

Goodness: “The Lord Is Good”
Psalm 100; Romans 7:18-20; 12:9, 21

Definitions:

Goodness (n)—quality of being morally good or virtuous.

Good (adj)—possessing or displaying moral virtue.

Virtue (n)—behavior showing high moral standards, a quality considered morally good or desirable in a person.

Virtuous (adj)—having or showing high moral standards.

Beneficence (n)—an act of charity, mercy, and kindness with a strong connotation of doing good to others including moral obligation.

The Vine Expository Dictionary denotes goodness: (a) in the sense of what is upright, righteous, **Rom. 3:12** (translated “good”); (b) in the sense of kindness of heart or act, said of God, **Rom. 2:4; 11:22** (thrice). It signifies “not merely” goodness as a quality, rather it is goodness in action, goodness expressing itself in deeds, morally honorable pleasing to God and, therefore, beneficial.

The key difference between kindness and goodness is that kindness mainly involves being generous and considerate and helping others, whereas, goodness involves righteousness in action or doing what is right.

Good and *goodness* are two of our most popular words. As children, we are encouraged to “be good,” and as adults, we like to think we are “doing good.” We all know that evil is the opposite of good, and there is broad agreement that the path of goodness is the right way to go. But for a long time, there has been a debate on what constitutes goodness. Is it the experience of pleasure and the eradication of pain? Is it the acquisition of knowledge? Is it the greatest good for the greatest number? Is it having lots of good things?

Before being good and doing good, we first need to define *goodness*. Any consideration of the goodness of Spirit life, while being aware of human concepts of goodness, must have a different point of reference. God, not man, is the measure of all things, including goodness.

Think about it—if asked, “Do you think you are a ‘good’ person?” How would you answer and why?

1. Read Psalm 100

- It is affirmed in this Psalm that God’s character is good—“For the Lord is good.”
- We are told in Scripture that because God is good, what he does is good. His act of creation was good (see **Genesis 1:31**), his law is good and perfect (see **Psalm 19:7**), and his goodness is translated to us through his will, which is also good (see **Romans 12:2**).
- Note the psalmist’s joyful response. We also should respond to the Lord’s goodness by making a joyful noise unto Him, serving Him with gladness, coming before his presence with singing, and entering into His presence with praise and thanksgiving. Why? For the Lord is good!

The Fruit of the Spirit (Fisherman Bible Study); *Fruit of The Spirit* (Life Guide Bible Studies), *Fruit of The Spirit* (Zondervan); *New American Standard Bible*; *Amplified Holy Bible*; *Open Bible KJV*

- Scripture focuses on good as an eternal reality, a quality described in what God has said and demonstrated in what God has done. The Christian understanding of goodness, radically different from the secular view, finds its reality in God's goodness shown in work, words, and will. Secular society finds goodness in the idea that humans, in and of themselves, are the standard for good.

2. Read Romans 7:18-20.

- It is affirmed in this passage of Scripture that in human nature, there is a struggle between the old man and the new man, the flesh and the Spirit, and "good and evil." Paul was talking in this passage about his present experience as a Christian, and the struggle he continued to have against sin.
- The battleground for the fight between good and evil is in the mind and heart of the believer. It is a battle between what we know is right or wrong and the passions or desires we yield to.
- I would dare to say that all of us can relate to Paul's struggle. The reason being all of us have both the "old man" and the "new man" living within us. Also, that we are all subject to temptations and the struggle between good and evil.
 - a. Some things that can help with the tension Paul described: 1) praying and being honest about the struggles, 2) saturate oneself in the word of God, 3) ask God for strength to overcome known weaknesses, and 4) when we do sin, don't "wallow" in sin and failure, but confess, ask for forgiveness, accept forgiveness. Sometimes the hardest step is forgiving ourselves.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 10:13** (AMP) reads, "No temptation [regardless of its source] has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience [nor is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance]; but God is faithful [to His word—He is compassionate and trustworthy], and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability [to resist], but along with the temptation He [has in the past and is now and] will [always] provide the way out as well, so that you will be able to endure it [without yielding, and will overcome temptation with joy]."
- This struggle within affects our ability to exhibit goodness because when we yield and do that "which we would not do," it shows up in our words and actions. Sometimes, based on the word of God those behaviors are not what one would describe as Christ like. Because of the inside struggle we don't always present ourselves as ambassadors for Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

3. Read Romans 12:9, 21

- In his statements in these verses Paul is admonishing us to: 1) cling to that which is good and 2) to overcome evil with good. We have to make a choice between doing good or doing evil, and between hating (abhor—regarding with extreme repugnance or hating) evil and holding on to good.

- There are many evils in our society today. Hating evil means more than an emotion of dislike, it means making a decision to not do them.
- Clinging to the good is like hanging on to a rope when you're tired. It is working conscientiously when you're bored and sticking with your marriage when you're disappointed. It's holding on through disappointment, persevering in discouragement, and pressing on through disillusionment.
- The ongoing battle of good and evil requires both defensive and offensive posture. There are times to be passive and times to be active. Goodness doesn't come naturally; it requires a decision. We not only need to stop doing that which is evil and resist the urge to do wrong, but we need to actively seek to do good.
- The Holy Spirit plays an important part in developing goodness in our lives. As we listen to and are led by the Spirit of God, we can begin to realize what is good and evil based on God's Word. Also, he can empower us to resist evil and do good. He can give us directions in seeking the goodness of God.

In closing, let's look at Psalm 107.

Psalm 107 is the classic exposition of God's goodness. God's action reveal goodness in its highest and purest form. His goodness provides the standard for developing this fruit in our own lives.

- Verse 1 speaks of the Lord being good.
- Throughout the Psalm, he speaks of what God has done in the life of His people when they cried unto Him.
- Repeatedly, the psalmist urges those who have been delivered to "give thanks to the Lord."
(vv. 8, 15, 21, 31)

"Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

Homework: Read **Lamentations 3:19-24; Matthew 25:14-30**

Topic: Faithfulness: **"Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant"**