Goodness

Again as part of that second triad (patience, kindness, goodness) of virtues listed in the ninefold fruit of the Spirit, we find Goodness. Goodness is similar to those virtues we have already looked at in the fact that it is both an attribute of God and also a fruit of the Spirit within us. Galatians 5:22-23 - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. NASB

Goodness is that which good and is not bad, but rather is of highest quality, what is morally excellent and virtuous, what is positive and valuable, useful and beneficial, proper, honorable and righteous. As an attribute of God, goodness consists of righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and love. So the Lord is said to be good and to do good to all.

Psalm 119:68 - 68 Thou art good and dost good; Teach me Thy statutes. NASB
Psalm 145:7-9 - 7 They shall eagerly utter the memory of Thine abundant goodness, And shall shout joyfully of Thy righteousness. 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. 9 The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works. NASB

Goodness expresses the supreme benevolence, holiness, and excellence of the divine character, the sum of all God's attributes. When God revealed Himself to Moses, He described His glory and goodness with a list of virtues. “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you.” Exodus 33:18-19 - 18 Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!" 19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion..... 34:6-7 - 6 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forges iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." NASB

Therefore whatever attributes God has ascribed to Himself in His self-revelation to us in the Bible, each one is an expression of His goodness. This is because every attribute of God is good, or virtuous. There is no attribute of God that could be described as bad, but rather each one shines forth another facet of the beauty which is goodness. Therefore God's character itself is the supreme measure of what goodness and virtue are. Moreover everything that God does is also good, for if He is good in His very essence, than He can but only do good. AW Pink comments... “There is such an absolute perfection in God's nature and being that nothing is wanting to it or defective in it, and nothing can be added to it to make it better. God is sumnum bonum, the choicest good. The original Saxon meaning of our English word "God" is "The Good." God is not only the Greatest of all beings, but the Best. All the goodness there is in any creature has been imparted from the Creator, but God's goodess is undervived, for it is the essence of His eternal nature. As God is infinite in power from all eternity, before there was any display thereof, or any act of omnipotency put forth; so He was eternally good before there was any communication of His bounty, or any creature to whom it might be imparted or exercised. Thus, the first manifestation of this Divine perfection was in giving being to all things. "Thou art good, and doest good" (Ps. 119:68). God has in Himself an infinite and inexhaustible treasure of all blessedness enough to fill all things.... All that emanates from God—His decrees, His creation, His laws, His providences—cannot be otherwise than good: as it is written. "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).” End quote. It is important to understand that the measure of goodness is God Himself, and that virtue is quantified by God’s own character, the very essence of His being. Thomas Manton comments... “He is originally good, good of Himself, which nothing else is; for all creatures are good only by participation and communication from God. He is essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself: the creature's good is a superadded quality, in God it is His essence. He is infinitely good;
the creature’s good is but a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of
good. He is eternally and immutably good, for He cannot be less good than He is; as there can
be no addition made to Him, so no subtraction from Him.” End quote. Therefore let us
understand that in reading of the accounts of God’s dealing with man, we learn what goodness is,
and therefore we can emulate it. God is good when He shines forth His mercy to those who
spurn His benevolence in offering forgiveness for their transgressions of His holy and sovereign
law. God even loves His enemies, and gives them ample opportunity to repent. The goodness of
God is seen in that when man transgressed the law of His Creator a dispensation of unmixed
wrath did not at once commence. God did not immediately execute holy wrath against sinful
man, as in the flood of Noah, but rather in great mercy for some 2000 years endured with much
patience the people of the earth who became increasingly corrupt until “the Lord saw that the
wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart
was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5-6). And so, in His goodness, God destroyed the evil world
of Noah’s day. But God is good, even in His judgment and wrath. AW Pink comments... “Nor
can the benevolence of God be justly called into question because there is suffering and sorrow
in the world. If man sins against the goodness of God, if he despises "the riches of His goodness
and forbearance and longsuffering," and after the hardness and impenitency of his heart
treasures up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath (Rom 2:5, 5), who is to blame but
himself? Would God be "good" if He punished not those who ill-use His blessings, abuse His
benevolence, and trample His mercies beneath their feet? It will be no reflection upon God’s
goodness, but rather the brightest exemplification of it, when He shall rid the earth of those who
have broken His laws, defied His authority, mocked His messengers, scorned His Son, and
persecuted those for whom He died.” End quote. In summary, goodness is what and who God
is, and what God does. And so of course Christian are called to goodness, and to be good, even
as God the Father is perfect and good (Matt 5:48).

Matthew 5:48 - 48 “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. NASB
Goodness is therefore a fruit of the Spirit of God within us, and so we are called to produce it
with faith and dependence on God’s working in us to produce this divine virtue in the way we
live and act.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 - 11 To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy
of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; 12 in order that the
name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the
Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

Ephesians 5:7-10 - 7 Therefore do not be partners with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now
you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and
righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. NASB

Goodness for Christians is not sinlessness but an integrity and uprightness of heart and mind
that reflects God’s goodness (His righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and
love) in our relationships with others (Luke 6:35, Gal 6:10, 1 Thes 5:15, Heb 13:16, 3 John 11). It
is that sincere desire for God’s virtue to come forth from our life, in all the facets of our
character.

Romans 15:14 - 14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are
full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another. NASB

Christians strive to be good because the Holy Spirit lives inside prompting us to live a life that is
morally excellent and virtuous, positive and valuable, useful and beneficial, proper, honorable
and righteous. We seek to imitate God and let His goodness be that which characterizes our
lives as we live according to His goodness of righteousness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and
love. May He grant us to be good, even as He is good.