

Peeled

LOVE | JOY | PEACE | PATIENCE | KINDNESS | GOODNESS | FAITHFULNESS | GENTLENESS | SELF-CONTROL

GETTING UNDER THE SKIN



Goodness
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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

We're in a series about the Fruit of the Spirit as defined for us in **Galatians 5:22-23a** "But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Each of these characteristics flows out of our relationship with God when we surrender our lives to Him. This week the word is goodness which means inward righteousness and generosity – what we would call God's nature.

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone."

1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

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.

Acts 9:36-42 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!" Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

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.

¹ All scripture is NIV translation unless otherwise indicated.

OBSERVATION

In the book of Acts, we meet Tabitha – she is described as being full of goodness and helping the poor. Her gift was sewing and she had a passion for fashion so she made clothes for women – which gave them dignity. Her needle and thread were resources God had entrusted to her in order to provide for the poor in her community. Then she died – but her goodness to others caused many people to believe in Jesus when Peter called her back to life. Resurrection and salvation were the result.

QUESTION: In what ways are you using your spiritual gifts today as you serve others?

APPLICATION

So, how do we define “good”? We can say the opposite is “bad.” But who decides what is good or bad? What measurement do we use? Some people think they are good and we might disagree. **1) ONLY GOD IS GOOD.** We might be more good than someone else at something, but only God is the most good. Jesus said that when He told the rich young ruler, “No one is good—except God alone.” He defined goodness by the Ten Commandments – a moral code for every civilization -- yet they are the lowest common denominator for morality where God is concerned. When one commandment says don’t murder, it really means don’t be angry; another says don’t covet a neighbor’s wife, it really means don’t look lustfully at a woman; another commandment says to have no graven images yet we all serve worldly idols in one way or another. We can redefine all of the commandments this way, can’t we? Do we idolize our finances, our cars, our houses?

QUESTION: Redefine the other seven commandments for us.

When we do, we realize that we are all sinners and, therefore, we need Jesus and His grace. And, when we are in step with the Holy Spirit, His goodness flows out of us. It is like two sides of the same coin: One side is inward goodness and the other is outward goodness – a person of goodness is **being** good and **doing** good in private and public – He/she has integrity. It is being inwardly righteous, pure and outwardly generous – with time and money. At the heart of goodness is generosity. We give because God gave us Jesus. We are saved by our inward righteousness or grace, not by being generous or doing good works. We reflect goodness when we take on Jesus’ mission to do goodness.

QUESTION: In what ways are you generous today? In what ways are you a bit stingy?

2) GOODNESS BRINGS A GOOD GOD TO A BROKEN WORLD. Tabitha used her God-given skills to help others and God is calling us to do what we can in the same way. Just as Tabitha experienced goodness resulting in resurrection and salvation so do we.

QUESTION: So, what character traits do you want others to see in you?

QUESTION: What do you want people to say about you at your funeral? What contributions or achievements would you want people to remember?

QUESTION: What special skills or resources has God given you and now is calling you to share with others?

So, what's hanging in the balance for us? God wants to bless our lives based upon our loyalty to Him, our righteousness, purity and generosity. And our salvation hangs in the balance – based upon our individual choice to surrender our lives to Jesus and follow Him into eternity -- the full life that Jesus promises. Remember what Peter said to Jesus, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God." **John 6:68.**

QUESTION: If not Jesus, what?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we want to share the goodness with which you blessed us when we received Your Son into our lives. Help us to be inwardly and outwardly generous with our resources as we show the world how much You love them. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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