


Yesterday we looked at Romans 7 where Paul told of the inward struggle he once faced. Paul's desire was to be, and to do good, yet he would not find it within himself to please God or to practice goodness.

Paul's desire, delight, and determination to do good all ended in failure. Finally Paul came to a place of **despair** when he proclaimed:

 Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

After despair, Paul found **deliverance**. Read Rom 7:25, 8:1-3.

Q. According to Rom 8:1, to whom is there now no condemnation?

Now read Gal 5:24,25 which follow directly after our list for Spiritual fruit.

As we've studied the fruit of the Spirit, we have found that all these spiritual qualities must be produced in us by the Holy Spirit of God. Paul said in Rom 8:1 that the answer is to *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. This is very similar to the words in Gal 5:24,25.


It is important as we study the fruit of the Spirit that we realize, like Paul, that we do not have the power to produce this fruit. For a portion of Paul's life he struggled, trying to please God with what *he* could do. He tried and failed to please God over and over again. Before Paul could come to a place of deliverance from this unsatisfied spiritual life, he had to come to a place of despair. He had to proclaim "O wretched man that I am!" before he could proclaim "Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

It is interesting to note that in Romans 7 we find the word *I* recurring 16 times in 25 verses, with the word *spirit* occurring only once. In Romans 8 we find the words Spirit and Christ occurring 25 times!

The despair that Paul felt in Romans 7:24, is the same despair that every Christian must feel before they can move onto a spirit-controlled life. We must all come to a place like Paul where we realize that *in us there dwelleth no good thing*. The average Christian life is characterized by spiritual frustration and broken commitments to God, why? Half-hearted obedience and partial surrender to God will not produce spiritual fruit or victory. We must come to a place of utter abandon, where we stop relying on ourselves and begin trusting in the Lord. Search your heart today are you fully surrendered to Him? If the answer is anything other than a resounding Yes!, then you will not experience the freedom from sin, nor produce the fruit of the spirit, until you come to a place of despair and surrender to Christ.

What is Goodness?

Thursday


 Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness...

The word goodness means many different things to different people. It's vague definition allows it to be defined and misdefined in a number of ways. Many folks pride themselves in "trying to be good", "living a good life", or "doing good deeds". The greek word *agathosun* brings with it the idea of *virtue*, or *moral goodness*. English poet W.H. Auden rightly stated "Goodness is easier to recognize than to define". So how do we recognize or define goodness? Perhaps the best definition of goodness can be found in the book of Micah, chapter 6 and verse 8:


Q. According to Micah 6:8, what three things constitute goodness?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Considering Micah 6:8, we can safely say that Goodness is "doing that which is required to maintain a right relationship with our fellow man (do justly, love mercy) and with our God (walk humbly before Him). This definition is validated when we look at the character of two New Testament men who were called *good*.

 Luke 23:50. **Q.** What two qualities are linked to Joseph of Arimathaea in this verse? What does v51 say he was waiting for?

Joseph fulfilled the requirements of Micah 6:8, he was good, he was just, and he sought to live for and with God.

 Acts 11:22-24. **Q.** What three reasons in v24 are given for Barnabas' care for the church in verse 23?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

To be good means to live an honest life before men, and a humble life before God. It may be hard to define, but can it be recognized in your life?

Goodness Leads to a Clear Conscience

Friday

Yesterday we determined that goodness affects our relationship toward God and our relationship toward men. Today we will see that seeking to walk humbly before God and honestly before men (the essence of goodness), will lead to a *clear conscience* before both God and man.

📖 Acts 24:16 **Q.** In what did Paul always exercise himself?

Q. What do you think is significant about Paul’s use of the word “exercise”?

Paul’s desire was that no man could accuse him of wrong doing, and that there be nothing between He and God that would hinder his relationship with Him. Paul’s consistent practice of goodness in his life had real practical benefits as we see in Acts 23. In this chapter Paul was ordered to stand before the council, where he faced accusations of wrongdoing.

Q. What was Paul’s response to the council?

Acts 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have:

_____..

One great benefit of living honestly, doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly before God, is that in times of trouble we can “earnestly behold” our accusers and boldly proclaim that we have a clear conscience! If Paul had some secret sin or had been less than honest with people he could not have responded with such boldness and confidence.

When we are dishonest, unjust, or unmerciful to others, we cannot live with a clear conscience. We, like David in Psalm 51, must say “my sin is ever before me”. It spoils our clear conscience and opens us up to legitimate accusation. Consider the example of Adam and Eve.

Q. What did the guilty Adam and Eve do when they heard the voice of God? (Gen 3:8). Why did Adam say he hid from God? (Gen 3:10)

As Christians we must live honest lives. When we lie to others, deal with them unjustly or unmercifully, we open ourselves up to accusations and bring offence to the name of Christ. Practicing Goodness allows us to stand boldly before our enemies and blameless before our God!

The Problem with Goodness

Saturday

Although goodness is essential to have a right relationship with God and man, there is a problem with goodness. 📖 Look up Jeremiah 13:23.

Q. According to this verse, what is the problem with Goodness?

📖 Look up Romans 3:12. **Q.** According to this verse, who does Good?

We have learned that Goodness is required of us, yet as far as God is concerned, we are incapable of performing it. Paul struggled with this very problem in Romans 7.

📖 Look up Rom 7:18-19. **Q.** What did Paul say was “present” with him?

Q. What did Paul **not** find within himself?

Paul had a **desire** to do Good. According to v22, what was Paul’s **delight**?

Paul was a man that loved God. He **delighted** in the law of God, and **desired** to do Good. In fact, in verse 18, we see that he was **determined** to do Good (to *will* is present with me). Yet, according to verse 19, his delight, desire, and determination was not enough to please God. He could not find goodness in himself enough to please the Lord.

We see the culmination of Paul’s struggle in Romans 7:24. Write it below.

Q. Considering some consistent themes that we have seen throughout these studies on the fruit of the Spirit, why do you think Paul could not find it within himself to do good?

Tomorrow we will see how Paul found *The Power for Goodness!*

The Fruit of the Spirit is Goodness

Review

From Thursday

1. Write out Micah 6:8

From Friday

1. What types of behaviour might defile our conscience?
2. How does living with guilt affect our relationship with God?
3. How does living with guilt affect our relationship with each other?

From Saturday

1. Write out Jeremiah 13:23

From Monday

1. What caused Paul to have a turning point in his life, ultimately finding spiritual victory?
2. What will be the turning point in our lives, that will lead to spiritual victory?