

August 20, 2006

## Extreme Makeover: Spirit Edition (Part 7: Goodness)

Gal 5: 22

[Click here for the handouts in the bulletin](#)

### INTRODUCTION:

A mother was playing “tooth-fairy” with her daughter when the little girl suddenly awoke. Seeing the money in her mother’s hand, she cried out, “I caught you!” As the mother mentally scrambled as to how she would explain why she was putting money under the pillow that was supposed to be from the “tooth-fairy”, the girl’s next words let her off the hook: “You put that money back!” she said indignantly. “The tooth fairy left that for me!”

Today we are going to deal with the fruit of goodness. The word in the Greek that we get the word goodness from is *αγαθωσυνη* [*agathoosúnee* (*ag-ath-o-soo'-nay*)]

Definition of goodness *αγαθωσυνη*:  
uprightness in both HEART and LIFE (integrity).

### Goodness in the Old Testament:

Used primarily to describe the goodness of GOD (Psalm 31:19, 69:16, 109:21).

*How great is your goodness, stored up for those who love you.*

*-Psalm 31:19*

### Goodness in the New Testament:

Used primarily to describe the goodness of PEOPLE (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Peter 1:5).

The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit into the believer’s life that empowers goodness/integrity in **both heart and life**. If you desire integrity in your heart and life . . . ask for the Holy Spirit to do His sanctifying work in you.

There is a frustration gap in our society. A Gallop Pole indicated that our society has “incongruent values and lifestyles”: what *we say* and what *we seek* are two totally different things. There is contrast between heart and life.

For example. The average person says that materialism is not important to them and yet they seek a lot of different things.

Father’s say, “I want to spend a lot of time with my child.” but he doesn’t.

Most couples say, “we want to have intimate conversations with each other”, but they don’t.

The business person says, “I want to always be honest”, but he/she isn’t.

An ambitious salesman delivered his company’s bid to an engineering firm. The project director left for a few minutes. The salesperson could not help but notice their chief competitor’s bid lying on top of the desk with all the figures in plain view except for the total amount, which happened to be covered by a can of Coke. He knew that he should not take unfair advantage by sneaking a look at the total bid. On the other hand, a multi-million-dollar contract was at stake for the company, not to mention several thousand dollars of personal commission. He felt hot and flushed as the battle raged in his heart. Since no one was around, he lifted the Coke for a peek. Thousands of tiny ball bearings instantly spilled out of the bottomless can all over the desk and onto the concrete floor.

George Gallop found a gap between what *we say* and what *we seek*. This gap between heart and life, between what we say and what we seek, is not new. Paul experienced it:

*As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. . . . For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.*

*-Romans 7.17-18*

You may be frustrated as Paul was--what you know is right, and what you do, are not the same thing. You want to do right . . . but it doesn’t come out that way. So sometimes we begin to fix the blame rather than fix the problem:

Dr. Hobart Mowrer, Professor at Harvard and Yale, one-time President of American Psychological Association, quoted in American Psychologist the psychiatric folk song of Anna Russell:

At three I had a feeling of ambivalence toward my brothers,  
And so it follows naturally, I poisoned all my lovers.  
But now I’m happy I have learned, the lesson this has taught,  
That everything I do that’s wrong, is someone else’s FAULT.

When faced with our shortcomings we can go through life blaming others or our past for the way we are today. My past may *explain* why I am the way I am, but it does not *excuse* it, because you and I both have a choice today. We can turn to God’s Holy Spirit and ask Him to do his powerful, graceful, transforming work in us.

Plato, the Greek philosopher (428-348 BC), wrote: *You can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the DARK; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the LIGHT.*

Let’s run to the light on this matter of integrity. Jesus is the light and His Spirit can wed what is in our hearts with what we do in our lives. His fruit in our lives is integrity. Integrity is the foundation for every relationship in life. It is the foundation for a good marriage, it is the foundation for a good business, it is what makes you a good neighbor. Integrity is key.

**The Presence of Integrity Brings:**

1. PROTECTION - less fear:

A lack of integrity can cause big problems. A scrawny fellow sits at the bar staring into his glass. Suddenly a burly truck driver sits down next to him, grabs the little fellow's glass and gulps down the drink. The scrawny guy breaks into tears. The truck driver feels bad and says, "Come on, buddy, I'll buy you a drink to replace that one." "No that's not it...this has been the worst day of my life. I was late for work and got fired. When I went to leave the office, my car was stolen. After I walked 20 miles home, I was so late my wife said "that's it – you're just a big loser – I'm leaving you. So I walked here and just when I'm about to end it all....you show up and drink my poison."

The truck drivers lack of integrity cost him dearly! The Scripture promises:

*May integrity and uprightness PROTECT me, because my hope is in you.*  
-Psalm 25.21

2. SECURITY - greater confidence:

*The man of integrity walks SECURELY.*  
-Proverbs 10.9

3. GUIDANCE - better decisions:

*The integrity of the upright GUIDES them.*  
-Proverbs 11.3

FEARLESS, CONFIDENT, DECISIVE . . . these are traits that everyone wants and they come from integrity.

The Absence of Integrity Brings:

Steven Berglas, a psychologist at Harvard Medical School and author of The Success Syndrome, says that people who achieve great heights but lack the bedrock character of integrity to sustain them through the stress are headed for disaster. He believes they are destined for one or more of the four A's:

1. ARROGANCE
2. The pain of ALONENESS
3. ADVENTURE – seeking
4. ADULTERY

INTEGRITY ESSENTIALS:

1. Speak HONESTLY (Ephesians 4:15; Proverbs 20:7).  
*Speak the truth in a spirit of love.*  
-Ephesians 4:15

Mark Twain once said: *Speaking honestly is better, it takes a lot of stress out of our lives. If you tell the truth, you don't have to REMEMBER anything.*

Now we need to make sure that when we speak honestly it is always done in a spirit of love. Haven't we known people who speak honestly, but it is not done in a spirit of love. What they

say is true but it is not clothed in love or kindness.

*The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.*

*[for as the Living Bible paraphrases...] It is a wonderful heritage to have an honest father.*

*-Proverbs 20:7 (LB)*

I think that many Fathers get deluded into thinking that their kids might be impressed with their accomplishments. It is the character of the father that molds children . . . not what the father has accomplished. It is integrity, it is the fruit of the Spirit that molds a family.

I want to say something to the Dad's and Mother's that are here. If the world never knows you and you never work in a respected profession; if you never own a business or get near the top of the latter; if you never accomplish big things in the eyes of the world... but you have loved your kids and demonstrated the fruit of integrity, you have given your kids everything. It is a sad day, if in going up the latter; we sacrifice even a pinch of our integrity.

## 2. Confess **REGULARLY** (James 5:16; Matthew 5:23,24).

*To keep your marriage brimming with love in the loving cup,*

*When you're wrong admit it, when you're right shut up.*

Don't you love the profoundness with which I preach? You are hearing deep and rich poetry.

*Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other.*

*-James 5:16*

There is a principal in forgiveness that we seldom talk about. It is called restitution: if I have wronged someone, I need to go to that person and confess it to them.

## 3. Live **CONSISTENTLY** (Matthew 6:1)

*Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them.*

*-Matthew 6:1*

I need to be the same at home as I am when I am here. If I am to be a man of integrity, then those who are closest to me will love and respect me the most. When those who are closest to you respect you the least, then there may be a problem with integrity.

Integrity means that our heart and life are consistent. Oh, it is easy to rationalize inconsistency. Like the guy who was trying to break his donut habit. He even changed his route to work so he wouldn't drive by the donut shop. After several weeks, however, sure that he was now strong enough to resist temptation, he returned to his former route. As the bakery came into view his glands began to salivate. He prayed: "Lord, if you don't want me to have a donut, may I not be able to find a parking spot and I'll drive on." It must have been the Lord's will that he ease up on his diet, for he found a place to park right at the front door of the shop... on his eight trip around the block.

## 4. Commit **BOLDLY** (Matthew 5:37; Psalm 101:2; Isaiah 45:19).

*Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes.'*

**-Matthew 5:37**

Commit boldly to the things you say you will do. One of the most remarkable stories of integrity that I have heard in the last couple years concerns a man called Robertson McQuilken. As a young man, he dreamed of becoming the president of Columbia Bible College in Columbia, South Carolina. He adored his father, who had held this position, and he aspired to someday take his father's place.

Robertson McQuilken's dream came true. He served as president of Columbia Bible College for a number of years and did so with distinction. He lead Columbia to become a premier Christian institution that has prepared hundreds of young people for service, both in the United States and overseas.

Then one day this very special man realized he had a tragedy on his hands. His wife began to show the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. This was no slow-moving case, and in a matter of months there were dramatic consequences. She not only lost the memory of much of their life together, but she was unable to even recognize him. She lost all awareness that he was her husband. Robertson McQuilken made his decision. He resigned the presidency of Columbia so he could give full-time care to his wife. Without hesitation he walked away from what he loved as an act of love for her.

There were realists who told him there was no point to what he was doing. Anybody could take care of his poor wife, they told him, but not anybody could be president of Columbia Bible College. And after all, she didn't even recognize him when he came into the room to help her. The man's answer was magnificent. He readily admitted that his wife didn't know who he was. But that wasn't the point, he told them.

*"The really important thing is that I still know who she is . . . .  
she is the woman to whom I promised to be there for 'UNTIL DEATH DO US PART'."*

Boldly stand by your commitments. If there was any trait that our society needs today is men and women, employees, business associates, husbands and wives, friends, mothers and fathers that will boldly stand by their commitments.

**APPLICATION:**

**Speak Honestly, Confess Regularly, Live Consistently, Commit Boldly**

Will you take a stand today? Will you decide that from this point on . . . you will be upright in both heart and life? Will you stand up today and make that commitment? The ability to carry through with your commitment starts with your commitment to place this area where you are falling short into his hands. Ask God's Holy Spirit to come in and cleanse your life and fill you with His presence so His fruit can grow out of your life. Will you take your stand today?