

## **The Fruit of the Spirit – Goodness (Galatians 5:22-23)**

Let this MIND be in you! - Philippians 2:5-11

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. At this point in our study on "the fruit of the Spirit", we are examining those graces which relate especially to our dealings with our fellowman...

a. Longsuffering, defined as "that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish." (VINE)

b. Kindness, defined as "the sympathetic kindliness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain" (PLUMMER)

c. And now we come to goodness...

2. The Greek word is agathosune {ag-ath-o-soo'-nay}...

a. This word is perhaps the most difficult to define, for it is so general in nature

b. The difficulty is seen in that the word "goodness" takes its meaning from its context

1) E.g., we might say "that is a good animal", or "he is a good man"

2) But good in what way? The context defines the sense...

c. The problem with its use in Ga 5:22 is that there is little in the context to guide us

3. But there may be at least two ways we might be able to come to a proper understanding of this word...

a. Comparing it to the words "just" and "evil"

b. Considering two examples in the New Testament of "good" people

[Let's begin by...]

### **I. COMPARING "GOODNESS" TO THE WORDS "JUST" AND "EVIL"**

#### **A. THE GREEKS OFTEN COMPARED "GOODNESS" WITH "JUSTICE"...**

1. BARCLAY writes of how the Greeks compared these words:

a. "Justice, they say, is the quality which gives a man what is due him;"

b. "...goodness is the quality which is out to do far more than that, and which desires to give a man all that is to his benefit and help."

2. Again, BARCLAY writes: "The man who is just sticks to the letter of his bond; the man who is good goes far beyond it." -- This suggests that the primary idea of goodness is "generosity"

#### **B. IN THE NT, THE WORD FROM WHICH "GOODNESS" COMES IS OFTEN CONTRASTED WITH "EVIL"...**

1. In a few places, the words "evil" and "good" have particular meanings

2. In the parable of The Laborers (Mt 20:15), "evil" means "envious", while "good" is used for "generous"

3. In Mt 6:19-23...

- a. The context speaks of an "evil" (or "bad") eye which is begrudging and ungenerous - cf. Pr 28:22
- b. In contrast to the eye that is "good" which lays up treasure in heaven (by being generous to others, cf. 1 Ti 6:17-19)

### C. NOW WE CAN BEGIN TO DEFINE "GOODNESS"...

- 1. The person who displays goodness is not like the person who is simply just...
  - a. The person who is simply just gives only to another, what that person has earned
  - b. Whereas the person who is good is generous to give what was not deserved
- 2. The person who displays goodness is not like the person who is evil...
  - a. The person who is evil begrudges everything he has to give
  - b. The person who is good is open-hearted and open-handed, i.e., generous

[It has been said that goodness "is easier to recognize than to define". With that in mind, consider...]

## II. TWO EXAMPLES OF "GOOD" PEOPLE

### A. BARNABAS WAS A "GOOD" MAN - Ac 11:24

- 1. He was generous with his possessions
  - a. Cf. Ac 4:32-37
  - b. This is consistent with our definition above, that one who is good is generous to give to others what is not deserved
- 2. He was happy to see the progress of others; i.e., he was not envious
  - a. Cf. Ac 11:23
  - b. Again this is consistent with our definition; he was not begrudging another's success
- 3. Barnabas was an encourager of others
  - a. Cf. Ac 11:23
  - b. He was liberal with his good words, which is how he got his name - cf. Ac 4:36

### B. DORCAS WAS A "GOOD" WOMAN - Ac 9:36

- 1. She was "full of good works and charitable deeds"
- 2. Even in her death, her goodness was being felt
  - a. Cf. Ac 9:39, where the widows were showing tunics and garments she had made
  - b. I doubt they were praising her ability to sew, but rather her charity in making such clothes for others (such as the widows)

## CONCLUSION

- 1. All those who are truly led by the Spirit of God will produce the quality of "goodness" - cf. Ep 5:8-9
- 2. That is, doing kind things beyond what is expected or required

- a. Such was the case of Barnabas and Dorcas
  - b. Paul was confident such was true of the brethren in Rome - Ro 15:14
- Would he have written the same of us?
3. That we should be "full of goodness" is only natural...
- a. For God who is our Father demonstrated His own "goodness"
  - b. This He did by giving His Son to a sinful world undeserving of such grace - Ti 3:3-7

Have you submitted to His saving mercy, that "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"? - cf. Jn 3:5; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38

If not, then why not do so today, and then heed Paul's call to "goodness"...

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men." (Ti 3:8)