

Study Guide

Monday, July 12. Read Mark 10:17-25. In this passage, Jesus makes the statement that only God is truly good. When we think of goodness, we must start at the top. The Psalmist puts it like this: **Taste and see that the Lord is good.** He has never made a wrong call. **Lord God Almighty, true and just are all Your judgments.** The writers of Scripture never stopped wondering at the sheer goodness of God. When a mind is spiritually sane and right, it is filled with thoughts about what a good God God is. God has never held a grudge: **For the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting.** He has never, in all eternity, spoken a deceptive word, never engaged in an ungracious deed. There has never been a prayer He hasn't heard, never been a repentant sinner He wouldn't forgive. Think of His goodness today. Make it a priority to thank God for his goodness in your prayers.

Tuesday, July 13 – Read Mark 10:17-25. Good teacher, what do I need to do? Jesus walks him through the Commandments. The average person thinks he or she is twice as likely to obey the Ten Commandments as anybody else. **All these I have kept since I was a child.** As long as I compare myself to other people, I can always find somebody else who is doing worse than I am and think I grade out pretty well. But we have this God who, when it comes to the Goodness Factor, never aims low, and He's never had a dark thought, and He's never said a dark word and He's never done a dark deed, and that's His plan for His creation. For those of you who know the Bible pretty well, when in the Bible did anybody ever encounter God—this holy transcending God—and come away saying: You know, from a moral standpoint, I'm doing surprisingly well. Isaiah said I have unclean lips. Peter said get away from me Lord. The woman at the well was changed. Zacchaeus was changed. The message from Jesus: I will help you change. I will give you my Spirit and part of that is being good.

Wednesday, July 14 – What if a Goodness Revolution swept through Dothan? No one would have to lock a door or lock a car. Nobody would have to worry no matter what kind of neighborhood they were in. No child in a city would have to recoil at something that sounded like it might have been a gunshot. What if there were a Goodness Revolution in the church, and people voluntarily gave up the best parking spots and voluntarily gave up the best seats, and unity flowed all the time, and sermons always ended on time? What if you were to ask Jesus to do a Goodness Revolution in you? In your heart? In your relationships? In your eyes? In your mouth? In your work? What if Jesus were to do a Goodness Revolution in you? Spend this day praying for the Spirit to give you the fruit of goodness.

Thursday, July 15 – Read 2 Samuel 9. The word translated “kindness” is one of those words in the Bible that is packed full of meaning. In its fullest sense, the word means: love, steadfastness, covenantal friendship, loyal love, justice. The first thing he does is to speak Mephibosheth's name. David said “Mephibosheth!” In speaking his name, David recognizes Mephibosheth as a person—not some nameless enemy and not a nameless exile. He's not a category of victim or fugitive. He's a person. He has a name and David knows him. Here's the lesson for you and for me. We can't show Kindness in general. We can't love by categories. We can't perform acts of Kindness in abstract. We can only love and show real Kindness to a named person. Practice this week to meet people and use their name when talking: in the check out line, in the movie line, at the gas pump.

Friday, July 16– Read 2 Samuel 9. David says: **I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather, Saul, and you will always eat at my table.** Columnist Cal Thomas once wrote: *Love talked about is easily ignored, but love demonstrated is irresistible.* And what David does makes Love and Kindness irresistible. He does more than just speak kind and reassuring words; he puts love into action—into something as tangible as three meals a day at the King's table. That sort of Love and Kindness cannot be ignored; that sort of Love and Kindness always make a difference. Again there's a lesson here for you and for me. Real Kindness requires action. Kindness is a way of life that works for the good of another. Kindness is bringing out the best in someone—seeing beneath or behind the labels that society may have placed on them. Labels like: disabled, inconvenient, worthless, & unlovable. Kindness is seeing through those labels to recognize a person of incredible value, an individual loved by God. Kindness is love in action. Sometimes it is demonstrated in ways as simple as calling someone by name and sometimes in tangible ways that meet a real need, but Kindness always makes a difference.