

## Goodness

2 Thess. 1:11

*To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire for **goodness** and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Thess. 2:16

*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, Who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and **good** hope by grace, Comfort and strengthen your hearts in every **good** work and word.*

### Introduction

The idea behind the fruit of the Spirit: God's being, through his Spirit, so gets into you that the DNA of his character permeates your heart and shows up, not in your skin, but in the complexion of your words and actions.

This is especially so with the fruit goodness.

The Greek word for good and goodness has a range of meanings that cluster around this core:

upright or honorable of heart and life. Delight in doing well, being generous. Around that core spin the concepts of:

Useful, pleasant, agreeable, excellent, distinguished; recognize it in yourself when you set a straight course to be in the place where God is pleased.

Because God delights in purity, righteousness, generosity, goodness--you delight in it. Therefore, you do whatever it takes to be morally honorable.

Paul, 2 Cor.5:9: *we have as our ambition to be pleasing to the Lord.*

What do we learn about goodness from Paul's prayers in 2 Thessalonians?

### **1. Goodness is learned through diligence**

The context is trial/ suffering/ persecution/afflictions (v.4,5, 6,7).

That's why comfort is an important word in the mix. Paul's prayer of 2:16 is, *may the God who gives us eternal **comfort**, **comfort** you now.*

But needing comfort never compromises goodness.

We have to wait upon and learn to receive God's comfort.

Our default mode is self-pity, retreat or attack, false self-comforts:

Those things actually don't give you abiding comfort, and they slow you down in the pursuit of moral goodness. So Paul exhorts in Gal.6:9:  
*and let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.*

The hard reality: Our internal sense of goodness will be tested by trying circumstances, proving just how strong or weak it in fact is.

## **2. Goodness is produced by grace through prayer**

Jesus opens for us a wellspring of goodness; we drink it in by prayer.

One biblical word that attributes the source of good to God is the word grace. Grace is God's supply, his abundant provision for all things good. The big issue behind the notion that grace produces goodness is this: The only way to have true goodness is to admit you aren't good.

These prayers attribute any goodness in you to grace. It is your experience and response to God's goodness that makes you good. Found in 2:16:  
*Who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and **good** hope by grace,*

Do you see the goodness of grace? Though we are not good, he treats us and lovingly accepts us as if we are! But how? How can God get around our sin? Because of the substitute. Jesus willingly lived the good life morally we owe God, in order to clothe us in it, and take upon himself the just penalty for our non-goodness.

So it is no wonder that such prayer always redounds to the glory of Jesus!  
*2:12 in order that the name of Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and you in him.* Jesus is glorified as grace giver; we reveal the grace given, trophies!

## **3. Goodness moves through us to others**

Just as God lavished his goodness upon us for our benefit, so too our reception of his goodness is meant to benefit others. Goodness motivates us to promote others welfare.

What's that look like? Three pictures from Romans making the same basic point: You're only as good as you are intent on bringing goodness to others.

Rom. 12:9 *Let love be without hypocrisy; abhor what is evil, cling to what is good.*

Rom. 15:2 *let each of us please his neighbor, for his good, to build him up.*

Rom.15:15 *I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to admonish one another.*