

GOODNESS

MEANING

- divine goodness is a supernatural desire to do good things for others
- goodness (*agathosune*) occurs only four times in the New Testament (Rom 15:14; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9; 2 Thess 1:11)
 - the best way to determine the meaning of *agathosune* is to study its opposite in the Septuagint: *kakia* (wickedness) is the opposite of *agathosune* (goodness) in Psalm 52:3
 - a contrast between loving wickedness and loving goodness occurs in a concrete historical context (Psalm 52:3): Doeg's wickedness was murdering the priests of Nob—"both men and women, children and infants" (1 Sam 22:18–19)
- the bodyguards chose goodness (to let the priests live) and whatever punishment came with their disobedience to King Saul
- goodness seeks to do good things for people; wickedness seeks to do bad or wicked things to people—to harm them

SEPTUAGINT (15 TIMES)

- (1) of goodness as opposed to wickedness (Psalm 52:3; cf. 1 Sam 22:18–19)
- (2) of treating people and God well (Judg 9:16; 2 Chron 24:16)
- (3) of the good things in life—wealth, offspring, and long life (Eccles 6:3, 6; 7:14; 9:18)
- (4) of wages earned by a worker (Eccles 5:18) or profits earned by a business (Eccles 5:10)
- (5) of the good things money can buy (Eccles 4:8)
- (6) of generosity—money, good things, and rewards given to others (Neh 9:25, 35; 13:31b)

A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- goodness is one of the fruits of the Spirit—sixth in order of importance (Gal 5:22)
- all divine goodness is produced in the hearts of Christians by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9)
 - goodness is a logical outgrowth of kindness: if you're kind you'll want to do good things for others
- faithfulness is logical outgrowth of goodness: if you desire to do good for others, you'll be faithful to those you covenant with
 - with the passing of time your love for good things grows (like fruit), as does your loathing of things wicked
 - believers should be full of goodness (Rom 15:14)
 - goodness is present in the souls of believers in different amounts—from empty to full
- you must be full of goodness and knowledge to admonish believers who are consorting with wickedness (Rom 15:14)
 - Barnabas "was a good (*agathos*) man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24)

THE ROLE OF PRAYER

- as your goodness grows you will want to do more good things for others—even in times of persecution (cf. 2 Thess 1:4–5)
 - goodness produces a desire to do good works and these good works will be rewarded by God
 - we often desire to do good things for others but have no means of implementing them
- goodness often expresses itself in generosity (thanksgiving baskets for shut-ins, a Christmas bonus for our missionaries)
 - prayer can fulfill all of your desires to do good things for others
- God will intervene "with power" to help you do *all* the good things you want to do for others (2 Thess 1:11; cf. 2 Cor 9:8)

GOD'S GOODNESS

- goodness is an attribute of God; great goodness is infinite goodness (Neh 9:25)
 - Israel's inheritance (all the possessions of the Canaanites) came from God's goodness (Neh 9:25, 35).
- rewards for good works come from the goodness of God ('Remember me...in *Your* goodness' Neh 13:31b; cf. 13:14, 22)