

The Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness

Lesson Seven

radiate

Settling In: About 10-20 minutes

- 1) Make a note to yourself who, if anyone, is missing from your home group this week:
- 2) Spend some time finding out how everyone is doing: make a note for prayer requests.
- 3) Introduce a time of conversational prayer. Make it clear that group members are not required to participate if they are not comfortable.

or

- 4) After a more brief time of prayer...
 - a) Reflect on Psalm 34:8
 - b) Introduce a time of testimonial worship by asking members to share a time or situations that cause them to more fully appreciate the goodness of God.

This is only for your information...don't make a big deal of who is missing to the members who are present.

Conversational prayer means each member taking turns praying for various concerns with reasonably short and to the point prayers.

Opener: About 10 minutes

- 1) Brainstorm: If you have a marker board or big sheet of paper, work as a group to come up with the most complete definition and description of "goodness" that you can.
- 2) What do you think about the popular saying (attributed to Anne Herbert): "Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty"?
- 3) "The good is sometimes viewed as whatever entails reverence towards either life, continuity, happiness, or human flourishing, while evil is given to be the support for their opposites." Wikipedia

You may not have time to ask every question in the study. Also, some of the discussion questions may not be appropriate depending on who is at the home group on a particular night. That's okay! We've intentionally given you more material than you can usually use.

Mini-teach: About 10 minutes

- 1) Our key passage is Gal 5:22,23.
- 2) Read this well known passage about *goodness*:

"Don't be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not be weary in doing good, for we will reap in due season, if we don't give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let's do what is good toward all men, and especially toward those who are of the household of the faith." (Gal. 6:7-10, WEB)
- 3) Reaping and sowing is a basic biblical concept that your choices and behaviour are eventually rewarded in kind.
 - a) This is different than the idea of karma. For example, karma is generally viewed as an impersonal cosmic cycle of cause and effect, whereas the Bible depicts sowing and reaping as personally effected by God.
 - b) "Sowing to the Spirit" is contrasted with "sowing to the flesh" in that when we do the former we reap a kind of life that is abundant and eternal.
 - c) This "sowing to the Spirit" is also described as "doing good".
 - d) "Doing is good" is certainly expected among believers in Jesus but is not exclusive to them: we are expected to do good to all as we have

ἀγαθωσύνη, agathosune, goodness, good and fitting behaviour.

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opportunity.

Discussion 1: *About 15 minutes*

1 Samuel 25:2-39

- 1) Ask the group to recount the story in 1 Sam 25.
 - a) Who is the villain?
 - b) Who is the hero?
 - c) What is the crisis?
 - d) What is the resolution?
- 2) Was David right in what he planned to do to Nabal?
- 3) How does the principle of sowing & reaping apply to this story?
- 4) Compare & contrast the character of Abigail and Nabal?
 - a) How did Abigail prevent the evil that Nabal would do?
 - b) How did Abigail prevent the evil that David would do?
- 5) In what ways could you describe the 'goodness' of Abigail?

נָבָל **nabal**, *naw-bawl*;
from 5034; stupid; wicked
(especially impious):—
fool(-ish, -ish man, -ish
woman), vile person.

While Nabal's behaviour towards David will not have been typical, this story well illustrates the difficulties David's band faced in the none-too-fertile country, and makes it plain that local land-owners must have viewed him with mixed feelings, if not outright hostility. Hospitality to a group of six hundred men is a costly business." New Bible Commentary, p 300.

Discussion 2: *About 15 minutes*

Luke 10:30-37

- 1) Ask the group to recount the story in Luke 10:30-37.
 - a) Who is the main character?
 - b) Who is the hero?
 - c) Who are the villains?
 - d) What is the crisis?
 - e) What is the resolution?
- 2) Would you describe the priest & Levite as evil?
 - a) Who might Jesus cast today to replace the priest & Levite?
 - b) Who would your friends recognize as a good person?
 - c) What kinds of behaviour would your friends mention in describing a good person?
- 3) Why do you think the priest & Levite did not stop?

"A steep road, 17 miles long, descended the 3,300 ft from Jerusalem to Jericho, which was a country dwelling of priests. The story may well be based on fact." New Bible Dictionary, p.905.

The injured man is assumed to be a Jew and the priest and Levite were Jewish religious professionals.

Many commentators believe that one of the main reasons they did not stop to help was their fear of becoming ritually

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- 4) Who was Jesus' audience? Why do you think Jesus made a Samaritan out to be the hero of the story?
- 5) Was the Samaritan's behaviour religious? Yet Jesus uses him as an example of fulfilling the second great commandment.
- 6) Based on what we have learned here, how can we define "goodness"?

defiled by the potentially dead body.

Although they were geographic neighbours, there were deep political, religious, historical, and racial reasons for the hatred between Jews and Samaritans.

Closer:

- What would it look like for us to more worthy of being called *good* by people who know us?
- Take a moment to reflect on your spiritual life and activity. How much of what you do and say could be described as *good*?