

Lesson 8

WHAT IS GOODNESS?

The fruit of the Spirit is ... goodness
(Galatians 5:22).

The words *kindness* and *goodness* are closely related. Although they are similar, the apostle Paul lists these two words separately. To better understand why we need to look at the original Greek word origins.

As we read in the last lesson, the word for *kindness* means “having a tender concern for another to be upright.” *Goodness* means “to desire after good,” but it may not always result in acts of tenderness. In other words, this fruit of goodness is a desire to do what is right with God, despite what others might say or do.

Goodness is used three other times in the New Testament. In each case, it is always used in reference to those who are born again through faith in Christ. Doing what is right and good cannot truly take place until God has changed one’s heart.

1. Write Romans 15:14 and share what you learn.

Having the fruit of goodness means you are able to correct and warn another about his/her bad behavior.

2. Read Ephesians 5:8-11 and write your findings.

Goodness should change our hearts so that we no longer desire to walk in wickedness. Our goodness should be so evident that it exposes the darkness around us.

3. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 and summarize Paul’s prayer for God’s goodness in the believer.

4. Jesus shows us a commendable example of goodness in Matthew 21:12-14. Write what you learn.

Jesus did what was good and right. He cleansed His Father’s temple of the wicked moneychangers who were abusing the people. Once the moneychangers were gone, we read that those who were in need were then able to come to Jesus for healing.

We see the goodness and the righteousness of God in action. Even though Jesus was not reflecting kindness toward the moneychangers, His goodness resulted in kindness to the blind and the lame who came to Him in the temple.

A Spirit-filled believer shows goodness to a person, although in doing so, it might cause them pain, but it would not hurt them.

5. Write Galatians 6:1.

The word *gentleness* in this Scripture passage carries the idea of “stern” goodness to benefit the person receiving it.

6. Acts 11:23-24 gives us the example of the fruit of goodness exemplified by the disciple Barnabas. Write what it says.

7. Read Acts 11:25-26 and describe Barnabas’ actions.

8. What other things did Barnabas do that bore the fruit of goodness? See Acts 4:36-37.

9. Write Psalm 145:8-9.

10. Write Luke 6:35.

To summarize, the fruit of goodness is moral excellence, with a generosity to benefit others even when they are ungrateful and wicked. Goodness is an act of grace toward someone else and gives to others without any strings attached.

Sometimes direction given to us for our lives might seem unkind or uncomfortable, but it is goodness directed by God who loves us and has our eternal perspective in mind.

11. Write Galatians 6:9.