

**LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS
for the Week of March 5, 2017**

**BEAUTIFUL ORTHODOXY:
The Good and Merciful God
Exodus 33:18-23; 34:4-7; Matthew 7:9-12**

1. How is your daily reading in Proverbs going? Take a few minutes to share some of your favorite proverbs so far. What has God has been teaching you lately about Godly wisdom vs. human wisdom?
2. When I think about God, the following statements ring true for me (check the statements below that line up with your ideas about God):

_____ God wants me to try harder.

_____ God blesses me when I'm good and punishes me when I'm bad.

_____ God is delighted with me.

_____ God is angry and frustrated with me and my lack of obedience.

_____ God is generous and trustworthy.

_____ God is unpredictable and impulsive.

_____ God is more loving than holy.

_____ God is more holy than loving.

If I had to describe who God is to me right now in my own words, I would say:

3. What does it mean to say "God is GOOD." Read and study the scriptures below. What does each passage specifically teach us about God's goodness?
Exodus 33:18-23; 34:4-7

Psalm 107

Matthew 7:9-12

Matthew 9:9-13

4. James Bryan Smith writes: “Jesus revealed his Father to us. The New Testament reveals a God who is pulsing with goodness and power and love and beauty. To know the God of Jesus is to know the truth about who God really is” (*The Good and Beautiful God*). Today people claim to believe or not believe in God. But who is this God they believe in, or doubt? The Christian disciple must be vigilant and discerning. He must constantly ask: *Is this understanding of God consistent with the God Jesus has revealed to us?* Have you (or someone you know) ever struggled with a faulty or false understanding of who God is? What happened as a result? How does our notion of God’s character impact the way we think, act, and treat others?

5. Jesus said, “No one is good except God alone” (**Mark 10:18**). What did he mean by this? When we, or others, inexplicably avoid doom or disaster or death, we often exclaim: “Isn’t God good?” But what if God hadn’t spared our lives? Would he *still* be good? Why or why not?

The Bible doesn’t simply say “God *does* good things.” It boldly declares that He IS good (**Psalms 119:65-68**). Why is this such an important distinction for us to understand and share with others? What difference does this make?

6. The Bible says “God is love” (see **1 John 4:7-8**). So, does it follow then that love is God? Our surrounding culture seems to think so. Why is it so essential for Christians to differentiate between the two today? What *is* the difference?

7. Today more and more people (and especially young people) equate God and Christianity with all that is bad and divisive and hateful, instead of good and true and beautiful. They’re afraid that if they were to become Christians they would actually become *worse* people (i.e., less tolerant and loving, less forgiving, less open and friendly, less honest and authentic, less human and humble), not *better* people! This is a relatively new occurrence in our culture. What do you think led to this? How did we get to this point? Read **Matthew 9:9-13** again, and **Luke 15:11-24**. Jesus paints a completely different picture of God than the God many reject today. What kind of radical difference would it make if we consistently presented the God of Jesus to our unbelieving neighbors vs. the God of politics and religion? What will you do this week to reflect and represent to others the God who is Good and True and Beautiful (see **2 Corinthians 5:16-21**)?