

Study Notes on Goodness - Ray Gill 22 October 2017

Romans 12:17-21

1. Review the following verses to see how goodness is part of the character of God.
Exodus 33:19; Psalm 23:6; Psalm 27:13; Psalm 116:12; 2 Peter 1:3
2. See these verses which associate goodness with Christian character. Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Peter 1:5
3. Ray suggested that the word goodness is not used in the gospels and therefore not applied to Jesus. Yet even non-Christians would describe Jesus as a good man. See Acts 10:37-38 – what is the evidence of goodness?
4. Recall the story told in 2 Kings 6:8-23. See how v23 illustrates the principle of Romans 12:20.
5. Ray gave examples of this practice from early church history, mentioning the martyr Polycarp. How does this understanding help us in the face of opposition in our society today? How may it inform our praying for our persecuted brothers and sisters?
6. See Ephesians 2:8-10. What is the connection between good works and salvation?
7. Reflect on this quotation which Ray shared: You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.
8. John Newton became a vicar, but he urged Wilberforce to stay in politics and do the good that God had set him there to do. How can we best support those Christians who God has called into the political arena?
9. Wilberforce is known for the abolition of the slave trade act, but his parallel campaign was to do with the moral temperature of the nation. George III instigated a Society for the suppression of vice, addressing such issues as excessive drinking, blasphemy, profane language. How do we react to the idea that the Church could be a Society for the Suppression of Vice? Can legislation effectively address such issues, or is there a more effective way?
10. Respond to these quotations with which Ray concluded his talk - "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." (Burke) 'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.' (Wesley)

John S Smith 25 October 2017