

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

“Goodness”

Introduction-

Goodness is the quality of being good. A composite definition of good would be, “beautiful, valuable, virtuous, right, best, pleasant, contributing positively to the condition of [every] situation.”

God is good and has placed His good nature in us by His Holy Spirit. This goodness planted in us bears fruit as we intimately fellowship with Him and do those good works He has foreordained for us to walk in.

I. God Is Good

1. Father

Ps 34:8 NIV

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Ps 106:1 NIV

Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

2. Son

John 10:11

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. NIV

3. Holy Spirit

Neh 9:19-20

19 "Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take.

20 **You gave your good Spirit to instruct them.** You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. NIV

*Verse 19 describes the Spirit of God leading them (pillar of cloud and fire) and verse 20 says it plainly. The reason that God gave them His **good** Spirit was to instruct them.*

Ps 143:10

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; **may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.** NIV

The Spirit of God leads us on level ground, a right road or the way of righteousness. It is no different in our day. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, righteousness, and judgment that we might keep on the level path.

Luke 11:13 NIV

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

The Holy Spirit is His good gift to us.

James 1:17

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

There is not other source for good gifts but the Father of lights. One principle of Scriptural interpretation is called the principle of first mention. When we use this principle, we go to the first place a thing or concept is spoken of in the Bible to gain primary understanding of it. Usually, the first time something is mentioned in Scripture speaks volumes about it.

Gen 1:4

God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. NIV

The first thing called good in Scripture is light! Our Father is light. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. And the Spirit is light.

Eph 5:8-10

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

9 (for the fruit of the light [*Spirit – KJV*] consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

10 and find out what pleases the Lord. NIV

The fruit of the Spirit, or Light, is in all goodness. The fruit is singular with many aspects, as the manifestation is singular with many workings. It is one Spirit that works it all (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4).

God is good. For us to have goodness requires that we have intimacy with God.

II. Goodness Requires Intimacy with God

1. We have no goodness of our own.

Ps 16:2

O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You." NKJV

Apart from God, our goodness means nothing. Only by Him can we have any goodness at all.

Rom 7:18-24

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? NKJV

Doing good (consistently and characteristically) in our own strength is impossible. Because we have a conscience, we know the good we should do. But sin lives in our flesh and prevents us from doing the good that we would. What is the answer?

2. Our goodness comes from God.

Rom 7:25-8:1

25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. NKJV

Jesus Christ rescued us from this vicious cycle. Chapter 8 of Romans lays out the particulars of serving the law of God, which is walking by the Spirit.

Phil 1:6

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. NIV

God began a good work in us and will bring it to completeness. He takes us as we are, but He does not leave us that way. He will develop the character of Christ in us and mold us into the fashion of His Son.

3. Intimacy – the good thing.

Matt 19:16-21

16 Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

18 "Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony,

19 honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

20 "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. **Then come, follow me.**" NIV

The young ruler had done his best to follow all the commandments from a child, and yet in his heart he knew something was lacking. What was lacking? Giving away his possessions? No, the one thing lacking was following Jesus. Mark 10:21 says that Jesus looked at him and loved him. He knew that the man needed to follow him, but something was holding him back.

Matt 6:24

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. NIV

What the man needed was Jesus as his master, but to do so he had to give up his wealth because he served it. Good things only come from God.

Luke 10:38-42

38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said,

"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." NKJV

This account has become proverbial. Martha was distracted with much serving while Mary had chosen the good part, the one thing that was really needed, which was sitting at the Master's feet and being taught of Him.

Ps 4:6

Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?" **Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD.** NIV

This cry of the psalmist was the real heart cry of the rich young ruler when he called Jesus "Good Master." Goodness is found in the light of God's face.

Ps 73:28

But as for me, **it is good to be near God.** I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds. NIV

It is good to be near God. God is goodness. If bad communications spoil good manners, than intimacy with God must birth goodness in our life. It is good to be near God.

Ps 84:10-11

10 **Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere;** I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. NIV

One day in the presence of the Lord is better than a thousand days lived anywhere else! If we are to know good, we must have intimacy with God.

Goodness begins with God and flows to us as we fellowship with Him. But it doesn't stop there. Goodness is not just a state of being, it is also doing.

III. Doing Good

1. Good versus evil.

A. Knowing good and evil

Rom 16:19

Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. NIV

God wants us wise about what is good. But there is a place He doesn't want to get this knowledge from.

Gen 2:9

And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. NIV

Gen 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. NIV

Gen 3:22

And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." NIV

*The knowledge in "tree of knowledge" is a noun form of the verb **yada**, to know. It means to know by observation and consideration or experience. Following is a note from Vine's definition of **yada**.*

Vine's definition-

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of the tree whose fruit if eaten would give them **the experience of evil and, therefore, the knowledge of both good and evil.**

To live in the garden was to know good experientially, for all was good. To eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was to know good intellectually through contrast to the experiential knowledge of evil. We want to know the good from having done the good. To recognize good through our experience of evil is to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and leads to death.

Heb 5:14

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by **reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.** NKJV

It is much more important to discern between good and evil than to know good and evil. How are we to discern between them? Vine defines "senses" as the capacity for spiritual apprehension. We are to discern through the Spirit of God. What trains our senses to discern between the two?

Heb 5:13-14

Anyone who lives on milk is a baby who does not know by experience what is right. But mature people, on the other hand, can take solid food, because they have **learned by practice and training** to be sensitive to the difference between good and evil. UBS Handbook

Practice and training. Practice and training in what?

Heb 5:14

You will never be able to eat solid spiritual food and understand the deeper things of God's Word until you become better Christians and learn right from wrong by **practicing doing right.** TLB

*The Living Bible captures the essence of this admonition. We learn right from wrong by **doing right!** To want to know good and evil through rebellion is to do evil in hopes that good might come!*

Rom 3:7-8

7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?

8 And why not say, **"Let us do evil that good may come"**?--as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. **Their condemnation is just.** NKJV

Rom 6:1-2

1 What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?**

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? NKJV

The way of the tree of life is to know the evil by doing good. Doing good exercises our discernment to know the difference between it and evil.

B. A revelation of goodness

Col 1:9-12

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. NIV

James 3:17

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. NIV

To have good fruit, we must receive heavenly wisdom. This comes to us from Scripture, from other saints, and from direct revelation.

C. Overcoming evil

Rom 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. NIV

Doing good is our weapon against the evil in this world. We are not to let evil overcome us. We are to overcome evil with good.

2. Good works are our purpose.

A. Created unto good works.

Eph 2:10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. NIV

We were created for a purpose and that purpose was to do good works. The Lord has not left us to our own devices to accomplish this either.

B. Furnished unto every good work.

2 Tim 3:16-17 KJV

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

The Lord has throughly furnished us by His Word unto all good works. Not only does He provide the knowledge, He also provides the means.

2 Cor 9:7-8

7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. NIV

As we involve ourselves in the economy of God, He makes sure that we have all we need to continue in every good work.

C. Prepared to every good work.

2 Tim 2:20-21 NIV

20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble.

21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

As we clear ourselves of ignoble purposes, we will be an instrument for the Master to accomplish any good work.

Titus 3:1

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, NIV

Often, our assignments come from those in authority over us. So we should walk in submission and humility to be ready to do any good work.

3. A good place to start.

A. Giving

Eph 4:28

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. NKJV

B. Healing

Acts 10:38

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. NIV

C. Evangelism

Philem 6

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. NIV

*It is called the gospel, after all, the **good** news! Sharing our faith solidifies for us the good things we have in Christ.*

Conclusion-

God is good and has placed His good nature in us by His Holy Spirit. This goodness planted in us bears fruit as we intimately fellowship with Him and do those good works He has foreordained for us to walk in.

Heb 13:20-21

20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. NIV

AMEN!