

The Fruit of Goodness

The terms, "good," goodly," and "goodness" are found throughout the Bible. In Genesis chapter one, the term "good" is found in verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31 where God said that what He had created was "very good!" In the general use of these terms in the Old Testament, they are indicating the following:

1. That which possesses desirable qualities, beneficial qualities, or agreeable qualities. (Gen. 2:9; Num. 10:29).
2. Serviceable, adequate, sufficient. (Gen. 1:4; 2:8).
3. Something full or complete. (Gen. 15:15; 30:20; 1 Sam. 25:3).
4. Not blemished, fair, honorable. (Gen. 18:7; 27:9; 1 Sam. 2:24; 2 Sam. 11:2).
5. That which is pleasure giving. (1 Kgs. 8:66; Esther 5:9).
6. That which is kind and Benevolent. (1 Sam. 25:15; 1 Chron. 16:34; Ps. 73:1).
7. Moral excellence or piety. (Gen. 3:22; Deut. 6:18; Ps. 37:27).

The New Testament uses these terms in much the same way. To illustrate:

1. That which is quality (physical or moral). (Matt. 5:45; 7:11; Mk. 10:17; Jn. 5:29).
2. Show a contrast between a good man and a righteous man. (Rom. 5:7; 7:16; Heb. 5:14).
3. There is a strong emphasis on God's goodness. (Rom. 2:4; Lk. 18:19).

Jesus' statement about only God is "good!" must be understood in its ultimate sense. There is none good, but God! (Lk. 18:19). There is none righteous; no, not one! (Rom. 3:10). These have to be understood in the ultimate sense, because these same Scriptures call men "good" and "righteous." (3 John 11; 1 John 3:7). All men fall short of being like God, but men can be good and do good; and, men can be righteous and do righteousness. And it is obvious from the study that we are in the midst of that the Spirit of God helps us to bear the fruit of goodness!

How does man determine what is good or goodness? I am convinced that the way we are made and with our ability to evaluate and reason, we generally know what is good. But we can become so hardened by sin and unbelief that our concept of goodness, as well as, right and wrong can be greatly hampered. The Apostle Paul, by inspiration, gave a long list of sins that were committed by the Gentile world (Rom. 1:18-32). He stated clearly that the wrath of God will be poured out on such people who commit these sins. In verse 32, he stated that these people knew such deeds were evil, wrong, sinful, but they did them anyway. Then, in Rom. 2:14, He pointed out that even though the Gentiles did not have the Law (of Moses understood), they showed the work of the law written in their hearts!

But, it is obvious that the Bible is the ultimate standard to determine what is good.....and the God who is portrayed in its pages (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Lk. 18:19). A good man is thus portrayed as one whose life is committed to God and directed by His authority in all areas of his life. This goodness comes from a God-centered and God-controlled life

(John 14:15). If we love God, we will not only show "kindness" but "goodness" as well. Look how the Apostle used this term in his writings: Rom 15:14; Eph 5:9; 2Thess 1:11

When we talk about doing good or that someone is a good person, we show that we have evaluated their deeds or actions and believe that such generally are acceptable. But men have a tendency to "lower" the bar of goodness so that more people can be included. Instead of lowering the bar, the Bible raises the bar in order to challenge men to the greatest good. We want to take two approaches to discuss the idea of that which is good or goodness.

1. What does the Bible say about that which is good?

- Rom 12: 2
- Rom 12:9
- 1 Thess 5:15
- 1 Pet 3:13
- Rom 13:3
- Rom 12:21

2. What are some factors that show that a man is a good man?

- Matt 25:21
- Acts 9:36
- Rom 12:1-2
- John 5:28-29

The Christian is being called upon to demonstrate to the world God's goodness through his life of goodness! Thus, his life will bring glory to God because of his good works (Matt. 5:16). We are admonished not to allow ourselves to be overcome by evil, but that we overcome evil by doing good (Rom. 12:21). When we purify our hearts, then our speech will be pure (Col. 4:6); we will refrain our tongue from evil speech (Eph. 4:29); and we can bring good things forth (Matt. 12:35). Not only do we govern our tongue, but our personal habits, our dress, our recreation, and our relationship with both men and women.

My Notes and Thoughts

How would you define Goodness? _____

What are the things that cause you to be bad or ruthless?

How does ruthlessness counteract Goodness? _____

How can Eph.5:8-9 work in you, even in times of waiting and confusion, even when people are rude and evil to you? _____

When have you been filled with Goodness the most? _____

What issue is in your life that would improve with more Goodness? _____