

49-05-09.wpd --Fruit of the Spirit: GOODNESS

darkness, light, creation, goodness, fruit

Eph 5:6-11

The more Christians grow in goodness the more they shine in the dark

### **INTRODUCTION:** (text read as Scripture Reading)

--*Goodness* is a fruit of the Spirit that's not easy to define, because it covers so much territory. It's defined as "the state of being *good*," but *good* in the dictionaries has a variety of meanings. [ "positive... desirable... purposeful... in excellent condition... sound... of high quality... worthy of respect... honorable... attractive... beneficial... healthy... competent... complete... thorough... reliable... sure... valid... true... genuine... real... operative... able to continue... able to contribute... bountiful... pleasant... enjoyable... favorable... morally excellent... upright... benevolent... kind... loyal... staunch... well-behaved... obedient... socially correct... proper... falling within the mark"]

--*Goodness* is related to *God* and that list reminds us of His work in the 6 Days of Creation. After each day's work, "God saw that it was good." On the last day, when he finished His work by creating us, it says, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."

--Satan got our ancestors to eat from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Before this, Adam & Eve relied on God alone for that knowledge. Now they had a "knowledge of good and evil" independent from their walk with God. Humans could invent their own rules, create their own moralities. This plunged the world into *moral darkness*. The only way back from the fruit of darkness is by the *fruit of light*. **HOM.idea.**

### **I. Deception with Empty Words** "Let no one deceive you with empty words"

#### A. Satan offers himself as an alternative authority to deceive us:

1. He raised doubts about God's Word--Gen 3:1b, He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" [appl: Some scholars have been unwitting pawns in Satan's hands, raising doubts about the Bible: "*These words could not have been spoken by Christ.*" ]
2. Satan contradicted God's Word-- Gen 3:4, "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. [appl: Each generation similar denials of the Bible's validity: "God sends no one to Hell. Everybody gets to go to Heaven. No one is really a sinner." Denials of Scriptural truth go on perpetually, because Satan doesn't stop trying to deceive humanity *with empty words*.]
3. He maligned God's character-- Gen 3:5, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [ill: That was the promise of LSD back in the 60s&70s: "*Take this*

*and your eyes will be opened.*" You got to know a "good trip" or a "bad trip." But it was empty, an escape from reality.] God's arrangement of reality was "*very good.*" Satan said, "*He's holding back something good!*"

#### B. Satan offers substitutes for goodness that God already provides:

1. (Gen 3:6) Eve was led into seeing the forbidden fruit as "good for food" (she already had more than enough good unforbidden food)
2. "and pleasing to the eye" (everything in God's good world pleased the eye, until that fruit (like LSD) opened her eyes on a bad trip!)
3. "and desirable for gaining wisdom" (Eve had a good relationship with the Author of all the wisdom she would ever need, until she and Adam ate a fruit that promised a wisdom independent of Him.)

#### C. Exactly as Satan planned, their eyes were opened:

1. They now saw creation in a new way, but it was a dark way:
  - a. Darkness overshadowed the glory and goodness in their own nakedness, which, when formerly seen through God's eyes, had been "very good" and "without shame."
  - b. Now a new morality, independent from God, was born, and they made up their first rule apart from God: "*God's naked image is indecent to be seen, and must be covered!*"
2. BUT far worse, darkness now obscured the way they saw God--Gen 3:8, Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

**TRANS:** People still hide from God, and He is still looking for them.

"*Let no one deceive you with empty words.*" Satan's "*fruitless deeds of darkness*" change neither the *goodness* of God nor of His creation. Both realms of *goodness* are still shining. We don't have to stay alienated to either. We don't need to stumble in the darkness of constantly changing political correctness and bankrupt human moralities. **V.8** says, "*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.*" **The more Christians grow in goodness the more they shine in the dark.**

### **II. God Wants His Goodness in Us to Shine Freely**

- A. There's a explanation about our being "*children of light*" in **v.9**, "*(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)*"
  1. Being a *child of light* is being a child of the God of glory-- 1 John 1:5b, God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

2. We become "*children of light*" by new birth through the Holy Spirit, but God goes beyond new birth: He wants to grow spiritual fruit in us after His own character of "*goodness, righteousness and truth.*"
- B. Our growth in goodness is one facet of "*the fruit of the light,*" and that growth is cultivated as we (v.10) "*find out what pleases the Lord.*"
1. Think of the many definitions of "good" and how they relate to the goodness that pleased God in the original creation. Harmony with those ideas is the key to the *fruit of goodness* in our lives.
  2. Jesus came to restore us to the glory of pleasing goodness by His death on the Cross, which accomplished 2 things in this respect:
    - a. He destroyed the power of Satan's sabotaging our hearts with the dark fruit of a "knowledge of good and evil" disconnected from the life and light of God)
    - b. He rescued our souls from a world system controlled by the dark moralities arising from that deadly fruit, so that we can say with Paul in Gal 2:20, I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
  3. Jesus frees us from a selfish world ruled by wayward moralities, calling us to the goodness of His original design for both our *physical* life in creation and our *spiritual* life in walking with Him-- Rom 12:2, Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

### CONCLUSION:

--In the beginning God told Adam and Eve to "*be fruitful*" physically. Now we must also be *fruitful* in the Holy Spirit. The *fruit of goodness* plays both a *defensive* and *offensive* role in our lives. **V.11** says, "*Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*" **The more Christians grow in goodness the more they shine in the dark.** *We were once in darkness ourselves, but because of saving faith in Christ, now we are light in the Lord. Let us live as children of light.*

Eph 5:6-11 (NIV) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. {7} Therefore do not be partners with them. {8} For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light {9} (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) {10} and find out what pleases the Lord. {11} Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.