

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

LESSON 05 - GENTLENESS AND GOODNESS

Text: Galatians 5:22-23

Overview:

1. The great battle of our lives here upon Earth is between the flesh and the Spirit.
2. Ultimately, this is a conflict over who will reign and rule in our lives – man (the flesh) or God (the Spirit).
3. When we choose to walk after the Spirit, we will bear His fruit in our lives.
4. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.”

Introduction:

1. Someone has said about “goodness” – “It is the word everybody uses, and no one defines.”
2. One dictionary lists 43 different definitions for the word “good.”
3. Many have an idea that goodness is a subjective quality, defined by one’s personal feelings and opinions.
4. Yet, God gives us His standard for goodness in His Word.
5. The two words in this study of the fruit of the Spirit teach us God’s definition of goodness...

I. The Meaning of Gentleness

- A. The Greek word is *chrestotes* (χρηστοτης) meaning, “moral excellence, goodness, integrity, kindness.”
 1. The ASV and the ESV translate this word as “kindness.”
 2. In the KJV, it is translated as “good,” “goodness,” and “kindness.”
- B. The root of this word means, “usefulness; or useful excellence.”
 1. It referred to something that was well suited for its purpose.
 2. When applied to people, it meant that they were well suited for their relationships with others.
- C. Thus, the term “gentleness” includes honesty, integrity, honor, decency, and reliability, along with kindness and gentleness.

II. The Meaning of Goodness

- A. The Greek word is *agathosune* (αγαθοσυνη) which means, “virtue, uprightness of heart and life.”
 1. It is found 4 times in the New Testament and always translated as “goodness” in the KJV.
 2. In 2 Thessalonians 1:11, it is used of God’s goodness.
- B. Goodness is a character trait springing from one’s submission to the source and standard of goodness – God and His Word.
- C. Goodness is being and doing good.

III. The Manifestation of Gentleness and Goodness

- A. The relationship between these two words seems to be this: gentleness (kindness) is a manifestation of (and flows from a heart of) goodness.
- B. Consider how God manifests His goodness and gentleness (Psalm 145:9).
 1. Romans 2:1-4 – by His longsuffering
 2. Romans 11:22; Ephesians 2:7 – by His salvation
 3. Titus 3:4-7 – by His grace and mercy

Lesson 05

4. Acts 10:38; 14:17 – by His giving
 - C. Likewise, the Christian must manifest gentleness and goodness.
 1. He must recognize the source of goodness (Matthew 19:16-17; John 10:11; 3 John 1:11).
 2. He must have a good heart (Luke 8:15; Luke 6:45).
 3. He must bring forth good fruit (Matthew 3:10; 7:17-19).
 4. He must do good works (Matthew 5:16, 44; John 5:28-29; Acts 9:36, 39; 2 Cor. 5:10; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Titus 3:8; James 4:17).
 5. He must be a servant (Matthew 25:21; Mark 14:7).
 6. He must have right priorities (Luke 10:39-42).
 7. He must not compromise with evil (Luke 23:50-51; 1 Cor. 15:33).
 8. He must not practice sin (Romans 3:12; 12:9, 21; 2 Timothy 2:21-22).
 9. He must live by faith (Romans 8:28).
 10. He must study the Scripture (Colossians 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 - D. Goodness is not about looking good, feeling good, having the goods, or living the “good life” (as the world sees it); rather, it is about being good.
- IV. The Connection to Love
- A. Gentleness or kindness “refers not to sentiment, but to service. [It] is usefulness in a good sense, and always in small things.”
 - B. There are many motives for doing good things, especially in great works (cf. Matt. 6:1-4; 23:5; Amos 4:4-5).
 - C. Love is the motive for noticing and showing kindness in the little things (cf. Matt. 10:41-42; John 13:4-5, 14; Acts 9:36, 39).
 - D. Gentleness is love’s activity!
 - E. Sometimes, good behavior is motivated by fear or guilt.
 - F. However, true goodness is motivated by love (John 14:15; 21:15-17; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 8:8-9).
 - G. Goodness is love’s quality!

Conclusion:

Do all the good you can,
 By all the means you can,
 In all the ways you can,
 In all the places you can,
 To all the people you can,
 As long as ever you can.