

Fruit Of The Spirit — Goodness

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

--Galatians 5:22-23

Leader's Note: This study will focus on the subject of "goodness." We'll particularly look at how it is used in a Gospel sense versus the more secular definition.

Part 1: "Good" in Modern Terms

? What are some ways that we use the word "good" in English?

List examples below:

? What does "good" mean in each of the following expressions?

1) Good Experience

Possible Answer: "There was some kind of benefit to me in the experience."

2) Good Friend

Possible Answer: "Dependable, can be counted on. The relationship benefits me."

3) Good Heart

Possible Answer: "Morally upright - good by God's standard of virtue."

Optional Transition: Now it's time to dive into the Bible! Let's think about how the word "good" is being used in each of the following passages. Read each one and then discuss it briefly.

Part 2: "Good" in Old Testament Terms

Genesis 1:31

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

? How do we define goodness based on this passage?

Possible Answer: Creation was good because God created it to be so!

Amos 5:4-15

⁴ This is what the Lord says to Israel:

“Seek me and live;

⁵ do not seek Bethel,

do not go to Gilgal,

do not journey to Beersheba.

For Gilgal will surely go into exile,

and Bethel will be reduced to nothing.”

⁶ Seek the Lord and live,

or he will sweep through the tribes of Joseph like a fire;

it will devour them,

and Bethel will have no one to quench it.

⁷ There are those who turn justice into bitterness

and cast righteousness to the ground.

⁸ He who made the Pleiades and Orion,

who turns midnight into dawn

and darkens day into night,

who calls for the waters of the sea

and pours them out over the face of the land—

the Lord is his name.

⁹ With a blinding flash he destroys the stronghold

and brings the fortified city to ruin.

¹⁰ There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court

and detest the one who tells the truth.

¹¹ You levy a straw tax on the poor

and impose a tax on their grain.

Therefore, though you have built stone mansions,

you will not live in them;

though you have planted lush vineyards,

you will not drink their wine.

¹² For I know how many are your offenses

and how great your sins.

There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes

and deprive the poor of justice in the courts.

¹³ Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such times,

for the times are evil.

¹⁴ Seek good, not evil,

that you may live.

Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you,

just as you say he is.

¹⁵ Hate evil, love good;

maintain justice in the courts.

Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy
on the remnant of Joseph.

? This passage encourages the reader to “Seek the Lord” (v.6), and to “Seek good” (v.14). From the passage, how do these concepts connect with each other?

Leader’s Note: This passage equates seeking God with Good, and specifically encourages the reader to take care of the poor. They both lead to life!

? What does it look like for you to seek goodness?

Part 3: “Good” in New Testament Terms

Leader’s Note: Read and discuss the following passages together.

Luke 18:18-19

¹⁸ A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

¹⁹ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.

Acts 11:22b-24

...they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

? If God alone is good, how can other people in Scripture be described as good?

Leader’s Note: They are influenced by the Holy Spirit, or in that moment are acting in God’s image just as they were made in God’s image.

Romans 5:7

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.

? With this passage in mind, what does it mean that Jesus was willing to die for our sins?

Possible Answer: He did it not because of our merit (since none of us are good), but because of his mercy. Good goes beyond righteousness; it is also personally beneficial (and thus worthy of dying for).

Part 4: So...what does it mean to be “good”?

Galatians 5:22-23

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? Now that we have seen the biblical teaching on goodness, how would you define it?

Possible Answers: Good - Does what it was designed to do. Fulfills its purpose. Often causes benefit. And can only truly be demonstrated by God, or through the power of God.

? How does the definition we just created for goodness line up with how you’ve experienced it in your life (whether giving or receiving)?

Galatians 6:7-10

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

? How can we become weary in doing good? How do we avoid this?

Possible Answer: It is harder to live in a way that is good than it is to just live however we want to live. This is the nature of sin. That is why the encouragement of this passage (and of gospel community) is needed.

? How could walking with the Spirit lead to increased goodness in your life?

? What is our community application of this passage?