

## GOODNESS

Of all virtues and dignities of the mind, goodness is the greatest, being the character of the Deity; and without it, man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing. Francis Bacon

Let us then be ever mindful of our dependence upon the Spirit of God. We derived our new life from Him and only He can maintain it in us. Without Him we can neither think good thoughts, speak good words, nor do good deeds.  
George Washington Bethune

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light" and there was light. And God saw the light **that it was good**; and God divided the light from the darkness. Genesis 1: 1-4*

Here is the first time we see the word "Good" in the English Bible and we see that God Himself is pronouncing the work of His Hand and Creative Power as good. In the New Testament we hear from the lips of Jesus the Son of God speaking to a rich young ruler.

*"Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is God.  
"Matthew 19: 17*

We see that true goodness is the essence of the character of God Himself. He alone is **truly good** and He alone produces **truly good things**. By His indwelling Spirit, we too can walk in His goodness and be a doer of good. Let's dig into this month's fruit of the Spirit....Goodness.

List all the synonyms that you can think of for Goodness:

List all the antonyms you can think of for Goodness:

In the Greek language the word translated as goodness in Galatians 5:22 is **agathosune** [ag-ath-o-soo-nay].

*“This word means goodness, generosity.*

*It is being full of -virtue and excellence,*

*-kindness and helpfulness,*

*-peace and consideration.*

*This word means that a person **is full of all good** and he **does all good**.*

*This word means that the one who possesses goodness...*

- *has a good heart and good behavior.*
- *is good and does good*
- *is a quality person” [Practical Word Studies in the New Testament]*

Knowing that God Himself is Goodness and thus the standard by which all other goodness is measured, it would follow that the behaviors that would display goodness must be an echo of God’s goodness.

Let’s look up some Old Testament Scriptures and note what God calls good.

Side Note:

All of these references uses the Hebrew Word :”tobe”

This is the same word used in the Genesis account when God pronounced the Creation as “good”. In other words it pleased Him.

*List under each reference the “actions, attitudes or behaviors that are noted by God as good and thus are pleasant to Him.*

Micah 6:8

Amos 5:14-15

Lamentations 3: 25-26

Proverbs 16:20 ESV

Psalms 34:10-14

Before we move unto the New Testament's discussion on Goodness. Let's do an activity with some verses from Proverbs 2. Using your Bible fill in the blanks in the following verses.

My son, if you \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_, And \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_ within you, So that you \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, And \_\_\_\_\_ your heart to \_\_\_\_\_; Yes, if you \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_, And \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_, If you \_\_\_\_\_ her as silver, And \_\_\_\_\_ for her as *for* hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God.

(Proverbs 2:1-5 NKJV)

When \_\_\_\_\_ enters your heart, And \_\_\_\_\_ is pleasant to your soul, Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you,

(Proverbs 2:10-11 NKJV)

So you may \_\_\_\_\_ in the way of \_\_\_\_\_, And \_\_\_\_\_ *to* the paths of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Proverbs 2:20 NKJV)

Working backwards....in these verses...if we would desire to **Walk in the Way of Goodness** (v. 20), we need to have wisdom in our heart and the knowledge of God needs to be pleasant to our souls. This wisdom and knowledge of the things of God will give us discretion and understanding which in turn protects and preserves us from evil. (v. 10-12).

We obtain this wisdom and knowledge by some specific and intentional actions/ attitudes: (v. 1-4)

- Receiving the Word of God (v. 1)
- Treasuring/ Esteeming God's commands (v. 1)
- Inclining our ear to wisdom (v.2) ***listening to the teaching of His Word***
- Applying our hearts to understanding (v.2) ***Studying God's Word***
- Crying out for discernment (v.3) ***Praying to God***
- Lifting up our voice for understanding (v.3) ***Asking God***
- Diligent and careful search for the wisdom of God (v. 4)
- Fear the Lord (v.5) ***Reverence God, seek to please Him in all we do and say.***

IN the New Testament we have a group of related Greek words that express the meaning of Good/Goodness.

Let's start with 'agathe" which means good, useful, beneficial, best, excellent, devoted and given to truth.

Let's look at a portion of Scripture where" agathe" appears. Turn to Luke 8: 5-15 and read the parable of the Sower and the Seed.

What is the first thing to be called "good" in this portion? \_\_\_\_\_

Why was it deemed good? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did this object represent? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did these types of hearers show that they had "good" hearts? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Another variation of this Greek word is "agathas".

According to the Practical Word Studies in the New Testament, *agathas* means kind, good, useful, high quality, virtuous through and through, good natured and caring.

This word is used in the following Scriptures:

the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

(Titus 2:3-5 NKJV)

What are some of the good things that the older women are to teach the younger women?

What types of character traits do the older women need to display in order to even qualify them to be teachers to the younger women?

Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, well reported for **good** works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every **good** work.

(1 Timothy 5:9-10 NKJV)

What are some of the good works that are listed in this portion of Scripture?

Look at the contrast to this type of woman with a woman who is not of a good reputation that is described a few verses later.

Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

(1 Timothy 5:13 ESV)

What three flaws are listed: These women are \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Based on these descriptions, take some time and imagine a Woman who displays the trait of Goodness in her life. Write a descriptive paragraph of this good woman.

The Bible offers us a flesh and blood picture of a woman of good works in

Acts 9:36-42.

Who are we introduced to in these verses? \_\_\_\_\_

How is she identified? as a .... \_\_\_\_\_

What does it mean that she was a disciple? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tabitha is said to have been “full of good works and charitable deeds” Using what we learned from the other Scriptures we studied in previous pages and from looking at v. 39, what type of things do you think Tabitha did with the time, energy and talents God had given her?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Tabitha was remembered because  
she did things that were MEMORABLE.***

Her life was so full of goodness, usefulness to others and service to the Lord that the other disciples in her community could not imagine their group without her help and presence. Even after sickness had taken her life they hoped and prayed that the Apostle Peter might be able to come and raise her up. Imagine how amazing this woman was that she would be missed so greatly by her church family.

This account is a sweet and tender account of a life well lived in the Spirit of Goodness. Tabitha’s legacy prompts us to contemplate what contributions we are making with this life we have been given by God.

How would you hope to be remembered by your church family? Your family?  
Your community?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Digging Deeper

***The Holy Scriptures unequivocally speak of an expectation of  
"Goodness"  
in the life of the believer.***

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*

*(Ephesians 5:8-10 NKJV)*

We see here in this verse from Ephesians that as we seek to grow in the knowledge of what is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord, we will be walking in the Spirit...and what will be the evidence that we are walking in the Spirit? We will be people of goodness, righteousness and truth.

Let's look at some more Scriptures and see some other truths about Goodness.

After each reference, write the Scripture out and then highlight how it relates to the category. Write a summary statement after each section.

*The first one is done for you.*

### Good Works and the Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Summary Statement:** Being instructed and schooled in the Word of God will enable/empower us to live a life that is mature and a life that will be full of good works.

## **Good Works and Our Witness**

Matthew 5:16

1 Peter 2:12

Summary Statement:

## **Good Works and the Believers Attitude**

Titus 2: 14

Titus 3:8

Summary Statement:

## **Good Works and Our Purpose in God**

Ephesians 2:10

Summary Statement

## **Good Works and the Church**

Hebrew 10:24-25

Galatians 6:9-10

Summary Statement:



*I choose goodness...I will go without a dollar before I take a dishonest one. I will be overlooked before I will boast. I will confess before I will accuse. I choose goodness.*

*- Max Lucado*

*Will you and I choose to walk in the fruit of Goodness?*

*Take some time to examine your heart before God. Have you been walking in goodness? Good thoughts? Good words? Good Deeds?*

*Write a letter of confession to the Father and then by His grace list by faith the ways in which you hope to do better in this area.*

***Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,***

**(Philippians 2:12-15 NKJV)**