

December 11

James 1:17 (NIV)

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Worship song suggestion: Goodness of God by Jenn Johnson & Bethel Music

On January 26, 2020, I remember seeing the BREAKING NEWS flash that Kobe Bryant and his daughter had been tragically killed in a helicopter crash. I am not an avid basketball fan but the grief of this hit me. I pondered how, in a matter of moments, a life can suddenly change. Those changes then act as a ripple effect that is felt by everyone who is left behind. In the two months that followed, our society was quickly stricken with grief from so many different angles. In this past year, it has felt like as soon as we begin the healing process from one difficulty, we uncover new hardships.

Knowing Christ does not give us a free pass from grief. It does, however, invite us to a place of peace in the chaos. In the scripture for today, James describes the goodness of God. This is an incredibly important theme throughout the Bible, that God's goodness follows us all the days of our lives. But what does it look like to be followed by goodness? Goodness can feel like peace and truth. It can feel like quiet and rest. The concept that God is so good that He follows us around to keep putting His goodness on us is beautiful.

But what about in those seasons where we feel stuck in the shadows? Many times, God gets blamed for things that He didn't do. When tragedy and loss hit we ask, "Why, God?" But we do not have a God that teaches us lessons through destruction. God is good and never changes. The sun never stops burning hot and bright – but daily, it is hidden by the shifting shadows and rotation of the earth. Our perspective gets shadowed, but the reality is unchanged. God, the Father of the heavenly lights, never stops burning bright and hot in His goodness, holiness, and love for His children. Our perspective may be shadowed, but God's goodness never stops running after us.

This Advent, this season of waiting, may we continue to acknowledge that God is the source of all that is good in our lives, and what will be good in the future.

~ Vera Smith