

Devotional Thoughts :: MARCH 7 - THOUGHTS BY WILLIAM MACDONALD

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“The fruit of the Spirit is...goodness...” (Gal. 5:22)

Goodness means excellence of character. Someone has defined it as “virtue equipped at every point,” which simply means that the person possessing it is kind, virtuous and righteous in every area of life.

Goodness is the opposite of badness. A bad man may be deceitful, immoral, treacherous, unjust, cruel, selfish, hateful, covetous, and/or intemperate. The good man, though not perfect, exemplifies truth, justice, purity and other similarly desirable traits.

The Apostle Paul distinguishes between a righteous man and a good man in Romans 5:7. The righteous man is just, honest and straightforward in his dealings, but he may be icily detached from others. The good man, on the other hand, is affectionate and lovable. One would scarcely die for a righteous man, but one might die for a good man.

And yet we must remember that goodness can be firm. It would not be good to condone or overlook sin. And so goodness can rebuke, correct and discipline. We see this when the Lord Jesus, who is goodness incarnate, cleansed the Temple.

A unique feature of goodness is that it can overcome evil. Paul wrote to the Roman believers, “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). When we allow someone else’s hatred to ruin our disposition, we have been overcome by his evil. But when we rise above it and show grace, mercy and love, we have overcome evil with good.

Murdoch Campbell tells of a godly Highland minister whose wife tried to make life miserable for him. One day as he was reading his Bible, she snatched it from his hands and threw it in the fire! He looked up into her face and said quietly, “I don’t think I’ve ever sat by a warmer fire.” His goodness overcame her evil. She became a lovely, gracious wife. As Campbell comments, “His Jezebel became a Lydia. His thorn became a lily.” Goodness had conquered!