

Step-By-Step

Goodness

- If you would, turn in your bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 12.
- We're continuing our series today, entitled Step-By-Step, as we're walking through the Fruit of the Spirit and today we're going to talk about Goodness.
- And here's myth about Goodness that's floated around some Christian circles:
- Goodness is what's inside, not what you do.
 - The reason why this is a myth is because, first off there isn't good inside of us on our own
 - Many people believe that we are born good and then taught to be bad
 - However, that's not the case, we are actually born bad, we are born sinful. The core of all

sin is selfishness. We are born selfish individuals.

- If you don't believe me just think about it. When have you ever heard a toddler, on their own volition, among their first words, say "Yours"
- Never! It's always "MINE!"
- Even Fletcher, who will be a year old this month, can't talk yet. But if he's got ahold of Rachel's phone or playing with something that we want to direct his attention away from. All I have to do is pick up a different toy, and start playing with it. I don't even have to pay him any attention.
- And 9.9 times out of 10. He's gonna drop whatever he has, crawl over to me, and snatch whatever I have out of my hand.
- Why? Because I love that boy to death, I would do anything for him. But that snaggle-toothed little goofball is already a selfish individual!

- There is no one that is inherently good outside of God alone.
 - No one is righteous, no not one.
 - Even all of our good deeds compared to Him are nothing but filthy rags
- That is why we need a Savior, that is why we need our lives are sealed with the Holy Spirit
 - And Paul is adamant that if we have the Holy Spirit, than we should be doing good things. Goodness should be an apparent attribute of our lives because His Goodness now rests within us.
- He says, in Galatians 6, ***“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” -Galatians 6:10 (ESV)***
- It is interesting that he puts a special emphasis on doing good to each other within the church.
- Because if we as Christians and members of the family of God don't know how to be good to each other, how will we ever be good to those outside of it.
- So the church is supposed to be a place where we practice being good to one another and allowing the Spirit to use us to build each other up.
- And the only reason why Christians fail to be good and do good to each other, is because we quench the Spirit.
- Now, we are going to get into a message that I really didn't want to get into for another year or so.
- However, in this season of our church, *we're trying to build a culture not a crowd*
- And if we are going to have a healthy culture we have to have a healthy view of the Holy Spirit.
- When we have an unhealthy view of the Holy Spirit, we have an unhealthy view of our relationship with God, and as CS Lewis said,

“The most important thing about you, is what you think about God.”

- So, because the Holy Spirit is God, this is important.
- Now Paul writes to the church at Corinth that was arguably the most spiritually gifted church in the NT but also the most spiritually immature church in the NT.
- Why? because they weren't walking properly in the Spirit and being good to each other.
 - I'm currently reading a book by Dallas Willard that points out, “Sometimes people have gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit.”
- So Paul writes to them to let them know what the true purpose of the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit is. And he says, in 1 Corinthians 12:
 - **“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are**

varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” -1 Corinthians 12: 4-7 (ESV)

- Then Paul goes on into chapter 13, famously known as the “Love Chapter” where he explains in detail that none of these gifts mean anything if not done in true authentic Agape Love
- No gift of the Spirit will ever be effective if it is not rooted or if it does not result in the Fruit of the Spirit.
- These gifts are not given for your uplifting but so you can uplift others.
- Spiritual gifts are given FOR THE COMMON GOOD
- Then he goes on into chapter 14 where he says:

- ***“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.”- 1 Corinthians 14:1 (ESV)***
- There are some of you right now thinking, “Oh geez, we at one of them churches....”
- Like I said at the beginning of this series, back in bible college I had a hard time fitting in theologically because I was too baptist for the charismatics and too charismatic for the baptists
 - Even after college I go to work in a baptist church and I was known as Charismatic Kenny for my first couple of years there
 - But I was ok with that and felt it was a good middle ground to be in, helped me be all things to all people, and gave me a balanced approach to the Holy Spirit.
- Now when it comes to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit you have to major camps of thinking, (the two extremes)
- **Cessationist:** Believe that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased
 - The main passage that they use for this argument comes from 1 Corinthians 13 where Paul says, ***“As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.” -1 Corinthians 13:8b-10 (ESV)***
 - The “perfect” that Paul refers to, many believe to be the Bible. They believe that once the canon of Scripture was completed that there was no more need for the gifts of the Spirit and as a result they have ceased
 - Which I believe to be a poor exegesis, or interpretation, because if you take this into the full context of Scripture, I believe the most likely conclusion is that Paul is referring to the Returning of Jesus here

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- The danger of the Cessationist theology is that we can easily turn the Trinity into God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Bible...and completely discount the ministry of the Holy Spirit
- This is not a Bible vs the Spirit thing
 - God, in His grace and Mercy allowed His Scriptures to survive throughout the ages so that we can have a better understanding of who He is and recognize His voice
 - That is why you will never understand a movement of the Spirit without Scripture and you will never understand Scripture without the Help of the Holy Spirit
 - Now on the other side of the Cessationist thought, you have
 - **Sensationalists:** Believe in the gifts of the Spirit and put an overemphasis on them, and create a theology more around miracles and experience than anything else.
- The danger of this theology is that it actually puts a under emphasis on faith, and leads people to believe that if they are not regularly seeing supernatural miracles or “feeling” God than God must not be present or working in their lives
 - This is where you get the gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit.
 - This is where we would focus more on the gift than the Giver.
 - It was for this reason that Jesus had to rebuke on two separate occasions in the book of Matthew, saying you evil generation, all you seek is a sign.
- When I was a freshman in college, a brand new Christian, I once visited a church where one of the deacons told me that if I didn’t speak in tongues than I wasn’t saved.
 - And that was very confusing to me and a young man just learning how to navigate my new found faith

- But the older I got the more I began to learn and grow and I realized things like when
- Paul asks the rhetorical questions in 1 Corinthians 12, when he asks, **“Are all apostles? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?”**
-1 Corinthians 12:29-30 (ESV)
- The obvious answer to his rhetorical question, is NO! They Don't!
- So Cessationalists, believe that the gifts have ceased, and the Holy Spirit doesn't move the same way today as He did in the NT. Sensationalists put way too much emphasis on them and create a theology based all around feeling and experience
 - Both extremes, both I believe to be wrong.
- You know, many of us struggle mightily with the idea of the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts because at the end of the day, we have control issues.
- If we can't understand it, then it must not be true
- However, if you ever come across someone who thinks they have the Christian Life figured out, especially the Holy Spirit, don't listen to a thing that person says.
- If we could figure out God, He wouldn't be God
 - His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, His ways are higher than our ways
- **“Sometimes we speak so little about the Person of the Holy Spirit, it makes you wonder if we're afraid He might show up.”**
-Jeff Pratt
 - We might be afraid of Him to show up because He might do something that's outside of our control, or that we might not fully understand.
 - A lot are afraid of Him showing up because we refuse to understand the Power of “I Don't Know.”

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- We always HAVE to know
 - Even if we don't know, we'll do everything we can to sound like we know
 - If I don't know, I'll try to develop some sort of system to make it make sense in my mind: And if it doesn't line up with my system, I'll throw it out.
 - I love that Rick Warren said that so many Christians don't actually believe in the infallibility of scripture, they believe in the infallibility of their interpretation of scripture as if the Holy Spirit can never reveal a new truth to us
 - We can't put The Holy Spirit in a box, we can't develop Him into a system, because The Holy Spirit is not a concept or an abstract idea, He's a Person, He's God, We're not.
 - He's the one that has to have everything figured out, not us.
- How much pressure would we take off of ourselves if we could get to the point where we could be confident in saying, "I Don't know"
 - Take the Gift of Tongues for example:
 - This is a highly controversial issue among many different denominations of Christians
 - Now, in Acts chapter 2, the day of pentecost is where we see the gift of tongues for the first time
 - In this instance, they were speaking in known languages that they didn't know, but people from far off regions heard them proclaiming the mighty works of God in their own languages
 - And more often than not, the word tongues, in the N.T. is translated as a known language
 - However, in 1 Cor. 13, Paul says if I speak in the tongues of Angles or of men...as if to imply that there could be some sort of angelic language that can be operated in

- And later on in 1 Cor. 14, Paul talks about uttering a speech that is unintelligible
 - He goes on to say that if there is no one to interpret, to keep it between you and God and not be a distraction to the body of Christ or a hindrance to unbelievers.
 - This is where many people get their idea of prayer languages
 - And one of their support verses comes from Romans 8 where Paul says that the Holy Spirit intercedes in our weakness when we don't know how to pray
- So taking all of this context in consideration, you know what my conclusion on all of this is....I DON'T KNOW
 - I feel like I have seen this done biblically before
 - And I also feel like I have seen it done very UNbiblically as well
- So I don't know! But what I do know is that one of two things is going to happen
 - 1. We'll get to heaven and God will say, "Yep, that was Me moving through you, I love you, Welcome Home"
 - 2. We'll get to Heaven and God will say, "Nope, that was complete gibberish, but I love you, Welcome Home"
- So this is not an issue worth sticking a stake in a ground and causing division about
- But the enemy loves to use things like this to cause division among Christians, because as soon as we are divided, the Spirit is quenched, and the Goodness vanishes.
 - Which is why Paul said to Not forbid speaking in tongues, in verse 39, but also one of the main points of chapter 14, is to not overemphasize it either.
 - And he concludes the chapter, by saying, ***"So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things should be done***

***decently and in order.” -1 Corinthians
14:39-40 (ESV)***

- Now, Prophecy is also a word that makes a lot of people uncomfortable as well, but I think sometimes it comes down to semantics
 - Because whenever done right, the Charismatics and Conservative Christians essentially believe the same thing, the Charismatics just call it Prophecy, and the Conservatives call it Words of Encouragement.
 - Because whenever we hear the word Prophecy, we think of someone doing the Shawn Spencer from Psych....
 - We see it more as a fortune telling type of thing, which some groups have wrongfully done.
 - But if scripture interprets scripture, Revelation 19:10 says that the Spirit of Prophecy is the testimony of Jesus
- Prophecy in the biblical sense, is the proclamation of what Jesus has done and what He is going to do. The Kingdom of God already and yet to come.
- However, in the context of the book of 1 Corinthians, the definition in the original language is:
 - **Prophecy: to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort [under the prompting of the Holy Spirit]**
 - This is why this is so important whenever speaking in the context of Goodness.
 - Because the purpose of all of this is for building up and encouragement, verse 3 says, ***“the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.” -1 Corinthians 14:3 (ESV)***
- So if what you say in church is not for upbuilding and encouragement, it's not of the Holy Spirit.

**- THE HOLY SPIRIT IS HERE TO BUILD UP,
NOT BEAT UP**

- In the same vein, The Holy Spirit is adamant that you are not in church to get beat up, you're in church to get built up
 - So the holier-than-thous that want to play comparison games and make you feel less-than, are not being led by the Spirit, they are being led by the flesh
 - Now, that doesn't mean that you'll never experience conviction. Because you will. I hope we all experience some sort of conviction whenever we worship together and that the Lord works on our hearts regularly
 - We are to experience conviction, but don't mistake conviction for condemnation
- These are two very different things because
 - Conviction builds you up, condemnation beats you up

- Conviction leads you repentance, condemnation will drive you to despair
- Conviction gives you hope to keep going, condemnation tells you to give up
- Simply: Conviction brings Hope, Condemnation kills hope
- And here's is a very important truth that every Christian needs to understand. It is not your job to convict.
- That's a ministry of the Holy Spirit. You actually do not have the supernatural power to convict a person's heart or soul.
- And whenever you try to take that ministry upon yourself, all that is going to result in is that other person experiencing condemnation
- Our job is to speak the truth in love, Christians do need to call each other out at times, but Paul says,
- ***“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should***

restore that person gently.” -Galatians 6:1 (NIV)

- Other translations say, “you who are spiritual”
 - Never forget, the most spiritual thing about you, is the way you effect the people around you
 - Our job is not to point out how bad someone else is being, our job is to be there for them and ask how we can help
- This is no doubt why Paul wrote in this letter and said things in **Chapter 12** like:
- ***All of these various manifestations of the Spirit are supposed to be “for the common good” (V. 7)***
 - ***There should be “no division among the body, but [everyone should] have the same care for one another.” (V.25)***
- Then he gets to **Chapter 14** and says over and over again that our focus is supposed to be on:

- ***“Upbuilding and encouragement and consolation” (V.3)***
 - ***“So that the church may be built up” (V.5)***
 - ***“Since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church” (V.12)***
 - ***“Let all things be done for building up” (V.26)***
 - ***“So that all may learn and all be encouraged” (V.31)***
- This is the purpose of Spiritual gifts. This is the Goodness of Fruit of the Spirit in action.
- But as long we are focused on ourselves, only our personal growth, the gifts we want from God, instead of how we can be used build up and benefit the people around us, we cannot be effectively used by the Holy Spirit.
- **GOD WILL GIVE TO YOU, WHAT HE CAN GIVE THROUGH YOU**

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- Normally this statement is used more in the context of financial generosity but it is just a valid in this context as well.
- Ever since the days of Abraham, God has been intentional about pouring out His blessings, so that we would in turn bless others
- But so many times, we want God to bless us, give us spiritual gifts so that we can be put on display, so that people will look at us and say, “Oh, look how spiritual that person is, look how close THEY are to God.”
- But there is NO ROOM for pride in the midst of a movement of God.
- We don't ask the Spirit to fill us and gift us for our own recognition, or our own platform, no we seek those things so we can be used to build up someone else.
 - If we come humbly before God, emptying ourselves of our pride and preconceived notions, genuinely ask Him to fill us with His

Spirit not for our benefit, but for the benefit of others,

- If we come at it with that heart, Jesus said in Luke 11, ***“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”- Luke 11:13 (ESV)***
- It's no coincidence to me that Jesus equates the Holy Spirit to a good gift.
 - Last weekend I was down in the pan handle area for a wedding, one of my best friends was getting married. And when we were on the Alabama side, after the rehearsal, me and the guys stopped by Buc-ee's on the way back. Have you ever been to Buc-ee's?? It was AWESOME!
 - Its's like sheets, walmart, cracker barrel, and a BBQ joint all rolled up in one! So on our way back I had to take rachel, her mom, and fletcher there to experience it

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- And Fletch was loving it as much as me, they had all of these stuffed animal Buc-ee's around and fletch was laughing and reaching for them. Rachel turned to her mom, and said, "Well Fletch is definitely leaving here with a buc-ee..."
- Next thing they know they see me and fletch walking down an aisle with Buc-ee in hand
- Best believe **Fletcher got his Buc-ee! (PIC)**
- Rachel knows how I love to get fletcher gifts that line up with my interests. He may or may not already have an eagles #1 shirt on the way for his first birthday!
- And I can't wait to see all of his interests and how they develop and I'm so excited for me to buy him all of the things that we bond over in the future!
- *And you know, I can't help but think that God gets that kind of joy whenever His children's interests line up with His*
- Whenever we get the same love for His people that He does, He loves to pour out His gifts on us so we can love and care for the things that He loves and cares for.
- But at the same time, He also knows not to give us what we don't need.
- James, in chapter 4, to paraphrase says, "You have not, because you ask not. And sometimes you do ask and don't receive, because you ask with selfish motives."
 - Sometimes we'll ask for God to gift us, but he knows that we're not ready for it because our hearts my still be more toward ourselves than they are others
- So we should still regularly ask to be filled with the Spirit, and just as regularly ask to be emptied of selfishness.
- Because God can't fill us if we're already full of ourselves.
- We get caught up so often asking God for so many other things and forget that He's already

given us the greatest gift of all. The gift of His Son, the gift of salvation.

- When we can get to the point when we realize that that is already way more than we deserve, that even if He never gave us another blessing in this lifetime, we know that our salvation and our relationship with Him is already MORE THAN ENOUGH
 - If we get to the point where we genuinely believe that, well then we can be emptied of ourselves enough for Him to be able to effectively pour into us.
- And sometimes we are so full of ourselves that we think our salvation is dependent upon what we can do, rather than who He is and what He's done.
- The first thing that came to mind whenever I thought about the topic of Goodness was the story of the Rich Young Ruler from Matthew 19, Mark 10, and Luke 18.
- If you're not familiar with the story, there was one day that Jesus was praying over and

blessing children, and as He was getting up to head out on His journey to Jerusalem where He would inevitably go to the cross, this rich young ruler catches Him on His way out

- And I know that Mark says that he ran up and knelt before Jesus, however, based on the context and culture, I don't really see this being done out of a state of brokenness or humility.
- Because what we need to understand that in that time and culture, men like him, who had an abundance of wealth and influence, were seen as very close to God.
- Their wealth was thought to be because of God's favor and blessings, and the fact that he was so rich, meant that he could purchase more sacrifices and burnt offerings than most so he was seen as a better servant of God. That was due to the twisted corruption of the temple which is why Jesus turned over the tables when He was there.

- So this man is seen in the public eye to be spiritually good, walking in the favor of God, he's a pillar of the community.
 - He's a local celebrity, Jesus is a local celebrity, so it makes sense that they connect
- So he comes up to Jesus, in dramatic fashion. Giving the people what they want, says to Jesus, but really to the crowd, **"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**
-Mark 10:17 (ESV)
- Expecting Jesus to say something along the lines of, "Oh you know you good my man! You know you're walking in God's favor, come on bring it in for a selfie."
- But instead, Jesus says, **"Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."**
-Mark 10:18 (ESV)
- Jesus isn't saying that he shouldn't be called good, he's rather putting his idea of goodness in into proper context. He says,

"God is the only one that is good, so just to be clear, by calling me good, you're calling me God. And because I'm God in flesh, I'm going to continue this conversation in that authority.

- And says, **"You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."** -Mark 10:19-22 (ESV)
- Oof, this conversation did not go the way that He thought.
- Myth #2: Your Goodness can save you

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- In Matthew's account he says, "What good deed must I do to inherit eternal life?"
- But that's impossible
- There is nothing you could ever do to be good enough to deserve eternal life.
- Rachel and I watched a documentary recently about a ministry that had a pretty big fall.
 - And at one point they were interviewing a lady who had walked away from the faith and her reasoning was because she found out that a particular Christian leader wasn't a good man and she thought well if it's between me and him getting into heaven, I like my chances.
 - But you don't get into heaven based on comparison to other individuals, because if you want to take that approach you really have to compare yourself to God to see if you measure up to get in, and NONE of us would measure up to that.
- But the comparison game is the one we play the most. And because of that, everyone who was around for Jesus' interaction with this Rich Young Ruler were distraught.
 - Because Jesus said, "**How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!**" ...**It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.**"-Mark 10:23, 25 (ESV)
 - Now this one threw everyone off because they saw that guy as being the closest to eternal life than anyone else they knew.
 - So they ask, "Well if that guy can't be saved, WHO CAN???"
 - But then Jesus says, "**With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.**" -Mark 10:27 (ESV)
 - Point being, it's impossible to save yourself! And it's so much harder for the rich and the

comfortable (which includes every single one of us if compared to the majority of the world) to recognize their need for a savior.

- But just because it is impossible with man, doesn't mean it's impossible for God

- AND THEN HE PROVES IT!

- In Luke's account, in the very next chapter, in Luke 19, Jesus encounters another rich man named Zacchaeus
- However this guy isn't seen as someone close to God. He wasn't rich because of God's favor and blessings, he was an extortioner. He wasn't just a tax collector, he was a CHIEF tax collector.
- He made his money by ripping people off, leading them to poverty, and managed an entire branch of guys that did the same.
- Yet as Jesus was passing through, He says, very controversially that He must stay and Zacchaeus' house.

- And Jesus goes over and we don't know what was said or how long He was there all we know is that at one point Zacchaeus gets up and declares, ***“Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”*** And Jesus said to him, ***“Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*** -Luke 19:8-10 (ESV)

- You see, salvation didn't come to Zacchaeus' house because of what he did. No, he did what he did because he experienced the goodness of Jesus, and had to respond.
- The word **Goodness** in Galatians 5 mean: **“Uprightness of heart.”**
 - The biggest difference between Zacchaeus and the Rich Young Ruler is that Zacchaeus had his heart turned and all of the sudden nothing seemed to matter as much as Jesus.

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- You see the Rich Young Ruler may have been good at keeping a number of the commandments, but he couldn't get past the first one.
- He had other gods. His possessions possessed him. His position defined him. Therefore he couldn't give his heart fully to God.
- You see, God doesn't care about your money, he cares about your heart, and He wants to turn it upright.
- Zaccheus didn't let that One Thing get in the way, he gave his heart fully to Jesus and as a result, God was able to do good through him
- He wants to give us a heart for what He has a heart for
- When our hearts are turned towards Him, that's when the fruit of the Spirit flows out of us.
 - Because what happens in your heart, cannot stay in your heart
- Remember like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:1, Spiritual gifts are a good thing to be desired. It is good to ask God for those things we should desire those things. But we pursue love.
- We pursue the upbuilding and encouragement of the people around us.
- So whenever we pray, we should be praying, "Lord, will you gift and empower me in the way I can best uplift and encourage the people around me."
- "Use me the best way You know how to serve and build up my brothers and sisters in Christ."
- Here's a very important prayer that we should be praying, "Lord, make me the most encouraging person that people come in contact with today."
- Man, if we can truly set aside our pride and pursue that, I believe that God will pour His Spirit upon our church in such a way that the Gospel will become infectiously attractive to the outside world.

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- That is how Goodness is going to be apparent in our lives, in our homes, in our church, and in our city.