

## Shaped by the Spirit: The Fruit of Life with God

### “Goodness”

Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, *goodness*, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control.”

#### I. What is Goodness?

Karl Barth: “The sum of everything right, friendly, and wholesome”

Scot McKnight: “*Tov* (good) is the Bible’s summary term, the ‘executive virtue,’ for how God wants us to live.”

The Hebrew word *tov* could also be translated as “pleasant,” “desirable,” or “excellent.”

#### II. Created in and for Goodness

In Genesis 1, God creates the world and sees “it was good... it was good... it was very good.”

God creates the world as a good place – one that is pleasant, desirable, excellent. And he creates humans as good things that are made to enjoy the goodness of creation.

#### III. A Measure of Goodness Lost

In Genesis 3, the first humans take from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Evil enters our world, and a measure of goodness is lost.

Human beings are no longer “good” as they once were. Paul writes this in Romans 3:

11 “There is no one righteous, not even one;  
there is no one who understands;  
there is no one who seeks God.  
12 All have turned away,  
they have together become worthless;  
there is no one who does good,  
not even one.”

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#### IV. The Good God Restores Us to Goodness

The Bible repeatedly states that God is good (Exodus 33:19; Psalm 34:8; Psalm 119:68; Mark 10:18, etc.)

Christopher J. H. Wright: “God is generous and trustworthy, without any deception or crookedness, and he is like that always, through and through like a solid rock, in his own character and in all his actions.”

Out of his goodness, God saves us and restores us to right relationship with him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And he also makes us into people whose lives are marked by goodness.

Titus 2:14: “[Jesus] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

Ephesians 2:10: “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Scot McKnight: “Even though we are not good, God flips everything upside down and calls us to *do* good and *be* good and to be known for *good works*.”

#### V. Goodness Expressed through Generosity

The Greek word for “good” also appears in Matthew 20:16 and later in Galatians 6.

Matthew 20:16: “...are you envious because I am *generous*.”

Galatians 6:6: “Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.”

Galatians 6:9-10: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Scot McKnight: “The foremost expression of *tov* is generosity.”

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#### **VI. Goodness Expressed through Integrity**

Christopher J. H. Wright: “what lies at the heart of ‘goodness’?... I think one key thing would be integrity – an absence of any kind of guile or deception. Truly good people are... What You See Is What You Get.”

This includes sexual integrity too. Sex is a good gift from God that has been warped by sin and evil.

Galatians 5:19: “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery”

Matthew 5:27-28: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

#### **VII. Goodness Comes from a Changed Heart**

Luke 6:43-45: “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

Ezekiel 36:26: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

As we come to God through Jesus, He gives us a new heart. And as we open our lives to the Spirit, He continues to cultivate that goodness within us.