

SPIRITUAL GROWTH REVIEW

The Fruit of the Spirit Is...

THE SECRETS OF BEING FRUITFUL

Memory Verse for this week: *"The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalms 23*

1. What is goodness? What would the world say that goodness is? What is a biblical definition?
"Goodness is righteousness overflowing." The world might say that goodness is anything that makes someone happy, but that's not always true according to our biblical definition. Things that are bad can make us happy and things that are good can potentially be unpleasant at the time. Righteousness is the outflow of the will of God. God is the source of anything good. So goodness then is the will of God overflowing from His children to the world.
2. Consider **Ephesians 5:8-13**. Referring to our definition of goodness, what is righteousness? *Righteousness is living according to the will of God. He is holy and just.. We are commanded to live in obedience to Him which means that we are expected to live a righteous life.*
3. In **Matthew 19:17**, **Mark 10:18** and in **Luke 18:19** Jesus said that "No one is good except God alone." How can we be "good". Is it even possible? *Because we have a fallen nature, none of us is perfectly good, but that doesn't mean that we are incapable of reflecting some goodness. If goodness is a demonstration of the will of God, we do "good" when we exhibit godly behavior. God would not have asked us to be good if we were incapable of living it out. See also **Romans 3:12**.*
4. How is goodness different from kindness? *Kindness is goodness in action. Goodness is the nature of God. Where love is connected to a feeling, Goodness is a state of being. There seems to be some overlap in the fruit of the Spirit, but there are also some subtle nuances as well.*
5. Look at **Romans 15:14** and **2 Thessalonians 1:11**. Is goodness something that we are or something we do? *Goodness is more a characteristic than an action. We can both do good and be good, but the context of goodness here leans upon the idea that goodness is an attribute of God.*
6. Read **2 Samuel 9**. Why are David's actions so out of the ordinary? What makes his gesture "good"? *Typically, a new king would put to death the family of the old king to remove any threat of retaliation. David not only spares the lives of Jonathan's family, but he also invites Mephibosheth into his home to live out his days in blessing instead of defeat. The act is good because that's how God would treat us.*
7. Why didn't David treat Mephibosheth like other kinds would have? *His relationship with Jonathan certainly played a big part in the story, but David was a man after God's own*

heart. He had a heart of gold, though even David was not perfect. David is an example to us of a life that was fully devoted to the will of God. He was good to those under his care.

8. Put yourself in Mephibosheth's shoes. How would you feel after being summoned by the king? How would you feel after hearing the king's intentions? *Imagine his fear. He knew what was coming - death! He probably dreaded the long journey to the palace and said some goodbyes to friends along the way. Then to hear that he was to be welcomed as a son? What a twist of plot! What a blessing. What a relief! Remember, this is how we should feel towards God. He hasn't given us what we would expect, but instead has given us His full blessing.*
9. David and Jonathan made a covenant to one another. Read **1 Samuel 20:16-17**. What is a covenant? How have we entered into a covenant with God? How should this affect our daily living? *A covenant is a commitment between two parties that could only be broken by death. As David and Jonathan entered into a covenant to one another, so we have entered into a covenant with God the Father through Jesus Christ. God gave us His all, and so we are to reciprocate by living our lives for Him. This should affect the way we live, the decisions we make, and our goals that we wish to achieve while here on this earth.*
10. How do you feel about your self worth? How should we feel about our self worth? Should we humbly recognize that we are nothing? *This is a tricky question to answer. We should be humble, but being humble and lowly doesn't mean that we have a poor image of ourselves. We are children of God, loved and redeemed. In humility we remember that we were sinners destined for destruction, but as children we celebrate our adoption as sons and daughters of the Most High King!*
11. What are some examples of goodness from scripture? *Abraham towards the three visitors. David with Mephibosheth. Abigail towards David. Jesus towards everyone. King Josiah. Joseph towards his brothers... Goodness isn't the action, but the attitude and character behind the behavior. Out of the goodness of their hearts, they acted with loving kindness.*
12. Can you think of other people in history who have lived out goodness? What person (or actor, character, leader, etc.) have you seen display an ideal picture of goodness? *Jesus, Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, The Good Witch of the North (The Wizard of Oz), Michael Landon in Highway to Heaven, Mufasa, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr.... Others?*
13. Read **Philippians 1:4-6**. Is bearing the fruit of the Spirit something we do or something only the Spirit of God can do? Is it us or God that does the work? *The answer is, "Yes"! Part of our spiritual growth is something that only God can do through His Holy Spirit. On the other hand, we are joining God in the work that He is doing in our lives. If we want to grow in the fruit of the Spirit, we need to abide in the vine and live according to the Word.*
14. What are the effects of goodness? *Goodness breeds peace and hope. When you can trust that someone is good, you can trust them with anything. Goodness brings us a sigh of relief in a world of tension, instability, busyness, and stress. King David's goodness led to a unified kingdom for 40 years. It was good for him and for his people. It is why David is considered to be a man after God's own heart.*

For this week: What a blessing it is to know someone who is truly "good". It seems to be a rarity these days. What do you need to remove from your life that is bad? Remember your commitment to God and His to you. Pursue goodness with all your might! (Mt. 5:48)