

Fruits of the Holy Spirit – Session 7
Goodness
Galatians 5

Timing: 30-45 minutes, then leading into ministry

Buzz groups: Suggestions are boxed, pairs or groups of 3-4 will work best

Illustrations: Suggestions are noted, but your own ideas and stories are preferable

Focus: Major on the one or two points most relevant to your group

Introduction

Key Point: Our lives get better and better as we give our lives over to the Holy Spirit

Key Verse: “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” (Galatians 5: 22-23).

All the fruits of the Spirit can seem like vague words or nebulous concepts which have lost their meaning to us.

Introduce this week on *goodness*. Sometimes think of it quite negatively. “Goody Two Shoes”. No-one wants to be around people who are too good as it reminds them they’re not. Mark Twain said “Be good and you will be lonesome.”

Buzzgroups: What does ‘goodness’ mean to you? Why is ‘goodness’ important in today’s world? Do you consider yourself to be a good person?

Get feedback.

Tolstoy said “It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness.”

Celebrity-obsessed culture honours people for their “beauty” in the eyes of everyone - not their goodness. We don’t get to know people’s true characters; we just see the presented, managed image. There is a crisis of authenticity as we don’t feel we can trust what’s in the public domain as we all know it has been airbrushed, or manipulated by PR and spin doctors.

But goodness is a core attribute of God – see Ex 33:19, 2 Chron 6:41; Neh 9:25; Ps 31:19

So goodness is what God honours in character – whether others see it or not.

Ultimately, God’s goodness to us is shown in his plan of salvation and Jesus coming to us, and in the free gift of the Holy Spirit who makes his home in us.

We’re so familiar with that we miss how radical, risky and reckless it was from God’s point of view. It’s not about being nice. If that’s how he was good, that’s how we should be good too.

Imagine what it would be like if Jesus withdrew His goodness from you. In what ways would your life be different?

How do we grow the fruit of “goodness”?

1. Knowledge (2 Peter 1:3)

The Point: All behaviour is based in belief. Changing what we believe about the world affects our behaviour.

Romans 12:1-3 ¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Therefore transforming our minds is about:

- (i) breaking old patterns of thinking v.2 (repentance) [personal illustration]
- (ii) embracing new patterns v.1 (worship) – “beholding is becoming” [personal illustration]
- (iii) discipline v.3 “mind”, “able to test and approve” [personal illustration]

Give examples of the practical ways in which you do these eg journalling, mentoring, listening to talks

2. Power (2 Peter 1 v 3)

The Point: Knowledge isn't enough.

Some of the meanest people seem to know the bible inside out. They have “a form of godliness but deny its power” (2 Timothy 3:5)

Psalms 107 talks about God's powerful goodness. Four illustrations are given:

- God provides for us (v 4-9)
- God delivers us (v 10-16)
- God heals us (v 17-22)
- God gives us peace (v 23-32)

Illustration: Tell a story about how you have experienced some of these outworkings of God's goodness when you have been aware of the Holy Spirit's presence.

Application: Recap for everyone how to experience the power of the Holy Spirit: by asking God and receiving!

Have you sensed a greater love/compassion ie. Goodness, for people since you began to meet with God (give an example)? What things cause this love/compassion to stop growing?

3. Promises (2 Peter 1:4)

The Point: By trusting in God's promises our lives are transformed and become good

2 Peter 1:4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Illustration: Tell a story about how one of Jesus' promises to you has made a difference to your life and changed you for the better.

Buzzgroups: Working each on a bible promise, asking “how do we live differently in the light of that? What difference does that make to us?”

Ideas for Ministry

- All stand in silence. Thank God for His goodness and unfailing love. Invite the Holy Spirit to come and bring transformation, and specifically ask Him to help you develop the fruit of

goodness in your life. Listen for words and pictures of encouragement. Share them and then pray for one another in 2's / 3's.