

Goodness

Purpose: To understand what the fruit of goodness means and to inspire us to allow the Holy Spirit to develop it in our daily lives.

Objective: By the end of this devotional the student will:

1. Know what goodness means.
2. Value goodness in his life.
3. Trust the Holy Spirit to develop goodness in his life.

Key Verse: Titus 3:14

I. Introduction

We have all heard statements such as “out of the goodness of his heart,” or “He is a very good person.” What does it mean to be a good person and do good things for others. That’s what we will look at in this session today.

II. Meaning of the Word.

- Goodness in Scripture refers to the disposition of a person who is ruled by the desire to do worthwhile and useful things for others. He seeks to do others good. It can also be translated as moral excellence. This is a direct contrast to the works of the flesh which put self first and is reflected in immorality, impurity and sensuality.
- In Ephesians 5:9 goodness is listed as a fruit of the light, along with righteousness and truth. This is contrasted to darkness and the unfruitful deeds of darkness.

On December 19, 1998 the United States’ House of Representatives voted to impeach President Clinton. One of the articles of impeachment deals with perjury. It accuses President Clinton of *lying under oath* about a *sexual relationship* with a young White House intern.

The same day the House voted to impeach the President, the Speaker of the House, Bob Livingston resigned over his own *extra-marital affair*. “His example [resignation over immoral behavior] was one few politicians wanted set,” reported the Orlando Sentinel. House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt said, “No one standing in this House today can pass a puritanical test of purity that some are demanding that our elected leaders take. If we demand that mere mortals live up to this standard we will see our seats of government empty.” House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt’s remarks were met with a united House applause.

- A. Where is the moral excellence or goodness of our leaders? And what is the lesson being taught to our young people by their example? Evidently, goodness or moral excellence is no longer a virtue to elected leaders of the United States Government, or, if considered a virtue, it is unobtainable.
- B. And, where is moral excellence in our people? The whole attitude of people seems to be, “What’s in it for me?” Or, “Live and let be.” With this attitude, goodness disappears. This is what the Scriptures picture in Second Timothy 3:1-5 and Matthew 24:12. Read these

verses.

- C. Finally, where is moral excellence and goodness in our churches? Do we exhibit goodness on the road, in the supermarket, with our families or roommates, and with our co-workers? We see from Titus 2:14 and 3:8 and 14 that we should be characterized by goodness. Titus 2:14 says that we are to be “zealous for good works.”

III. Bearing more fruit

A couple was privileged to be the guests of some friends who lived in the mountains. When they entered their room, they were pleased to find a lovely basket of fresh fruit on the table. The grapes, pears, apples, and strawberries looked refreshing and delicious. But it was not until they cut or bit into the fruit that they experienced the full aroma and flavor.

Like the fruit in the guestroom, the full "flavor" of the fruit of goodness is best released under cutting or trying circumstances. One reason God allows us to experience trials is that through our godly response the true value of the fruit of the Spirit is released as a witness to the world. The next time we are tested, may our deepest desire be to allow the Holy Spirit to produce fragrant fruit in us for the glory of God.

We shrink from the purging and pruning,
Forgetting the Husbandman knows
The deeper the cutting and paring
The greater the fruitfulness grows. -Anonymous.

The Spirit's keen paring knife enhances a Christian's fruit-bearing life. (**Daily Bread:** Fragrant Fruit -DCE)

Jesus said to his disciples in John 15:2, 4, “...every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit...as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” The fruit of goodness is produced in people as they let God do His pruning and as they abide in Jesus Christ and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

IV. Conclusion

Goodness is a virtue that God desires to be found in us. But in today's climate, it is an easy one to pass over. Many consider goodness a puritanical standard unobtainable by mortal man. And it is, unless a person is a Spirit-filled believer.

V. Application

Think through your relationships in the four primary areas of your life: family, friends, associates and neighbors. Are you exhibiting goodness in your relationship to them? What moral example do you set as a witness to others? In difficult times of testing how do you respond? Ask God right now to fill you with His Spirit and to show you how to manifest the fruit of goodness in your life through good deeds to others.