

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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God is Good

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The prayer many a child has been taught to say at the dinner table is: “*God is great; God is good; let us thank Him for our food... Amen.*”

Thanking God for our food is a good start for our young. Recognizing God’s greatness as the provider of our food, while also deserving our thanks is a good start. Knowing that God is good is a great start. These concepts form a suitable foundation for true understanding, and humble prayer benefiting any young child. But our next step as parents is to help our children mature in understanding. The concept of “good” is developed from the beginning of creation in the Old Testament to a more mature understanding in the days of the prophets. Such understanding is helpful as we try to explain “God is good” to our children.

Genesis begins with creation. Good begins with God. When God said, “*Let there be light,*” He “*saw that it was good*” (*Genesis 1:4*). God viewing His gathering the seas into one place, allowing dry land to appear, and letting the earth bring forth productive herbs and fruit trees, moved Him to declare “it was good” (*Genesis 1:9-12*). The sun, moon and stars in the

heavens, the swarming fish in the seas, the flying birds in the open sky, and the land animals were created with God looking over it all with an approving “good.” (*Genesis 1:18, 21, 25*). When He created man in His own image and looked upon His six days of creative work, He saw it all as being “*very good*” (*Genesis 1:31*).

The Greeks had primarily two words translated “good” in the New Testament. KALOS denoted something which was excellent in character. AGATHOS, while not ignoring excellence in being, emphasized something that was beneficial in effect. Looking at nature we can view its excellence and beauty of being, while experiencing the benefits of light, vegetables, fruit and meat for our existence.

From the beginning, we learn that God is the source for “good” and is the One who defines “good.”

God created mankind as being innocent. The man and woman were naked and were not ashamed (*Genesis 2:25*). But we are introduced to the antithesis of “good” in this same chapter: “evil.” There was the tree of “*the knowledge of good and evil*” in the garden where Adam and

Eve lived. God commanded them not to partake of its fruit. However, being “like God” was the final key that unlocked Eve’s resistance to the Devil’s lies for she desired to “be wise” rather than be obedient to God. Innocence was lost when evil prevailed, while spiritual separation from God was experienced (*Genesis 3*).

While not knowing good and evil is a characteristic of innocence (*Deuteronomy 1:39*), our children will mature, and must be able to discern good and evil (*Hebrews 5:14*). They must with this knowledge “*abhor that which is evil*” and “*cleave to that which is good*” (*Romans 12:9*).

Micah 6:8 has been described as “the most comprehensive and all-embracing statements in the Old Testament” (*The Minor Prophets; Homer Hailey; page 214*). Micah offers parents a good definition of “good” as defined by “God.” Micah writes that Jehovah requires one to “*do justly ... love kindness, and ...walk humbly with thy God.*” Doing what is just, and being kind toward our fellow man, while walking in humble obedience before God is a great place to demonstrate for our children that which is “good.”