Homegroup Study  March 2021

The fruit of the Spirit

The sixth part of the fruit of the Spirit is **Goodness**.

When God created the heavens and the earth, we are told repeatedly that “it was good”. Everything in creation was all that it should be… until our first parents rebelled and sin entered into the world.

The plotline of the Bible tells us the story of God redeeming this cursed creation so that it is utterly good once again.

As God’s re-created people, we are to exhibit the fruit of this goodness in our lives.

Goodness means being all that God has called us to be regardless of the situation that we find ourselves in. There is to be no hypocrisy or double standard in us, only a character consistent with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here’s a brief definition:

“**Goodness is when we are all that we should be, regardless of the situation**”.

**Q** What are some of the ways that we use the word, “good”? What do we mean by good?

**Q** Read Mark 10:18 and Romans 3:10-12. Is it possible to actually be good? What does good mean in these verses? What would it look like to grow this virtue in your heart?

**Q** Read Psalm 145:8-9. How is God’s goodness expresses to us?

**Q** On Sunday we defined goodness as “being all that we should be in any and every situation”. When do you find it hard to do this?

**Q** How can we guard ourselves against the counterfeits of this fruit; Religiosity, Hypocrisy and Idolatry?
The seventh part of the fruit of the Spirit is **Faithfulness**.
Perhaps a better word to use is trust or trustworthiness.
I think there are two sides to this fruit; First of all the trust that we have in God – our unshakeable confidence that all He has said, He will most certainly do. The gospel itself requires that we trust Jesus to save us – it is Him that we are to pin all our hope on. And secondly, this fruit concerns our own faithfulness as we express the character of God in our lives – We are to be dependable, trustworthy, loyal and true to our word just like God is.
Here’s a brief definition:

“**Faithfulness is loyalty. Courage. To be principle-driven, committed, utterly reliable. True to one’s word.**”

Q What are some of the ways that our world encourages unfaithfulness and disloyalty?

Q Read 2 Corinthians 1:20. What does Paul mean when he says that all of God’s promises are “yes” in Christ? What does this tell us about the faithfulness of God?

Q What are some of the promises that God has made to us? (e.g. John 11:25, 1 John 1:9, Philippians 4:19, Matthew 28:19-20, Revelation 22:6-7)

Q What characterises a truly faithful friend? (Proverbs 19:4, 27:6)

Q How might faithfulness be seen in the local church? (Hebrews 10:25, Galatians 6:1-2)
The eighth part of the fruit of the Spirit is **Gentleness**. Older translations use the word ‘meekness’ to refer to this aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. Unfortunately, both of these words carry the connotation of weakness or blandness, like a warm breeze on a summer evening. But the concept behind the word in the Bible is anything but weak! God Himself is described as gentle (e.g. Isaiah 40:11). Moses, the great leader of the Exodus is described at the meekest man on the earth (Numbers 12:3) and Jesus tells us that He is “gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29).

The idea captured in this word then, is that of having great power, might and strength, but rather than letting it loose, like a bull in a china shop, that strength is kept completely under control.

Here’s a brief definition: **“Gentleness is strength under control”**

**Q** If you were to describe someone as gentle and meek, what do you think people would understand by that?

**Q** Contrast Isaiah 40, verses 11 and 12. How is God described in each of these verses? How would you describe the gentleness of God seen in v11?

**Q** Some of the counterfeits of gentleness that we talked about on Sunday are: Passive aggression, false humility and being a doormat; What do these look like? How are they a false version of gentleness?

**Q** The gentle Christian knows that *in Christ* they have great strength (see 2 Timothy 1:7-8). How do we know when it’s the right time to make a stand?

**Q** How might gentleness be seen in the local church? (2 Timothy 2:24-26, Galatians 6:1)
The ninth part of the fruit of the Spirit is **Self-control**

“Self-control” is a bit of a misnomer. Left to ourselves we fail miserably in the battle with the desires of our sinful nature. What is needed is the help and the strength that the Holy Spirit provides the believer as we live and walk with Him. Our sinful desires constantly hammer at us, and self-control (or as the older translations put it ‘temperance’) is that virtue which resists them by ruling our passions and (by God’s grace) choosing to obey him instead.

Here’s a brief definition:

*Self-control is the ability to pursue the important (What God wants) over the urgent (our desires).*

**Q** Read Proverbs 25:28. What is the picture given here to describe a man who lacks self-control? Why are walls a good picture of self-control?

**Q** Read Galatians 5:16. What does Paul say is needed if we are not going to gratify the desires of our sinful nature? Why isn’t discipline, grit and determination what we really need?

**Q** Read Titus 2:11-14. How do we learn to say “no” to “ungodliness and worldly passions”? What does v12 actually mean when it says grace teaches us?

**Q** How would you counsel a brother or sister who is struggling with a lack of self-control in the areas of anger, lust, envy etc?