



The character of goodness & gentleness

The challenge to goodness & gentleness

The foundation of goodness & gentleness

The practice of goodness & gentleness



Overview

As we walk in the Spirit we will more and more display the character of Christ. This week we will look at two words that reflect that character; goodness and gentleness. These words describe a disposition to act in the best interest of another, not out of compulsion but out of love. These two words describe what we are to do for others and how we are to do it. Goodness is that selfless orientation that seeks to do for others those things that will bless them. It is action flowing out of character. Gentleness describes how we are to act toward others. At the core of this is humility. It responds to and acts toward others understanding that we all have vulnerabilities and needs. Together they point to behavior that truly seeks to bless and lift others so that they feel blessed.

Engaging with each other

1. Name some backhanded compliments you have heard or received.

Engaging with the Bible

1. Read over the descriptions of goodness and gentleness in the overview above. How do the two qualities fit together and complement each other?
2. Can one effectively exist without the other? For instance can you recall a time where you saw goodness displayed without gentleness?
3. Galatians 5:19-21 contains a list of the deeds of the flesh. Among these are the following: hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy. Can you think of a word or idea that describes the root of all of these?

4. Read Galatians 6:1 and 9-10. Here we find some good examples of goodness and gentleness. List as many examples or aspects of these as you can.
5. Read Psalm 27:13. What are some of the ways you personally see the goodness of God displayed?
6. In Psalm 18:35 there is a beautiful picture of how God relates to us. The NIV translates the last phrase of the verse, "You stoop down to make me great." How is this a picture of goodness and gentleness?

Engaging with our lives

1. Look again at Galatians 6:10. What are some ways you can do good to "all people?" What are some ways you can do good to "those who belong to the family of believers?"
2. How would doing these things bring glory to God rather than to yourself? (ref. Matthew 5:16)
3. As a closing prayer read Psalm 23 together.
Psalm 23
A psalm of David.
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
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.