolute way, I recount how God has increasingly been that perfect Father for me. It is not that He has increased, but instead He has helped me increasingly embrace Who He fully Is and recognize His dealings with me. The outcome of any progressively Sanctified heart includes a repaired understanding of Him, and with repentance, an ever wider lens that sees Him. Father, our Heavenly Father, works towards fulfilling His intent to grow each of us this way. He has been consistent and true to me, and this is why I choose to reverently call Him Father.

Consider early Church father Polycarp’s response to those who would have him deny Christ. There stood a man who had learned to trust God, and I want to know Him in the same way.

The proconsul then urged him, saying, “Swear, and I will release thee; — reproach Christ.” Polycarp answered, “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?” At the stake, to which he was only tied, but not nailed as usual, as he assured them he should stand immovable, the flames, on their kindling the fagots, encircled his body, like an arch, without touching him, and the executioner, on seeing this, was ordered to pierce him with a sword when so great a quantity of blood flowed out as extinguished the fire.

My privilege of a growing closeness to Father cannot be special or unique – I read in the Word that this relationship is intended for every human being who would embrace Christ, obey the Spirit, and trust Father.