

Ga 5:22–23 (ESV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ⁽²³⁾ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

1. We continue our look at the fruit of the Spirit

- A. We've seen this is a product of walking with God – yielding to His Spirit
 - 1). Each one of these Christlike characteristics will start to grow naturally in us
They will start shaping our character to be more like our Lord

2. The fruits we will look at today

- A. We will see the fruit of Goodness and then Self-control

I. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS GOODNESS

1. This is a difficult word to define because it's used so rarely

- A. It's found only 4 times in the NT including this instance in Galatians
- B. Many times to define a Greek word used in the NT – we see how it was used in classical Greek
 - 1). Problem: This word was never used in the classical Greek

Transition: Fortunately we do get help by looking at some examples: God's goodness

- A. Then the goodness of a man Jesus spoke of in the parables

The Goodness of God:

1. Turn to Exodus 33:18: Moses asked the Lord to “show him His glory”

Ex 33:18 (ESV) Moses said, “Please show me your glory.”

- A. Listen to what the Lord tells him in the very next verse
Ex 33:19 (ESV) And he said, “I will make all my *goodness* (there's our word) pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’”
 - 1). Moses says “Show me your glory” – God answers “I'll do that by showing you my goodness”
- B. What did the Lord reveal about His goodness when He passed before Moses?
TURN: Ex 34:6–7 (ESV) The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God *merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, (7) keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...*”

Question: So what does it mean when we say God is good?

- A. We are saying he is merciful and gracious. That he abounds in steadfast love and faithfulness
- B. We are saying that he maintains that love – while forgiving us of wickedness, rebellion, and sin
 - 1). So it is steadfast – unshakable – even towards those who fail

Transition: From this we can get a working definition of what “Goodness” means for us

2. Definition of “Goodness”

- A. The “good person” will be one who is merciful and gracious towards others
 - 1). **Mercy** = Not giving them what they deserve – **Grace** = giving them what they don't deserve
 - 2). They are willing to forgive and will continue to love – even when that love is sinned against
 - 3). They are faithful – you can trust them – they are people of integrity

Question: Who are we good like this towards? Just the believer?

- A. If God is our pattern (and He is) it is to be towards everybody

3. The extent of God's goodness – it is universal

- A. Every man – woman – child is dependent upon His goodness to live
Ps 145:9 (ESV) The LORD is *good to all*, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

Ps 145:15–16 (ESV) *The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food* in due season. ⁽¹⁶⁾ You open your hand; *you satisfy the desire of every living thing.*

- 1). Do you see what that is saying?

Every morsel of food and every drop of water proclaims the goodness of God for everybody

- B. Our every breath comes from Him – believer and unbeliever – saint and sinner

Job 12:10 (NIV) In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

- 1). None of us deserve a next breath – we’ve all sinned - deserve its wages death & hell
- 2). Therefore every breath is a testimony of His goodness to us

- C. His goodness is also seen by placing us in a world filled with delights

- 1). We’ve talked about this before – He’s given us food that tastes wonderful
- 2). A world that is breathtaking in its beauty – Yosemite. Grand Canyon. Hawaii.

Point: Everywhere we look, blue sky, clouds, birds singing, flowers, tasty food

- A. He's done this not only for His children - but for everybody to enjoy = *common grace*
- B. God loves to bestow blessing upon us - *He loves to be generous in His goodness*

4. It is the way the Father lives – it is the way Jesus lived

Ac 10:38 (ESV) how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about *doing good* and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

- A. This is what the Spirit-filled life looks like

- 1). There is a readiness – willingness to do good to others – to help when there is a need
It is a characteristic that wants what is best for them

Transition: So far we see the Goodness in God that we are to emulate – in Exodus 34

- A. This is a person who is merciful and gracious to others

Their love towards others is steadfast – even when it is sinned against – they are willing to forgive
They are faithful – you can trust them – they have integrity

- B. There is a willingness to help others when there is a need
- C. But I just mentioned another word – I want to look at
“God loves to be *generous* in His goodness”

4. The generosity of goodness

- A. Remember in Matthew 20 – Jesus told a story about some laborers hired to serve and work

- 1). Some were hired early in the morning – some hired later – last hour of the day
- 2). When the pay was given out – the master started with those hired last
He gave them a full days wage even though they had only worked one hour
 - a). Those working all day thought “Wow! I wonder how much we’ll get, if those who only worked an hour got a full days wage?”
 - b). To their disappointment they received the same – a full days wage
- 3). They started to grumble against the landowner – it’s not fair

Mt 20:13–15 (ESV) But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ ⁽¹⁴⁾ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? *Or do you begrudge my generosity?’*

Mat 20:15 (NKJV) ‘Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil *because I am good?’*

- a). Here we see goodness is linked to generosity
- b). A Spirit-filled person with the fruit of goodness growing will be generous

- B. We could call this a generosity of heart and action - A readiness to do good to others

Thought: Generosity is such an important virtue for the believer

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- A. I think it is important for our witness when we are out – ex. tips
- 1). Talk to waiters and waitresses – wait on big groups of demanding Christians
Then leave a paltry little tip – I’ve talked to servers who hate it when Christians come in
 - 2). When I was over singles – we’d go out – I’d tell them be generous
Everybody would go above and beyond – big tips – they loved to see us come in
 - a). It also left the door open to witness – we were living love out
- B. You’ve heard – you can’t out give God – is that Biblical – YES!
- Pr 11:24-25 (ESV)** One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. ⁽²⁵⁾ Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.
- 2 Co 9:6 (ESV)** whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
- Lk 6:38 (ESV)** give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”
- Point:** God has promised blessing to the generous and leanness to the miserly
- A. We talk about generosity in giving into God’s kingdom – YES – but also just in living
- B. I’m amazed by the people I know who constantly seem to be giving
- 1). I watch as God just keeps giving to them in surprising ways
 - 2). Like one person said – “I just concentrate on giving out – and God concentrates on putting in”
- Summary:** What is the person filled with the Spirit – living out the fruit of “Goodness” like
- A. This is a person who is merciful and gracious to others
Their love towards others is steadfast – even when it is sinned against – they are willing to forgive
They are faithful – you can trust them – they have integrity
There will be a generosity about them – they aren’t hoarders – they are trusting God
- Transition:** Now we come to one that is very important
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II. THE FRUIT OF SELF-CONTROL

1. This fruit is so important – without it you will be constantly defeated

Prov 25:28 (NLT) A person without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls.

- A. Cities with broken down walls = always vulnerable
- 1). Enemy could pour in any time they wanted and cause great destruction
 - 2). That’s the believer without self-control – no defense against the destructive powers of the enemy
- B. They don’t have the necessary discipline to be consistent in spiritual things
- 1). They read their Bible and pray occasionally – in church now and then
They don’t get the fellowship and encouragement they need
 - a). So they live in a weakened state – victimized again and again
- C. Listen to what was said about the inhabitants of Jerusalem because walls were down
- Ne 1:3 (ESV)** And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in *great trouble and shame*. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.”
- 1). Great description of the believer without self-control – like those in that city
 - a). Living in great spiritual trouble – defeated consistently
 - b). They live in shame because of their lousy testimony
 - 2). This person never gets anywhere – never makes an impact
The minute they rise up to do anything significant – enemy comes in – knocks them down
 - 3). Year after year they never change – never grow – defeated by same things

Transition: This is why I think this may be the most important fruit

2. The most important fruit

- A. Why? The rest of the fruits depend upon this to some degree
 - 1). Without self-control - you'll lack the consistency that brings about those other fruits
 - a). You'll never live that connected life – life of Christ flowing into you
 - 1a). The sin that lacking self-control allows will keep severing that
 - 2a). Rather than fruit being produce you'll dry up – shrivel up
 - b). You won't live out that consistent life that fruit flourishes in
 - 1a). The nutrition that comes from the Word, prayer, fellowship
- B. The Spirit produces this fruit – but there are conditions it grows in
 - 1). There are conditions that will stop that growth

Transition: So self-control is essential – let's define the word used for it

Self-controlled defined

1. Word in the Greek means to "Grab hold"

- A. Paul says something interesting in 1 Timothy 6

1 Ti 6:17–19 (ESV) As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ⁽¹⁸⁾ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ⁽¹⁹⁾ thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, *so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*
- B. So self-control is seen when we don't allow the things of the world to become too important
 - 1). When we control them rather than letting them control us

Question: How do I control them? Paul tells us – it is by putting them in their proper place

- A. Being more concerned about being rich in good deeds than rich in worldly goods
 - 1). Being generous and willing to share in God's kingdom for God's glory
- B. As you focus on the things of the kingdom – rather than the temporal things of the world
 - 1). You take hold of life that is truly life – spiritual life – kingdom life becomes who you are

It's not a fleeting thought you have on Sunday – it is who you are every day – Kingdom minded

Same thing: 1 Ti 6:19 (ESV) thus *storing up treasure for themselves* as a good foundation for the future, *so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

Remember from last week. Same thing: Mat 6:19-21 (NIV) "Do not store up for yourselves *treasures* on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. (20) But store up for yourselves *treasures* in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

 - a). As you concentrate on living for the kingdom

It changes everything about you here on earth – you grab hold of spiritual life
 - b). But if you let the things of this world master you

This worldly life will grab you – put a death grip on your heart
 - b). You embrace true riches – true life - by letting go of the fools gold

Thought: Nothing wrong with having money – and planning for retirement etc.

But without self-control that can be so dangerous

- A. Money – things - can be used in a way that moves your heart towards God or away from Him
- B. Let me show you how it works – in moving you towards God by storing treasures in heaven

I've used this illustration before – the stock market

 - 1). I couldn't care less about Apple Stock – why? I don't own any

Therefore I'm not Apple minded – I never think of that company – how it's doing etc.

- 2). Now lets say I started buying Apple stock – month after month I bought more and more
 - a). Soon I'd have enough to grab my attention – I'd check on how it's doing – why?
Because I've become Apple-minded – I have treasure there – it now matters to me

Point: That's what Jesus and Paul say happen to you when you exercise self-control in temporal treasures

- A. It will move you to a place where you grab hold of eternal life – rather than hold it loosely
 - 1). You're life becomes caught up in God and His kingdom = great place to be

2. Remember this is a fruit – the Spirit will produce it

It is also a command that you must choose to do – depending upon the Spirit to enable you

- A. As you choose self-control – depending upon the Spirit to enable you
 - 1). To hold the things of the world loosely – so that you will hold the things of heaven tightly
 - 2). To discipline yourselves in those things you must do to stay strong
 - a). Bible – prayer – church - fellowship
 - 3). To abstain from those things that will weaken you spiritually
- B. As you choose “Self-control” – depending upon the Spirit to enable you
 - 1). This fruit that is so essential will begin to grow
- C. In this world that has so much temptation – walking with a flesh that wants all that
 - 1). I need this fruit growing in my life in a big way
- D. We have so many people in this church that have so much potential
 - 1). But without a yielded life – without the fruits of the Spirit being produced
Without self-control – that's all it will be – potential that is never realized

Gal 5:23: Against Such Things There Is No Law

1. Paul has been preaching against meriting God's favor through the law - legalism

- A. So he assures us – this has nothing to do with law keeping – our own effort
 - 1). This comes about when we live in communion with our Lord
Yielding to His Spirit – not allowing sin to sever that vital connection with Christ
 - a). As we do that – everything we need to live the Christian life flows to us from Christ
Through the Spirit – and this fruit is produced naturally
 - 2). We are making choices to obey – but it's not to earn God's favor
It is to live out the life of God's Son that is pouring into us
 - a). We don't do this in our own power – it is in His
- B. This is not connected to the law at all – Paul isn't changing his mind here
 - 1). You are saved by faith alone – not works of the law
You are saved through Christ's performance alone – not your own
 - 2). As you stay connected to Him – these fruits are produced by His Spirit

Php 2:13 (ESV) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Transition: Come to statement so important – truth we'll dig into more as we see who we are in Christ

II. THE VICTORY IN CHRIST

Ga 5:24–25 (ESV) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ⁽²⁵⁾ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Ga 5:24 (ESV) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh...

1. What an important statement

- A. Crucifixion was a means of execution – all but 4 times in NT it refers to death of Christ
 1). But if we look at 3 of the exceptions we can see what is happening here for us to apply

Ro 6:6 (ESV) We know that our *old self* was crucified with him...

Ga 2:20 (ESV) I have been crucified *with Christ*...

Ga 6:14 (ESV) ... the *world* has been crucified to me...

- A. Each of these passages is saying something was executed – put to death – past tense
 1). Let's string this together to see what it is saying
 When I embraced Christ by faith and was born again – I was crucified with Christ
 a). Just as I was with Adam in the garden and sinned in him
 I was with Christ at the cross and died with Him
 b). The result is that old self that loves sin and the world died with him
 Therefore the domination of the world and it's ways died

Thought: Yeah but I still have these urges – Yes – but this changes how we deal with them

- A. I face them in the truth that I have died to that life – it has died to me
 1). Sin no longer has the power to force me to do anything
 2). I have risen with Christ – to a new life – wired to be satisfied with new things
 B. How foolish to give myself to something I am no longer alive too – what can no longer satisfy
 1). I am linked to Christ and His death but also to Him and His resurrection
 Therefore I choose to live for that which I am alive too – and can satisfy
 a). I choose to live that risen life
 C. Here's the power: I face these thing now on victory ground – I'm not that 98lb weakling
 I'm more than a conqueror in Christ because I'm linked to His death and resurrection
 1). Therefore when facing sin and temptation – I can see the foolishness of choosing it
 "Why would I do something I'm dead too? I don't need to be tempted by that!"
What Paul said: Ro 6:11 (ESV) So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 D. We are going to tear these things apart in our upcoming series

2. Basically: We need to start living like who we are

- A. Start enjoying the victory we've been linked to when we were united to Christ
 1). Simply believing that's what the Bible says happened to us really did
Ro 6:1–2 (ESV) What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ⁽²⁾ By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
 a). Pretty simple – you died to sin – so how can you still live dominated by it?
Question: How do I apply that? I face temptation based on who I am in Christ
Ro 6:11 (ESV) So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 A. When I was united to Christ something happened
 That is a fact – whether I feel like it or not
 God has broken the power of sin in my life
 1). Therefore I need to start facing temptation like this is true
 Talk to yourself - why should I continue in sin when I don't have to
 What sense does it make to keep giving in to something I have died too
 a). Why would I choose to stop living the *risen life* for this
 B. Again – we will look at this in the next series – who we are in Christ

2. Paul sums it all up

Ga 5:25 (ESV) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- A. Paul says – if that happened to you – then live like it – walk by the Spirit
 - 1). Live a life that is yielded to Him and depending upon Him
Live a life that is led by Him – desiring what He desires
So that His fruit will be produced in you and through you
 - a). So that your life will be growing in Christlikeness
The kind of life that brings glory to God
 - B. Keep in step with the Spirit = simply doing what the Lord tells you to do moment-by-moment
 - 1). Again it is the yielded life
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CONCLUSION

1. This finishes our look at the fruit of the Spirit

- A. These fruits grow naturally as we yield to Him – keeping in step with Him
- B. They are also commands we choose to do – depending upon Him to enable us
 - 1). Depending upon Him to live the life of Christ out through us