

Goodness

Lesson 01 of the series: "Training Camp"

I. God wants us to live godly lives.

"By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires." - 2 Peter 1:3-4 (NLT)

a. God has promised us new lives through Christ.

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" -2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

"For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God." -1 Peter 1:23 (NLT)

b. God has promised us the power to live godly lives through the Holy Spirit.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." -Acts 1:8 (NLT)

"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." -Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

c. God has promised to keep working in us so that we become godly people.

"God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him." -Romans 8:29 (MSG)

"I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." -Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

II. The more godly we become, the more useful we become.

"In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence (goodness), and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins." -2 Peter 1:5-9 (NLT)

"He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

-Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to help each other train in godliness.

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."

-Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

"Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come." -1 Timothy 4:8 (NLT)

III. Godly people are good people.

a. God wants us to be good.

"Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

-Ephesians 4:21-32 (NLT)

b. God wants us to do good.

- To people in need. “Our people must learn to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be unproductive.” -Titus 3:14 (NLT)
- To our enemies. “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.” -Luke 6:35 (NLT)
- To everyone. “...whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.” -Galatians 6:10 (NLT)

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’ ...‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’”

-Matthew 25:34-40 (NLT)

Note: “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.” -James 4:17 (NKJV)

Note: “So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.” -Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the following questions and write out a few brief answers. Be prepared to share them with your group.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching on "Goodness," was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. Read 2 Peter 1:3-9. Peter wants Christians to live productive and useful lives. Why do many Christians settle for boring "religious" routines?
3. In his message this week John reminded us of the following three promises God makes to us:
 - God has promised us new lives through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 1:23)
 - God has promised us the power to live godly lives through the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8, Phil. 2:13)
 - God has promised to keep working in us so that we become godly people. (Rom. 8:29, Phil. 1:6)

Discuss these promises and their supporting Scripture references. How do these promises make you feel? How should these promises impact the way we live?

4. What do the following Bible passages teach us about doing good?
 - 1 Timothy 6:17-18
 - Galatians 6:9-10
 - James 4:17
 - Luke 6:27-36
 - Ephesians 2:10

Would you describe yourself as a person who likes to do good? Why? Why not? How could you improve? Describe a friend who does a good job of using his/her time and resources to do good. What's their secret?

5. Many people say they are "good people" but when pressed as to why they think so they reply, "Well, I haven't killed anybody." Read Ephesians 4:21-32. How does Paul describe good and godly people? How is such a life possible?
6. Spend some time as a group discussing how you might do good to people in your sphere of influence this week. Then spend some time praying for each other asking God to help you live out your faith.