

GOODNESS: The Fruit of the Spirit #7

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, **GOODNESS**, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (*Galatians 5:22-23*)

Romans 8:5-6 (ESV) ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but **to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**

Psalms 34:8 (ESV) ⁸Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Psalms 25:8 (ESV) ⁸Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

Everything that God made was originally good:

“God saw all that He had made, and it was very good” (**Genesis 1:31**).

God’s goodness is displayed in the Law He gave to Israel:

“the Law is holy, righteous, and good” (**Romans 7:12**).

God can do only what is good, because He is fully good:

“Every good and perfect gift is from above” (**James 1:17**).

I. Meaning of the Greek word *agathosune*

A. The quality of being good (used only 4 times in the NT)

“Goodness is virtue and holiness in action. It results in a life characterized by deeds motivated by righteousness and a desire to be a blessing. The Greek word translated “goodness” is defined as “uprightness of heart and life.” *Agathosune* is goodness for the benefit of others, not goodness simply for the sake of being virtuous.”
(www.gotquestions.com)

B. Romans 5:7-8: Paul compares GOODNESS and JUSTICE to make a point.

Romans 5:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷For scarcely for a righteous (just) man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1. “Justice is the quality that gives a man what is due him. Goodness is the quality which is out to do far more than that, and which desires to give a man all that is to his benefit and help.... The man who is just sticks to the letter of his bond; the man who is good goes far beyond it.” (*Barclay, William: The Daily Study Bible Series*)
2. “Agathosune finds its fullest and highest expression in that which is willingly and sacrificially done for others. It is moral and spiritual excellence manifested in active kindness. Agathosune describes a positive moral quality characterized especially by interest in the welfare of others. It is the generosity which springs from the heart that is kind and will always take care to obtain for others that which is useful or beneficial.”
(www.SermonIndex.net)
3. “What is the difference (between goodness and kindness)? Agathosune might, and could, rebuke and discipline; chrestotes can only help. Trench says that Jesus showed agathosune when he cleansed the Temple and drove out those who were making it a bazaar; but he showed chrestotes when he was kind to the sinning woman who anointed his feet. The Christian needs that goodness which at one and the same time can be kind and strong.” (*Barclay, William: The Daily Study Bible Series*)

II. GOODNESS used only 4 times in the NT, but each use is revealing...

A. Romans 15:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

1. NOTE: Why must an elder be “a lover of good”? (Titus 1:8)

B. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NKJV) ¹¹Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹²that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. It is God’s pleasure to be good to us. He works powerfully in our lives to strengthen our faith.

C. Ephesians 5:7-10 (NKJV) ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them. ⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the ^fSpirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

1. Here goodness refers to upright moral character, virtue.

III. Further Help In Seeing the Nuances of GOODNESS

A. Matt. 20:11-15 – Parable of the Eleventh Hour Laborers

1. “Or is your eye evil because I am good?”
2. here “evil” means “envious” and “good” means “upright and generous”

B. Matt. 6:19-24 – good eye vs. bad (*evil*) eye

1. upright and generous in contrast to covetous

C. 1 Tim 6:17-19 – “let them do good”

1. good is upright and generous

D. Acts 11:19-24 – Barnabas (“for he was a good man”)

1. Why choose Barnabas to go to the first Jew-Gentile church? (vs. 23-24)
2. **Firm in exhortation, kind in heart.**
3. **Acts 4:36-37** –not just in words, but also in actions.

Conclusion

1. **Galatians 6:9-10** – “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
2. **1 Peter 4:19** – “Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.”