

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- *goodness* -

... Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place...

(Mark 6:31)



The Holy Spirit develops the fruit of goodness in our lives as we allow him freedom to work in the garden of our souls.

Goodness is an attribute of God and difficult to separate from his kindness, patience and love. God is good simply because that is his nature and it doesn't depend on him doing anything for us – he is good because he is God.

God's creation was good (Genesis 1), he revealed his goodness to Moses (Ex 33:19), the psalmists extol the goodness of God and the prophets call us to walk in ways that are good. Jesus calls us to let our good deeds shine and to do good to those who hate us (Matthew 5:16; Luke 6:26). And as mentioned, goodness is a fruit the Holy Spirit develops in us in our journey of Christlikeness.

The word “good” is so broad that it is difficult to define – we see it, however, in the works of God, in what Scripture tells us about him and in what we ourselves have experienced of him. This is an opportunity to explore God's goodness more deeply and to respond to the challenge that God is offering us.

(On-line link) <https://youtu.be/ezoF8YFKKDQ>

GOODNESS - FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Call to worship

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 100

Prayer

We will praise you, Lord.
We give you thanks, for you are good;
your love endures forever.
We proclaim your mighty acts and
fully declare your praise.

We give thanks to you, Lord, for you are good;
your love endures forever.
We will proclaim the redemption story,
how you redeemed us from the enemy,
through the goodness of your love.

Based on Psalm 106:1-2; 107:1-2



SONG

Lord, let your glory fall
as on that ancient day,
songs of enduring love
and then your glory came.
And as a sign to you
that we would love the same,
our hearts will sing that song:
God, let your glory come.

You are good, you are good,
and your love endures.
You are good, you are good,
and your love endures.
You are good, you are good,
and your love endures today.

Voices in unison
giving you thanks and praise,
joined by the instruments
and then your glory came.
Your presence like a cloud
upon that ancient day,
the priests were overwhelmed
because your glory came.

A sacrifice was made,
and then your fire came;
they knelt upon the ground,
and with one voice they praised.

Scripture

I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised,
according to all the Lord has done for us—
yes, the many good things he has done for Israel,
according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

He said, “Surely they are my people, children who will be true to me”;
and so he became their Saviour.

In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them.
In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Isaiah 63:7-9

Reflection

We best understand what goodness is when we reflect back on God’s dealings with his people throughout the years. The redemptive story of Israel reveals God’s goodness. Think of the many stories which reveal God’s goodness to his people. What are your own stories? How has God shown goodness to you over the years?



Thanksgiving

(silent prayer of thanksgiving)

You’re my God, and I thank you.
O my God, I lift high your praise.
Thank God—he’s so good.
His love never quits!
Psalm 118:29 (MSG)

God is so good, God is so good,
God is so good. He’s so good to me.ⁱ

(This song was composed to help pass the time on a road trip. The first verse was composed by Velna or her traveling companions, and many more have been added since. You might like to add a verse or two of your own that reflect God’s goodness in your life.)

Scripture

I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.

I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.”

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

Ps 13:6; 16:2; 23:6; 34:8; 145:9

REFLECTION

*The goodness of God was made even more visible in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
Jesus came to proclaim, in words and power, the good news of the Kingdom – which is the goodness of
God transforming the world!
He also proclaimed what that same goodness should look like in us, the children of God...*

In the same way, let your light shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who
curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.
If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.
Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.
Do to others as you would have them do to you.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if
you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you
lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners,
expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting
to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he
is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.
Luke 6:27-36

Slowly read these verses through again. What stands out for you?

What is God saying to you?

What does “doing good” look like for you in your current circumstances?

How would you like to respond?

Pause

Prayer

Dear Jesus,
help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly
that my life may only be a radiance of yours.
Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others;
the light, O Jesus, will be all from you,
none of it will be mine:
it will be you, shining on others through me.
Let me thus praise you in the way you love best,
by shining on those around me.ⁱⁱ



Scripture

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

SONG

Give thanks to the Lord our God and King,
His love endures forever.
For He is good He is above all things,
His love endures forever.
Sing Praise, Sing Praise.

From the rising to the setting sun,
His love endures forever.
And by the grace of God we will carry on,
His love endures forever.
Sing Praise, Sing Praise.

With a mighty hand and outstretched arm,
His love endures forever.
For the life that's been reborn,
His love endure forever.
Sing Praise, Sing Praise.

Forever God is faithful, forever God is strong.
Forever God is with us, forever.

Benediction

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father,
who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,
encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17



GOING DEEPER: Here are some suggestions that may help you to engage more deeply with this theme.

- **Reflect:**

History is full of examples of goodness: God's goodness to all people, and the calling on his followers to also live out this goodness to others.

Reflect on ways God has been good to you...
How have you experienced God's goodness through other people?
What are some of the ways you have shown goodness to others?
When you think about goodness, what comes to mind?

How would you define it?

In what ways are you being challenged at the moment to be good to others?

- The **Bible** has many references to goodness. It would be difficult to separate experiences of God's goodness from experiences which show his kindness, mercy and compassion. Think of some stories which reveal to you how good God is. Choose one and read this story through slowly and thoughtfully and reflect on what God might be saying to you through this.

There are also a number of verses that tell us something about goodness. Choose one (or more) that speak/s to you and meditate on what it is saying you right now.

These verses refer to the goodness of God: Ps 69:16; Ps 86:5; Ps 135:3; Nahum 1:7

These verses challenge us to live out God's goodness in our own lives:

Amos 5:14-15; Micah 6:8; Romans 7:18-21; Romans 12:9, 21; Ephesians 2:10; Eph 5:9; Col 1:10;. 2 Thess 3:13; Titus 1:8; Heb 10:24; 1 Peter 2:12; 2 Peter 1:5; 3John 1:11..

- You could use one of the Bible passages or songs provided in the material to practise **Lectio Divina**.
- If you enjoy being **creative**, think about some ways you could creatively express what God's goodness might be like. You could use collage, paint, clay or even objects you find outside to show this. Or, you could create something that shows what goodness means to you and the place it has in your life.
- Go for a **walk**. Where do you see the goodness of God at work in the world around you? What would you like to say to God about what you have discovered?
- If you are **sharing** this retreat day with someone else, spend some time worshipping together and praising God for his goodness, and thanking him for what you have learned about goodness in your own life. This may also be an appropriate opportunity to express your sorrow for the times you know you have failed to show God's goodness to others.
- If you like to **journal**, make a note of what you have experienced during this retreat time in your journal. A simple way to do this is to:

Thank God for who He is and what He is doing in your life

Notice what is happening around you and in you

Respond to what God has shown you, by thanking Him, repenting, or recommitting yourself to Him

- **Simply sit in His presence.** We don't have to do anything to enjoy being in His presence! We are in His will when we are fully and completely in His presence, with our hearts focussed on Him.

EVEN DEEPER

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition. Its title derives from the Latin words meaning reading and divine/holy. In Lectio Divina, we seek to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Lectio Divina can be practiced both by individuals and in groups.

Practicing Lectio Divina Individually

1. Text

Begin by choosing a section of Scripture that you would like to read and pray. You can choose the text randomly or use a liturgical book, such as The Book of Common Prayer. Try not to set a goal for how much content you will cover; the goal is to listen for God and to experience his presence.

2. Preparation

Do what you must to quiet and prepare yourself to hear from God. If you need to find a quiet room, sit in silence for several minutes, or sit in a comfortable chair, take whatever posture will help you prepare to receive and experience God's presence.

3. Reading/Listening

When you sense that your heart is prepared, begin by slowly reading the passage of Scripture that you have selected. Move slowly through sentences and phrases. As you read, pay attention to what word, phrase, or idea catches your attention.

4. Meditation

Begin to meditate on the word, phrase, or idea that has captured your attention. Repeat it again and again.

Consider:

What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on this word, phrase, or idea?

What are you reminded of in your life?

What does it make you hope for?

Meditation is no easy task—as you try to concentrate don't be disappointed if random thoughts enter your head. As they do, offer them to God.

5. Prayer

Now begin to speak to God. Tell God what word, phrase, or idea captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. How is God using this word, phrase, or idea to bless and transform you? Tell God what you have been thinking and feeling as you've listened and meditated. Tell God how you hope this word, phrase, or idea will change your heart to be more like His.

6. Contemplation

Finish by focusing your attention on the fact that God's presence is with you. If as you try to focus on God's presence you sense a need to read the text again, to continue meditating, or to simply continue talking with God, allow yourself to do so. As you do, know that you are in the presence of God.

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THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Finding the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives as we review our day.

1. Recognize the presence of God

Be still and know that you are with God.

2. Look at your day with gratitude

Acknowledge God in the big and small things of life.

3. Review your day

When or where in the past 24 hours did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God's action in your life? When were you resisting?

Ask yourself

- What habits and life patterns do I notice?
- When did I feel most alive? Most drained of life?
- When did I have the greatest sense of belonging? When did I feel most alone?
- When did I give love? Where did I receive love?
- When did I feel most fully myself? Least myself?
- When did I feel most whole? Most fragmented?

4. Reconcile and Resolve

- Seek forgiveness
- Ask for direction
- Share a concern
- Express gratitude
- Resolve to move forward

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SONGS

Lord let your glory fall – Matt Redman. 1998 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)

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ⁱⁱ John Henry Newman (1801-1890)