

Goodness of God: How to deal with SMS

SMS = Short messaging service

SMS = Short memory syndrome!

This was a problem for the children of Israel on their journey out of Egypt. Their circumstances contributed to them soon forgetting God's goodness and the miraculous way in which He freed them from the tyranny of their oppressors, the Egyptians. It's not just the Israelites who forget!!

Psalm 103:1-5

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we want to establish a culture rich in the knowledge, and acknowledgment that God is good - all of the time. The question is, how does this happen?

The cultures we are looking at and wish to be our reality are a bit like a canvass backdrop on to which the mix of our lives sits. It's against the backdrop of the goodness of God that we comfort one another and celebrate with one another. The problem is that when we go through times of struggle, hardship, loss or whatever, we don't see a God who is good. We begin to question His goodness and rationalize as to why He can't be good all of the time (or much of the time!). Alternatively, we start to ask what we are doing wrong or that God simply doesn't love us.

There are ways our thinking and choices can change to agree with the truth of how the bible describes God, without denying our pain and disappointments.

Let's 'C' how the Holy Spirit can help us establish this canvas:

Cultivate healthy beliefs

Our beliefs can be shaped more by our life experiences (or those of friends and family) rather than by God and His word. "I like to believe."

To cultivate something means to put in the work necessary to reap and crop or fruit in due season. When we make the choice to cultivate we need the Holy Spirit's help in the same way the farmer needs God's help with things such as the weather and the natural principles He has ordained in nature.

Focus on reading stories of God's goodness, both in the bible and the biographies of other Christians who tell story after story of His goodness and

faithfulness. Meditate regularly on scriptures that remind us that God is good. Choose to reject any lies we believe about God and how He sees us.

Confess God's goodness

We so easily speak about our problems and difficulties to one another and perhaps rarely talk (confess) of the good things God is doing in and around us. We want to be real with one another as we build relationships together but it's very easy to get stuck in a cycle of negativity. It's all too easy to form a 'community of negativity' and before long our 'agreement' can be more to do with slipping downhill rather than encouraging one another in our faith and hope. We can find ourselves sitting in a rut of dullness.

We can help ourselves by:

- ~ Declaring the truth of the goodness of God
- ~ Sharing good news with one another

Confirm God's goodness

Telling stories and sharing testimonies is a powerful and affective way to confirm God's goodness. The cardboard testimonies gave us a moving and powerful insight into the good things God is doing in our lives. By sharing like this we are not only being good news but we are agreeing with what heaven is orchestrating through the life of the Spirit at work in us and through us. Testimony can help to build faith and hope, confidence comes when we know God has done it before and done it in a life of another.

Celebrate God's goodness

We can be so restrained in our response to God and His ongoing goodness. Quite apart from what He is doing in our lives today we have a hope and a future secured and rescued from the condemnation we once lived in. We really should be the happiest and most secure people on earth as we understand the revelation of who we now are in Christ.

I'd really love us to have a celebrating and partying culture where we don't hold back and our corporate praise, worship and thanksgiving only needs the touch paper to be lit. Celebration of course doesn't need to wait until we are together, we can celebrate by communicating messages of encouragement and appreciation through all the communication tools at our disposal.

Consume God's goodness

“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”

We can nourish ourselves on the goodness of God and His word by feeding ourselves well. A healthy diet includes digesting what He is saying carefully by meditating and considering it, asking for Him to reveal the truth behind what is written.

Questions and ideas for Groups

1. Spend some time in quiet and ask the Holy Spirit to bring back into your memory the occasions when God has done something for you or provided something at just the right time. Write them down and then share with the group. After this there may be opportunity to encourage one another and to pray/prophecy over one another.
2. What scriptures can you think of that speak about eating or nourishing yourself on God's goodness and word?
3. As a group, think about God's goodness and on a large piece of paper, write down two or three 'declarations' that you could speak out during the week.
4. During the week, read Psalm 103:1-5 every day and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through it and use it as a basis for personal thanksgiving and prayer.