

# Fruit of the Spirit Series

## GOODNESS

July 22, 2012

*Fruit of the Spirit –GOODNESS (Luke Knight)*



May we be reminded, as we find ourselves in the middle of the series, that the *Fruit* only comes from a vibrant relationship with Jesus.

*“Pray for me that I may not loosen my grip on the hands of Jesus, even under the guise of ministering to the poor.” – Mother Theresa*

### The Fruit Ordered

*Love, Joy, Peace* – these are broad or foundational results of a relationship with God. These are big themes.

*Patience, Kindness, Goodness* – these characteristics are more particular to an outward focus of our interaction with others.

*Gentleness, Faithfulness, Self Control* – these relate more obviously to the inner life, what the Spirit cultivates within.

### Kindness vs. Goodness (God’s Tough Love)

- Kindness is defined as “God’s goodness in action”. It is God’s goodness toward us, which then, flow to others.
- Kindness is intentional, a movement, an exertion, motivated by God’s love.
- Goodness is heavily related to sacrificial generosity.
- Goodness is a very active goodness or kindness directed toward that which doesn’t merit or deserve it.
- This has been called “God’s tough love” – not tough on the receiver, but tough and dependent on the giver.

*“How does love become unconquerable? By never asking what the enemy is doing to it, and only asking what Jesus has done. Loving one’s enemies leads disciples to the way of the cross and into communion with the crucified one. But the more the disciples are certain to have been forced onto this path, the greater the certainty that their love remains unconquered, that love overcomes the hatred of the enemy; for it is not their own love. It is solely the love of Jesus Christ, who went to the cross for his enemies and prayed on the cross for them. Faced with the way of the cross of Jesus Christ, however, the disciples themselves recognize that they were among the enemies of Jesus who have been conquered by his love. This love makes the disciples able to see, so that they can recognize an enemy as a brother or sister. Why? Because they live only from the love of him who behaved toward them as toward brothers and sisters, who accepted them when they were his enemies and brought them into communion with him as his neighbors. God’s love seeks the enemy who needs it...” - Discipleship (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)*

### Discussion Questions:

- Do you recall a time when someone showed you “God’s tough love”?
- Why is this kind of love (action not dependent on the receiver, but the giver) so hard? What does it show us about ourselves?
- Where should Christian’s practice *goodness*, God’s tough love?