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Ga 5:22, 23 But the fruit of the Spirit is ... goodness ... against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Scripture Text: Galatians 5:14-26; Mark 10:17-22; John 15:1-13

What are the characteristics or keys to the Christian (Christ-like) personality? Galatians 5:22-23 gives us an excellent list, called the fruit of the Spirit (notice the capital letter). If we have the Spirit in us, we will bear this fruit. While speaking in other tongues is the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit baptism, the abiding evidence that the Holy Spirit dwells in a life is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit.

Paul lists nine elements of Spiritual fruit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Peter lists eight qualities that will make us fruitful in Christ: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (II Peter 1:5-10). Faith and temperance are repeated in both lists. Virtue and godliness are aspects of goodness, brotherly kindness and charity are aspects of love, and patience is similar to longsuffering.

Goodness. This word includes righteousness, morality, virtue, and excellence. We must remember that “there is none good but one, that is, God” (Mark 10:18). Any good thing we have comes from Him (James 1:17). Our righteousness is as filthy rags in His sight (Isaiah 64:6), and only the righteousness of Christ saves us. When we have faith in Him, God imputes the righteousness of Jesus to us (Romans 4:5-6). We will be saved only if we continue in God’s goodness (Romans 11:22).

Goodness (agathōsunē). Goodness was a deep-down virtue of moral sweetness, moral excellence; this word is not found in secular Greek sources. Developed by believers as a way to express a kind of goodness that was deeper than anything the world experienced Ephesians chapter 5 we read in verse 9, “The fruit of the Light” which is in the margin of your bible, the divine Light, the heavenly presence our Lord. “The fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.”

Goodness is connected to “righteousness.” Righteousness manifested through humanity can have a hard edge. Righteousness can pose the stern aspect of Christian character. When you are righteous: you have righteous standards, you have righteous convictions, you know what is right, you expect people to do what is right, and you uphold the standard of what is right, you defend what is right. That is the sterner aspect of Christian character.

However, the backside of that – and that’s what Light produces, according to Ephesians 5:9 – the other aspect of that righteousness is goodness. That’s the sensitive side of your convictions. That’s the kindlier expression of your convictions. Its right to have those convictions, its right to hold those convictions, its right not to compromise those convictions, but it’s also right to be full of goodness so those convictions don’t wind up abusing people.

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Romans 15:14; this is one of the sweetest commendations of any congregation in the New Testament: "Concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness." That is that your convictions have a tenderness connected to them. When you have the full knowledge, the full understanding of the Word of God, when you have the full picture, it doesn't just make hard-nosed convictions, it produces strong, immovable convictions that have a soft side of goodness. No one has convictions stronger than God, And yet the goodness of the Lord extends to the highest heavens. Nehemiah 9 reveals His great goodness.

David said in Psalm 23, "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

In Psalm 27, verse 13, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

God is both righteous and good; and this goodness is what brings mercy to bear. This is the kind of goodness that Joseph had. Joseph was a good man, Matthew 1:19, he was a righteous man, and he found out that his wife was pregnant with a child, and he was devastated because he knew her character. He couldn't figure out how this could have happened, not yet understanding that it was done by the Holy Spirit. He didn't know what to do. He was a righteous man, so he had to do what was righteous.

He could have stoned her; that would have had Old Testament support. He could have publicly shamed her; that would have had Old Testament support. But instead, he planned to put her away to cancel the contract of engagement, even though they hadn't ever come together in marriage, cancel the engagement contract privately. This is because his righteousness was tempered with his goodness. And this is how it is with God. He is perfectly righteous, but His righteousness is tempered with His goodness.

This is the example that Christ gives to us. They said of Christ in John 7:12, "He's a good man. He's a good man." He was the man who came into the temple and threw them out at the beginning and end of His ministry. His message was severe regarding judgment. But there was a goodness in Him that could be seen, and spoken of: "He is a good man." In Isaiah 42:1 our Lord quotes in Matthew 12:18 "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him," the messianic prophecy. Christ will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. "He'll proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel, nor cry out; nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets."

In verse 20: "A battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out." He's coming as a conqueror. He's coming to lead justice to victory. He's coming to take over the world. He is the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Conqueror of conquerors. But it says, "A battered reed He will not break off." People used to play tunes on reeds. They could play a reed. Shepherds are well-known to be playing little flutes made out of reeds. Eventually saliva or just time would make the reed useless. It would get soft and it couldn't be played. And so, one might break the reed and break the little flute and throw it

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away. And wicks would eventually run down and be useless, and when they were still just barely flickering get thrown away. Messiah, when He comes, will not take that bruised reed and break it and discard it. He will not take that flickering light and extinguish it and throw it away. There's a goodness about Him, and Jesus was speaking of Himself. Goodness comes along with righteousness and softens the convictions.

We are commanded to this goodness. It's not as if it's optional, we're commanded to demonstrate this. Galatians 6:10, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people. Do good to all people, especially to those who are of the household of the faith," especially to fellow believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:15, "See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always, always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people." For us as the church and for all people outside, we are to be known by our goodness, our large-heartedness, our tenderness, our kindness, our patience.

2 Thessalonians, chapter 1. Here's the prayer of Paul in verse 11: "To this end also we pray for you always, this is what I pray, that our God will count you worthy of your calling," – that's your calling to salvation – "and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power." So that's the power source: God.

Paul says, "I pray always for you, that our God will fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power." Here is the apostle praying to God for your goodness, for my goodness, for the goodness of the people of God. It's supplied by heaven through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Observe verse 12 of 2 Thessalonians 1, "so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." Why are we to manifest love, joy, peace? Why are we to be characterized by these virtues of patience, kindness, and goodness? "So that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you." Christ is being put on display; a transformed life is being shown.

This is not how people live in the world. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness – that's not our culture. Our culture has been defined already: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and a lot others. That's the society. Lives like this are a demonstration of the power of the gospel; they bring glory to our Lord.

Defining goodness through a contemporary lens

The fruit of goodness gives us the beat of a "different drummer." This person does not seek fame or fortune and often tries to avoid it. They seek different goals and have higher convictions.

A famous quote. Henry David Thoreau was once jailed because he refused to pay a poll tax to a state that supported slavery. Soon his close friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, came to visit him, peered through the bars, and anxiously asked, "Why Henry, what are you doing in there?" "Nay Ralph," Thoreau pointedly replied, "The question is, What are you doing out there?"

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Thoreau defended his position and those of other such men when he wrote, “If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.”

A young man wrote a prominent clergyman and announced he was giving up ministry and would simply live by the golden rule. He based his decision on a viewpoint of how God could permit such evil throughout the world.

The minister replied, “You are a young man, and I am now in my 80s. You write about living the good life as though you could blow on your hands and do it. That has not been my experience. Right living is a challenging affair! It involves a constant and sometimes devastating struggle against temptation. It cost self-discipline, self-sacrifice, self-control, courage to refuse conformity and to stand up against popular wrongs.” He continued, “I have seen many magnificent comebacks from moral abysses- alcoholism, vice, criminality, or what you will-but I never saw one that did not involve a recovery of faith in God.” *True goodness requires a spiritual stamina that exceeds just a determination to be just.*

George Washington Carver was born a slave and struggled against tremendous odds to achieve an education. After years of abuse he finished his master’s degree and was asked to accept a position with Iowa University. It was a coveted job and no other black man had ever had such a high place. At last he could enjoy the comforts of his society. People at the university loved him and sat eagerly in his classes.

Then a letter came from Booker T. Washington asking the young scientist to join him in a dream to educate Black men of the South. Leaving his comfortable position, Carver traveled to the parched cotton lands of the South to live and work among his starving people. Years of sacrifice and insult followed, but slowly and surely he was able to lift his fellow people from sure starvation and brought them a dignity that would raise them from a slave class.

When questioned about his brilliance, Carver always said the good Lord gave him everything. He refused to accept money for any discoveries, rather choosing to give them free to anyone who asked for them. Three presidents claimed him as a friend. Great industries desired his service and even Thomas Edison offered him a beautiful new laboratory and a \$100,000.00 a year salary. When Carver turned it down critics commented, “If you had all that money you could help your people.” Carver replied. “If I had all that money I might forget my people.” The epitaph on his tomb bares this inscription, “...He could have added fortune to fame, but caring for neither, he found happiness and honor in being helpful to the world.” This type of goodness always cost greatly.

A Divided Heart

Robert Stevenson’s story of the good Dr. Jekyll and the bad beast Hyde shows the potential for great goodness or great evil in a person. A man must become able through the Holy Spirit to choke out the evil and cultivate the good.

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David says, "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name." (Ps 86:11).

David prays for a heart united to fear God. Unfortunately a heart can be united to despise good and commit sinister evil. This was seen in Nazi Germany with the unspeakable horrors of genocide.

Mt 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Knowing how evil humanity can be, we must cry to God to make us over... to make us good. John Bunyan in his work called Pilgrim's Progress, speaking of *Christian's* journey to the City of God, says a desire will carry a man to God if 10,000 oppose it; "without the desire all is rain upon stones." (Luke 8:13).

The Apostle James deals with a divided heart when he says, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." (Jas 3:10-12). Real wisdom is complete purity and goodness (Jas 3:13).

Ultimate evil or goodness is first sown in seeds of everyday goodness or evil. Habits we sow in the springtime of life we reap in the fall season. Goodness must be determined in the mundane things. Goodness is born of God's Spirit and takes full sway only as we give control to Him.

Whom do We Trust?

There is an old theory that says, "all things are relative". Rather than observe a set of rules one must wait for the situation to present itself and then decide what is moral or good. However, to cultivate good one must also stamp out evil. The arguments of "situational ethics" or "circumstantialism" fade in the light of truth.

Paul observed the law was given that we may know when we have done that which is not good for ourselves, society, and God. The fundamental fact says there must be a basis for judgement or each man is a law unto himself. The dangerous problem with situational ethics is what Israel experience during its confederacy of the judges, "But every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). It was spoken earlier, "The children of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord" (2:11). While something may seem right in our own eyes it is contrary to what God desires.

God warns against arrogance and self-trust- *Pr. 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* Situational ethics can be most perilous because as Jeremiah observed; *Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* Whom or what do we trust to give us basis for truth?

Exodus 32:1-8; 1 Sam. 15:24 - The crowd is wrong. The teenager may say, "Everybody is doing it" That is always an insufficient reason. Morality cannot be as unstable

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as fads and fashions of the masses. A few centuries ago the crowd knew tomatoes would poison and even warned against taking baths for health reasons. They told Edison his light bulb would never work and the cotton gin was scorned in its experimental stages. The crowd is often wrong.

A group of teenagers were arrested for shoplifting. They admitted they did not need the merchandise, but stole it because everybody was doing it. Investigators revealed they did not feel they had done wrong since the crowd had placed a sanction on it. Sometimes we stand alone. If we crush goodness we risk our very life.

Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Following your feelings. Feelings are fickle. A giant passenger jet crashed. Officials began unveiling the story of the crash and decided the probable cause was vertigo. Vertigo is when the atmospheric conditions begin to confuse a pilot. All sense of direction and perspective is lost. They may even feel they are flying upside down although the instruments indicate that all is well. The greatest temptation during this time is to take the controls into one's own hands and try to right the plane.

The Bible says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil." (Prov 3:5-7). Emotion will drown out the voice of God in your life. Remember God (Ps 20:7; Is 46:9) and commit your way and thoughts to Him (Ps 37:3, 5; Phil. 4:4-8).

Find wiser men and wiser words. Some pin their hopes for morality on intellectuals of this world. The philosophers become guides for society and we feel those with higher education and intellectual capacity are more qualified than we to rule on morality. More than half of Hitler's high command were highly educated. Most had their master's degree and several had their doctorates. They were certainly not sane judges of what was good for themselves or society. Goodness does not improve with education. Education might a person more skillful and less rude, but still the heart is arrogant and hateful.

The eternal fact is that the only basis for goodness is God's Word. In an age of relativism and denial of past mores it is important to note without a foundation the framework of goodness cannot be built. David said he hid God's word in his heart that he might not sin against God. Psalm 119 is charged through with praise for this foundation which gives light, life, guidance, and truth.

Ezekiel seemed to understand this generation when he spoke of the conspiracy of God's prophets, who went about as roaring lions, ravaging the prey, devouring souls, profaning that which is sacred, and seeing no difference between the holy and the profane things (Ezek. 22:24-29). He concludes his plea's with, " And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." (Ezek. 22:30).

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Goodness produces a faith that rejects...And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: (Gen. 14:21-23). Context Gen 14 chapter

Goodness holds to integrity...Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate (Genesis 39:1-6).NIV

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18). NIV

You plant a seed, you get the life that is contained in that seed; that never ever changes.

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: (Duet 30:19)

God always sees what men and women only look at (1 Sam. 16:7). In a manger, God saw a King...in a servant, a Savior...in a sacrifice, salvation...in a crucifixion, a resurrection. In death, God was working at life; in defeat, He was looking at victory. What you or I, or your country or my country, looks like is not what God sees. God looks beyond the surface to the potential deep within. That is God's way of thinking about everything. Beyond the immediate troubles God sees success, and He continues to call it forth until what He sees becomes reality.

The seed of every tree is in the fruit of the tree. That means the blessings of the Third World nations are in the Third World nations, and the prosperity of America is in America. The answer is right inside of us. It's our attitudes that make the difference. No one can *make you* disorderly or careless or thoughtless. You *are* unruly and careless and thoughtless because you choose to be.

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Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house at night (Genesis 39:7-12).NIV

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Goodness allows us to maintain our convictions no matter how blessed we are or how offended we are - by God (Job 13:15) or by men (Joseph's brothers; Gen 37:4; 18-28). We will see life, even our life, as God sees it.