

"Believe it can be done"

"God is Goodness. He can give good, but cannot need or get it. His love is, as it were, bottomlessly selfless by very definition; it has everything to give, and nothing to receive."

C. S. Lewis



Goodness

"Fruit of the Spirit and more. . ."

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Psalm 23:6

From the very beginning of the Bible we hear about good and goodness. In Genesis 1:4 we read *"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."* Then before the birth of Christ we read in Luke 2:10 the angels' message to the shepherds *"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."* What does this have to do with

a fruit of the spirit? Good and goodness have so many meanings. They are used many times throughout the Bible and we use the word good in everyday life. In the King James Version, the word "goodness" is mentioned fifty seven times. One definition I found that I liked was "uprightness of heart and life." But we need to know how to get this goodness in our lives.



"I have engraved you on the palms of my hands." Isaiah 49:16

Actually it is not our goodness. It is a gift from God. His goodness will lead us to repentance and salvation. God's goodness has to operate through us. Through our goodness we can lead others to Christ. Many times we are drawn to people through their goodness. It isn't preaching; it is living our life in the hands of God. I like the picture of Christ with open hands signifying He is welcoming us into His fold, and also that He is willing to give to us. Some who do not know Christ recognize there is something different about believers and want to have that same goodness but don't know how to get it. They know that Christians are different. Christians can effectively witness to others by just living right and being a good example and role model for others to follow. Goodness is a complicated word!

Goodness is a quality that others can see. We don't have to preach about it. If we have it, people can see it in us.

May my heart be open to God's Goodness.

When we encounter people who are filled with goodness we can see it in their personalities. This quality doesn't waiver. We can see it and feel it when we are around them. We can't buy it. We can't sell it for money. We can give it to others by living with the uprightness of heart and life. That isn't easy.

I am a follower of Charles Schultz and I think we all know the phrase "You're a good man, Charlie Brown." We can each have our own interpretation of this phrase. We are told that Charles Schultz was shy as a child. People who read the comic strip saw the goodness of people through his eyes. We don't have to shout it from the mountain top; we just need to live a God filled life. Yes it was humorous, but it was also deep in its meaning. We all could observe the wholesome characters, their good qualities, and their failures. We know Linus' need for his security blanket, Schroeder's devotion to his favorite composer, Beethoven; Peppermint Patty's love of sports, but failure in the classroom; Lucy's "knowledge" and observation; and Snoopy, just a dog with human characteristics.



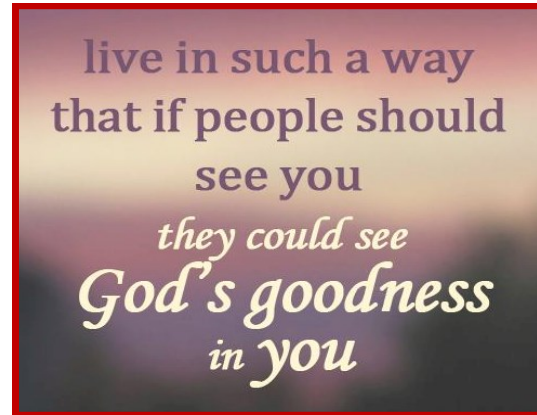
Many researchers say that Charles Shultz was Charlie Brown, and that can hardly be denied. The main character, Charlie Brown, brought all these together. Shultz brought out the goodness of each character he created. Well maybe Lucy wasn't always good! She never did let Charlie Brown kick the football, but we aren't always good either!

Schultz was adamant about one thing in his Christmas cartoon "A Charlie Brown Christmas". He insisted on Linus reciting the story of Christ's birth. He is quoted as saying "If we don't tell the true meaning of Christmas, who will?" This is the goodness that we need. I'm not saying that Charles Schultz was goodness personified. But we can all have the goodness that was shown in his characters. We can all stand up and be counted and testify to our knowledge of God's love and goodness, and His coming to earth to save us from our sins.

At the end of Charlie Brown's Christmas pageant, a choir begins to sing "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing." This has met with some criticism over the years, but it showed again a person taking a stand for what he believed was the true meaning of Christmas. Through this we accept God's goodness and we also show His goodness. It is quite a challenge.

We are told to try to be Christ like. Matthew tells us "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven." Goodness is not about doing some thing to gain recognition, it is the small acts that we do every day that the people around us see. In these we can seek to be Christ like. Goodness is really not a

noun; it is a verb, it is action.



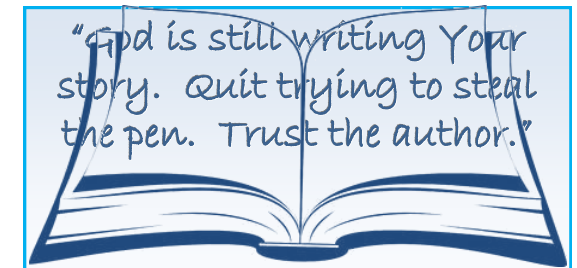
As a child we are often told to be good. What does that mean? Usually at that age it meant not to get into something we shouldn't, but as we got to be a little older it often meant not to embarrass our family. We are God's children and both of these situations fit into our life with Christ. Do we show goodness in our everyday life? I feel that just as parents get frustrated, so does our Heavenly Father.



Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for all your goodness. Please help us to show Your goodness to others. Help us to honor You and be worthy as much as we can of Your calling to us so that someday through Your love, grace, and forgiveness we will dwell with You in Your goodness. Amen

1. What is your definition of goodness?
2. How can you achieve this goodness?
3. How can you help in showing God's goodness to others?
4. Why is goodness called a "Fruit of the Spirit"?
5. When we don't show "goodness" does God still love us?
6. Can we embarrass God?

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"If you have the power to make someone happy, do it. The world needs more of that."

