

FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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INTRODUCTION

There are many wonderful aspects of the work of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, that we can study. We can study the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus. We can study the experience known as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. We can also study the nine charismatic gifts listed by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12.

But here today, we are going to start a series on another aspect of the Holy Spirit's work - the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. This is listed in Galatians 5:22-23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

We see that just as there are nine supernatural power gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12, there are also nine personality gifts here in Galatians 5. It's no accident that there are nine supernatural personality gifts

known as the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is really nine different manifestations of God's love which are meant to be balances for the nine different manifestations of God's power. So always keep in mind that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are God's power and the Fruit of the Holy Spirit is God's personality.

It's important for us to know that throughout the Bible and also in the reality of everyday life today, that whenever God acts in His power, He always clothes it or dresses it up in His love.

Back in the early part of the Bible, in Exodus chapter 28, God instructed Moses on how to make a special garment that the High Priest would wear when he went into the presence of God to worship in the Holy of Holies. This special priestly garment was known as the EPHOD. God commanded that on the hem of the ephod there would be alternating golden bells and pomegranates (a delicious sweet fruit). There would be a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe.

Everything in the Old Testament was a foreshadowing of what He would do through His Son Jesus in the New Testament. The Old Testament High Priest was a foreshadowing of Jesus, the Great High Priest. The golden bells foreshadowed the power gifts of the Holy Spirit (miracles, healings, words of prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, etc.). The pomegranates foreshadowed the Fruit of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, etc.).

God designed the ephod this way on purpose. The ringing of the bell could be heard signifying power. But if there were only bells, the noise might be a clanging, harsh, and maybe even unpleasant sound of metal against metal. The pomegranates between the bells would soften the sound and produce more harmony. The sweetness of the pomegranate would fill the air and the seeds of the pomegranate would be a reminder that the Fruit of the Holy Spirit put into action would reproduce itself. Love put into action would produce more love; joy and peace in action would generate more joy and peace; patience put into action would multiply patience in others.

In 1 Corinthians 13:1, Paul must have been thinking of the ephod when he wrote: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging symbol." In fact, in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul defines the supernatural gifts; in 1 Corinthians 13, he writes in detail about the fruit of the Holy Spirit; and in 1 Corinthians 14, he goes back to speaking about the supernatural gifts. It's no accident that he uses a chapter about love to cushion two chapters on the power gifts. So we see first of all that God intends that the exercise of His power is always clothed in love - and second, wherever His love is manifested, supernaturally

powerful things should happen. The two are always meant to go together. Power without love and compassion can be cruel. But God, who is Love, always exercises His power clothed in love.

A second aspect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit is the food or nourishment aspect. When we think of fruit, we think of healthy food filled with health-producing vitamins. We think especially of vitamin C which gives the power to fight colds and infections and gives strength to the bones. In the old days, sailors making long sea voyages would develop weak bones and gums - a disease called scurvy because they had no fresh fruit on those voyages.

Fruit is necessary for good health. When a child wants a snack, a wise parent will give them fresh fruit so the child will get proper vitamins, especially vitamin C. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is like spiritual vitamin C. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is what strengthens both the Body of Christ and the individual Christian. Love, joy, peace, patience, faith, goodness and the others are what keep Christianity healthy. Without active love, joy, peace, patience, faith, goodness etc., the Christian life can become a hollow, difficult empty attempt at religion. But with the living, active fruit of the Holy Spirit, the Christian life is exciting, vibrant, and alive.

Fruit is healthy and life-giving. It's sweet and good tasting. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is what gives the Christian life its sweetness. Fruit also contains within itself many seeds with the capability of reproducing itself without end. Just as apples and oranges reproduce, love, joy, peace, patience also reproduce themselves as they are planted into the garden of life.

In the book of Revelation, the last chapter of the Bible talks about the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal dwelling place for redeemed humanity after this present earth passes away. We read how there will be trees of life and how we'll eat fruit from the trees of life. I personally believe this eternal fruit we'll be eating is fruit containing the glory of God, the life of God, and the personality of God. This is what will sustain our new glorified eternal body - the very life and personality of God Himself.

Thirdly, the fruit of the Holy Spirit represents the personality of Jesus Himself. God the Father sent Jesus to this earth as the New Adam, the New Man. An important part of the New Man's life were two special characteristics: 1) it would be a life characterized by faith working by love (Galatians 5:6), and 2) the New Man, Jesus Christ, would live a life that was perfectly Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, and Spirit-controlled. Furthermore, after this New Man had been crucified, died and then rose again in unlimited glory, He would be able to impart His very own life, power, and personality into every human being that would call on Him in faith and ask this Risen Christ to come live in their spirit. Therefore, people who have the Christ-life

within them would also have the personality and characteristics of the New Man growing in their spirit and being lived and manifested in their daily lives.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the very personality of Jesus. You see, in the daily life of Jesus' ministry, it wasn't just what He did that was important, but also how He did it. He lived and moved with love, joy, peace, patience, faith, self-control, etc. Jesus was more than a wonder worker; He was a wonderful worker. This fruit of the Holy Spirit will make us new within the new man.

I'd like to close with a brief definition of each fruit of the Holy Spirit. In future lessons we'll see each fruit in detail one at a time. But here's a brief summary of each:

1) LOVE - The decision to act toward another person in a way that God's best will come to pass for them, regardless of what it costs.

2) JOY - An inner delight that comes from the fact that God loves you and considers you a worthwhile person.

3) PEACE - An inner security that results from knowing that an Almighty God is watching over your life.

4) PATIENCE - Longsuffering; the ability to endure in God's way of doing things until the proper results happen.

5) GENTLENESS - The quality of never wanting to hurt anyone or cause them physical or emotional pain.

6) GOODNESS - Putting God-given love into action in the form of acts of mercy and good works.

7) FAITH - The ability to believe the promises of God are true and will come to pass through love.

8) MEEKNESS - The act of not striking back in revenge or anger, but committing it to God for Him to work it out for everyone's best.

9) TEMPERANCE - A God-given balance and self-control over temper, emotions and appetites; a life of harmony and balance.

These fruits are God's highest plan and original hope and purpose for all mankind. They are God's vision for being that He created in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26,27) and they are available to us through the life of Christ within us.

THE FRUIT OF LOVE

Welcome to the next of our special lessons on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. Last issue, we looked at the Fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 in an introductory way. Now, we are going to look at the first and most important fruit listed: love.

Before we get into the study of the Fruit of Love, I want to briefly review a few points about the Fruit of the Holy Spirit in general.

1) You remember that the Fruit of the Holy Spirit is part of the priesthood that God established back in the Old Testament. The High Priest wore an ephod. On the hem of the ephod there were alternating bells and pomegranates. The bells foreshadowed the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the pomegranates the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. God was showing that His power and His love were always to work together in harmony. This applies to the Old Testament High Priest, also to Jesus in His priesthood and ministry, and also to the priesthood of all believers. It is no accident that there is a balance of 9 Gifts and 9 Fruits.

2) The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is the personality of Jesus Christ the New Man. The fullness of the Holy Spirit dwells in Jesus, so His personality perfectly reflects the Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

3) The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is also the personality of the new men, the new creation in Christ Jesus. All true believers who have the risen Christ in their heart also have His personality within them.

4) There is the nourishment aspect of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. Just as natural fruit has vitamin C to keep the physical body healthy, the Fruit of the Holy Spirit supplies a kind of spiritual vitamin C that keeps the Body of Christ and the individual Christian spiritually, emotionally, and ultimately physically healthy.

5) Finally, there's the fruitfulness aspect. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit resides in all true believers in Christ. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit reproduces and multiplies as it is planted in everyday life. The Christian who exercises love or joy will see love and joy multiplied and reproduced in their world around them.

With that said, let's look now at the Fruit of Love. Love is listed as one of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. Actually, it is the most important one and it is the one that the other eight grow from. We can actually say that love is more like the trunk of the tree from which all the other fruit grows.

This is obvious when we see that God's nature is love. The Source of all life, the Creator and Upholder of all things is LOVE. 1 John 4:8 gives us that very definition of God's nature. For all of God's other attributes, adjectives are used: God is merciful, just, all-knowing, etc. But when we come to the reality of love, the Word of God uses a noun to state that God's being is love. So, all of creation owes its very existence to a being Whose core is love.

This fact is also true of Jesus the Son of God. In John 15:5 we see that Jesus is the Vine, we are the branches. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. Jesus' very being is love, just as God Almighty the Father is Love. Colossians 2:9 states, "For in Him (Jesus) all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus Christ is love personified. He is the Word - the Logos. Everything the invisible God wanted to say about Himself He said in Jesus. As we draw our eternal life and spiritual life from Jesus, we draw from the supernatural fountain of love, the Vine of love.

What do we mean when we use the word LOVE? The scripture uses a special word to express God's love - the word AGAPE. *Agape* love - as seen in God - as defined by scripture is a decision (not an emotion or feeling) or a commitment to act toward another in a way that will bring about God's best result for them regardless of the cost to one's self. The classic example is John 3:16. When this planet was lost and dying in sin, God gave His only Son to bring redemption and eternal life to all who would believe even though it cost Him seeing His Son crucified. Jesus showed His *agape* love in the life of perfect obedience He lived and in His free self-giving of Himself as the innocent lamb sacrificed for our sins.

The awesome fact of reality is that this universe was created and is upheld by a Person, a Being Who is committed to bringing about good in all situations and to offering redemption toward bad or fallen situations, and bringing about a victorious and triumphant conclusion to what we call history. God is committed to act in a positive and redeeming way toward all people and all situations when man seeks Him. This is also the description of the earthly ministry of Jesus and should be the description of the ministry of the Body of Christ.

This special kind of love is given to a person when they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and ask Jesus to come and live in their heart, in their spirit. When Christ comes to live in us through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit then brings God's own *agape* love which was always coming toward us now into us. (Romans 5:5) Then it becomes part of our discipleship to begin loving others with this love that God has given to us. In fact, the Bible tells us that this is one of the signs of a true conversion, that we begin to love others the way God loves. (1 John 3:14-16) As with all

fruit, it has to be planted to grow more fruit. As we plant this God kind of love into the world around us, we'll see it reproduce and multiply.

What are the concrete expressions of *agape* love? Turn to 1 Corinthians 13. The apostle Paul gives us some precise guidelines as to what *agape* love is and does. If you remember our theme scripture (Galatians 5:22-23 - read it now) you'll also notice that 1 Corinthians 13 includes all of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit and then some...

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

(1 Corinthians 13:1-8)

What I do from time to time at Bible studies at Christ's Chapel is take this passage and have everyone read this passage and substitute the word GOD for LOVE. (Try it now.) Then we substitute the word JESUS for LOVE. (Try it now.) Finally, we'll substitute the word "I" for LOVE. (Try that now!) With Jesus Christ the New Man living within us, we should be able to read that scripture and mean it.

A few closing thoughts about the Fruit of Love, *agape* love:

1) Although *agape* love often acts sacrificially and makes sacrifices, the lover never feels they are making a sacrifice. The heart of *agape* love gives willingly and never makes an issue about giving the gift. There's an old saying: Love never really makes a sacrifice. A father can willingly work two jobs to supply his family's needs. A mother willingly stays up all night with a sick child to watch over the little one. God willingly gave His Son. Jesus willingly gave Himself. They would have done even more if necessary, but what They did was perfect.

2) There's a tough side of love - a correcting side of love. Since God always wants His best for us, He's going to correct us from our wrong and self-destructive behaviors. No parent who truly loves their child will let the child play with the controls of a cooking stove or run across a street without

looking to see if it's safe to cross without correcting that child. A good, loving parent would rather see a few tears now than see real tragedy and grief later on. In Hebrews 12:5 and 10, we see that God corrects us but it's always for our good. In Revelation 3:19, we see that Jesus corrects those He loves. God loves us just the way we are, but He loves us too much to let us stay that way! Sometimes, to bring His best to pass, God will have to discipline or correct us. But always remember His faithfulness. If we fall 99 times, He'll pick us up 100 times.

3) Finally, *agape* love is the standard by which we judge all our actions. It's like a doctor who holds an x-ray up to a fluorescent light to read the x-ray. Our actions are the x-ray, *agape* love is the light. When we hold God's actions toward us up to that light, we see that He passes the test every single time! Our goal as believers is that when our actions are held up to the light of *agape* love, we'll pass that test the same way. It's the way we can be vessels to bring God's salvation and redeeming love to others.

THE FRUIT OF JOY

Welcome to the next of our lessons on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. We've already had an introduction to the Fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22,23 and we looked last time at the Fruit of Love. Now we'll be looking at the Fruit of Joy...

Our biblical definition of JOY is an inner delight that comes from the fact that God cares for you and considers you a worthwhile person. Remember, the Fruit of the Holy Spirit is a free gift or blessing placed within us when the Risen Christ comes to dwell in our heart, in our spirit. At the moment of salvation, the Word of God tells us that we are translated out of the kingdom of darkness, out of the kingdom of this world system, out of the kingdom of the law of sin and death, and we are translated into the Kingdom of light, into the Kingdom of God, and into the Kingdom of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

At the moment of salvation when the Risen Christ takes up residence in our spirit, we get an awesome awareness of the tremendous love that God the Father has for us and the tremendous love that Jesus Christ has for us. God takes love seriously. Jesus takes love seriously. With the Father and with Jesus, love is not a game or some kind of toy as it is with all too many people today. In our present world, we throw the word "love" around so freely that we've devalued it and at times don't even know what we mean

when we use the word love. But not so with the Father. Not so with Jesus. They take love seriously.

When the Father showed His love for us by sending Jesus so that we might have eternal life, the Father was, in effect, placing an infinite value on our worth. The Father was saying that each one of us is worth as much to Him as His own Son Jesus is. That's awesome. Jesus, by giving Himself for us, was saying we are so important to Him it was worth going to the cross and going through the hell of paying for our sins to see us restored, redeemed and made whole.

When we become aware of the tremendous value God places upon us, it fills our heart with joy. Joy is the outcome of being loved. Joy is the outcome of knowing that we are worthwhile, that we matter. The awareness of God's love for us and the value He places upon us makes us feel like we're sitting on top of the world. It makes us feel like kings.

The Greek word for joy is CHARA. The joy God gives us is different from what the world calls happiness. Worldly or earthly happiness or "joy" depends upon favorable outside circumstances or a favorable external environment to sustain it and keep it going. But the interior joy that comes from God holds steady whether outward circumstances are favorable or unfavorable. (John 16:22)

The world value system has come up with the idea of a Happy Hour which is where people gather and in reality deceive themselves into thinking they are happy, but when they leave the gathering, they have to face their same old problems, loneliness, and inferiority complexes. But the joy which the Holy Spirit gives is an abiding joy that is present regardless of outward circumstances and it is a supernatural joy that heals our loneliness because of the abiding presence of Jesus in our hearts and it heals our inferiority complexes BECAUSE God reveals to us the high value He places on each of us.

Let's look at what the Word of God tells us about joy:

1. Joy comes from our salvation. The moment we accept Jesus into our heart is the moment joy from God begins in us. (Psalm 51:12)

2. Joy is the normal state of affairs in God's Kingdom. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 14:17 that the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of joy and healthy self-esteem because of God's love for us. Even when our old hurts and insecurities are deep, those in God's Kingdom undergo a progression toward inner wholeness because of JOY. The Body of Christ is a joyful kingdom.

3. Joy heals our shame and humiliations. God's love and value for us erases our shame and humiliation. God declares that through Jesus we are

justified in the Court of Heaven. Our justification erases our shame and humiliation and sorrow. In Isaiah 61:17 God declares His people as justified and acquitted through God's redemption. We know from the New Testament that this was through Jesus.

4. God Himself is joyful and Jesus is a Person of total joy. In John 17:13, Jesus prayed to the Father that the Joy He had within Himself would be given to all those who believed in Him. The Lord Jesus was not a religious sourpuss; He was the New Man filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

5. The joy of the Lord is our strength. Nehemiah 8:10 tells us the inner joy given to us by the Holy Spirit enables us to remain strong and secure in any situation. The apostle Paul tells us "nothing can separate us from the love of God." (Romans 8:39; see also Romans 8:31.) We know that the final outcome of all the circumstances of our life are guaranteed to be for our good because of God's love and power. This makes us strong through any situation in life.

Finally, I'd like to take a look at how the Bible tells us that we can sustain and nurture the joy God gives us. As with all fruit, the Fruit of Joy has to be cultivated.

1. Joy is cultivated or grown when we ask God for it. So many of God's gifts come to us through the simple act of asking, of telling God we depend on Him. (John 16:24)

2. Joy is cultivated and grown by the study of God's Word. Jesus said this in John 15:11. The Word of God is Holy Spirit inspired. This means the breath and life of God is upon the words. God communicates His life and breath and consequently His joy through His Word.

3. Joy is cultivated and grown when we praise God and assemble in His presence and worship Him. Psalm 16:11 tells us that in the presence of God there is fullness of joy in fellowship with God.

4. Joy is cultivated and grown as we seek to do God's will for our lives. Psalm 126:5 states that if we sow in tears, we'll reap in joy. If our heart wants God's will in our own life and the lives of others, and we're willing to obey even in the things that might cause us to shed tears initially in our obedience, we'll see an ultimate harvest of blessings that brings joy.

5. Joy is cultivated and grown when we use the joy we already have in times of trouble. James 1:5 tells us to consider it all joy when we encounter various trials, because the testing of our faith produces spiritual maturity. "Consider it all joy" can also be translated "throw a party." We rejoice because we know ahead of time our trial will have a happy ending. Football teams have a wild celebration in the locker room after they win a championship game, even dumping a barrel of ice water or Gator Ade on the

coach's head. They have to wait until the end of the game. We have the right to celebrate with equal gusto in the middle of a trial because God's Word and promises have already guaranteed the final victory.

6. Finally, JOY is cultivated and grown, like all the other Fruits of the Holy Spirit, when we give it to others and sow the seeds of this fruit in our lives. It turns us into a flowing fountain of joy and it also produces joy in the world around us and the harvest benefits US. It's better to work with a joyful boss and live with a joyful spouse than a non-joyful one!

I pray that the revelation of God's love will come to you and that you'll be filled with JOY when you know that God considers YOU worthwhile. YOU are important to God. YOU were worth Him giving His Son. YOU were worth everything Jesus had to give.

THE FRUIT OF PEACE

Welcome to the next of our lessons on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. We've already had an introduction to the Fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 and we've looked at the Fruits of Love and Joy. Now we'll be looking at the Fruit of Peace.

Our biblical definition of PEACE is an inner comfort of knowing that all is well. There is a total absence of fear, worry, and anxiety. There is a sense of calmness, well-being and *security*. There is an inner sense of safety and security. There is quietness of heart that leads to a quietness of mind because we know first of all, that all is well between God and ourselves and consequently, all is well in every part of our lives.

When we are at peace, there is an inner rest and there is a knowing that all problems we may ever have to face will have a favorable outcome. The guarantee that God will work all things for our good (Romans 8:28) eliminates fear, worry and anxiety and produces the certainty of security. The biblical words for peace are the Old Testament Hebrew *Shalom* and the New Testament Greek *Eirene*.

The experience of peace - the sense of safety and the sense that all is well - depends on TWO things:

1. The Person guaranteeing your peace is big enough and strong enough to enforce that peace.

2. You are in a good relationship with that Strong Person so you will be granted a position of favor with Them and receive the peace They can enforce.

ALL true peace depends on these two factors. So, peace as a Fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives depends upon God being big enough to guarantee our peace and upon us being in a favorable position with Him to receive that peace.

Let's examine these two points in the light of God's claim to give us the Fruit of Peace:

1. *Is God big enough and strong enough to enforce the peace He Guarantees?*

We see first of all the evidence of a resounding YES in creation. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 1:20 that the creative power of God is clearly seen and there is no excuse for anyone being an atheist. God Almighty's power is clearly seen in the order and balance of the created universe from the vastness of the far away galaxies right down to the microscopic details of atoms, molecules, and DNA. God's names in the Old Testament reveals His Almighty: *El Shaddai* - the strong-chested One Who is more than enough; *El Elyon* - the Most High God, possessor of all heaven and earth; and *El Olan* - the One Who never changes but remains forever the same.

Almighty God furthermore issues a challenge in His revealed Word that there is no one like Him and no one above Him. (Read Isaiah 43:11; Isaiah 45:6,7). No one has ever successfully taken up God on this challenge and no one ever will. No one will ever knock God off His throne. And He has also given His Son Jesus this same position of power and pre-eminence. (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22) God the Father and Jesus are well able to enforce the peace they guarantee.

2. *Now what about the second point? Not only must there be an Enforcer powerful enough to enforce Peace. But for us to have the benefit of that peace, we have to be in a position of harmony and favor with the Enforcer.*

This is indeed a significant point because we see that the *very first* result that Adam suffered when he originally sinned and disobeyed God was that he lost his inner peace; he became afraid and insecure. He was separated and alienated from God in his inner man.

All of mankind's religious actions have been an attempt to try to make peace once again with God. But *all* of man's attempts failed. In fact, God was the One Who had to take the initiative to reestablish peace between Himself and man. In the Old Testament Leviticus Chapter 3, God set up a temporary system where man could offer an animal sacrifice known as a Peace Offering to temporarily establish peace between God and man. But true peace would only come through the pure, holy sacrifice of the Lamb of

God, Jesus. Peace was lost when Adam sinned. Peace could only be restored if sin was taken away. John the Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.”

When God sent His Son Jesus to earth, it was God taking the initiative to reestablish true peace between Himself and mankind.

Luke 2:14 - The night Jesus was born God was offering peace and good will toward man.

Ephesians 2:14 - Through the blood of Jesus we’ve been brought near to God and Jesus is our peace.

Colossians 1:20 - Jesus made peace with God for us through the blood of His cross.

Romans 5:1 - We receive justification by faith and we have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:15 - The Gospel is called the Gospel of Peace - the Good News that man and God are at peace through Jesus Christ.

Through His sacrifice, His free giving of Himself, Jesus earned the right to give everyone who believes in Him as Lord the *very same peace* He enjoys in His relationship with the Father (John 14:27).

In the Old Testament, those who waited for the Messiah looked for someone who would do two things. The *true* Messiah would do two things: 1) He would initiate a banquet and a banquet mentality where there would always be more than enough, and 2) the *true* Messiah would inaugurate the rule of an everlasting SHALOM, or an everlasting peace.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul tells us in Romans 14:17 that the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Peace. Peace was so important to the early apostles that *every* letter of the apostles Paul, Peter and John start with the greeting “Grace and peace be to you...”

Now, as in our previous studies on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, I’ve always concluded with how each fruit must be grown or cultivated in our spiritual walk. Now I will end with how the Fruit of Peace can be cultivated.

1. *We cultivate or grow peace by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the Source of Peace.* Isaiah 26:3 states that God will keep those in perfect peace who keep their mind fixed on Him. We keep our problems in perspective and see the bigness of God and the smallness of our problems.

2. *We don’t worry, but pray and thank God He will work things out.* (Read Philippians 4:6.) We’ll have the same peace about things that God has. God never worries because He *always* has things under control.

3. *We are told to think about good things, not bad things.* (Read Philippians 4:8.) Stay away from fear. Instead of thinking about the worst thing happening, think about the best things happening!

4. *We are told to be spiritually minded.* (Romans 8:6) Simply put, this means we are to give priority to the same things that God gives priority to. We are to value highly the things God values highly and shun the things that displease God.

5. *We grow or cultivate peace as we obey God in our daily lives.* Adam lost his peace through disobedience. We nurture peace through obedience. No matter how things turn out on a given day, we can be at peace when we put our head on the pillow at night if we obeyed God and did the right thing.

6. *We are told to be a peaceful people and pursue peace with all men.* (Hebrews 12:14) This means that Christians, as followers and disciples of Jesus, our initial confrontation or meeting with everyone we encounter has the assumption that we are at peace with them. We are not suspicious; we are not calculating. We assume posture of peace with all we meet until circumstances or evidence forces us to do otherwise.

7. *We are commanded to attempt to bring peace where there is no peace.* In Matthew 5, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commanded us to be peacemakers. We do this by bringing Jesus' love and Jesus' principles of living to situations where there is no peace and we hold out or present *the possibility of peace* to those not at peace.

THE FRUIT OF PATIENCE

I welcome you to the next in our studies of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. Today, we are going to look at the fourth fruit, the Fruit of Patience.

Our Biblical definition of Patience is: "the ability to endure in God's way of doing things until the proper results happen." It contains the idea of persevering even under unfavorable circumstances for as long as necessary. The Old King James translation uses the word *longsuffering* instead of patience. The Old King James gives you a "gut feeling" of what could be involved in patience. The Greek Biblical word is *macrothumia*. Patience includes the sense of

1. slow to get angry;
2. slow to give up or quit; and
3. to go through a difficult time without grumbling or complaining.

Psychologists say that the response of living things in nature when faced with difficult or dangerous circumstances is to fight or run away - the "fight

or flight” response to stress. That’s the natural response. But through the power of the Holy Spirit within us and the indwelling of Jesus Christ the New Man within us, we do not face stressful situations with fight or flight; we respond with the *supernatural* response of patience. We’re slow to anger and we don’t give up.

Patience is probably the first and foremost outward active manifestation of God’s kind of love, *agape* love. In 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul lists patience as the first mark of God’s love. “Love is patient.” (1 Corinthians 13:4) He also lists the qualities of patience at the end of his description of love. (Read 1 Corinthians 13:7-8.) So, everything we do in love is always wrapped up in the covering of patience. If our love is like a book, our patience is like those book covers we used to put on our old school books to keep them new. Patience keeps our love fresh; and true love always manifests itself in patience.

The Fruit of Patience runs so, so contrary to our current world and the values of our society. In fact, even those of us who are Christians and follow Christ desiring to be His disciples will often admit that patience seems to be the most difficult personality trait and Fruit of the Holy Spirit. I think of the pastor I knew who once jokingly told his congregation that he was praying for God to help him develop patience. He said that he prayed, “God, I want patience and I want it *now!*”

We don’t see much patience in our society. We see just the opposite. You remember we said two aspects of patience are slowness to get angry and slowness to give up or quit. Patience is the opposite of fight or flight. But in our current society we see such things as road rage, and we see an increase in things like assault and battery and crimes of passion like manslaughter. Today everyone is quick to fight.

We also see people getting quick to give up. We have an all-time high divorce rate. Fifty percent of all marriages end up in divorce and of those who remarry, 50% get divorced a second time. People who really loved one another at the start are quick to quit when a marriage hits a rough spot instead of loving each other patiently and working to heal the relationship.

A big part of the problem is that we’ve become an “instant society” where we’ve wrongly come to expect that everything we want has to happen instantly - instant mashed potatoes, drive-through windows at fast food restaurants, etc.

A second, bigger, more serious part of the problem is that we are a society moving away from God. The Fruit of Patience is part of God’s own character and personality. Any patience that we have is rooted in God’s own patience. As we grow close to God and close to Jesus we grow in their

likeness. The problem is that we have a society that is going more and more away from God. In fact, modern society is trying to push God out of the picture as much as possible. One of the bad results we are reaping is that the life and character of God that we so badly need to energize us and give us the true wholeness we need, is being forced out as we force God out. One of these good things we see less of is the Fruit of Patience. Instead, we see an increase in all sorts of spontaneous violence and a growing lack of stable commitment to relationships.

We see in the Word of God that patience is at the very core of God's personality:

Romans 15:5 - He is the God of patience.

Exodus 34:6 - He's slow to anger.

Romans 9:22 - He delays judgement and punishment to give a chance to repent.

2 Peter 3:9 - The only reason God hasn't judged and destroyed this world already is to give people a chance to get salvation.

Romans 2:4 - God is not a "softie" toward sin, but His patience and goodness lead people to repentance when they "hit bottom."

2 Timothy 1:16 - Jesus has *perfect* (not just good) patience when bringing Paul to salvation and teaching him the ways of God after he got saved.

Colossians 1:11 - The active life of Christ within us develops patience. He makes us aware we should be patient.

Galatians 5:22 - Also, the Holy Spirit produces patience in us as we ask the Holy Spirit to control our lives. When we invite the Person of the Holy Spirit to control our emotions, He will accept our invitation and begin growing a patient spirit within us.

The Fruit of Patience is closely linked with two special characteristics that God desires to bring forth in us. Patience develops:

1. *Endurance or perseverance* - As we endure in doing things God's way until we see the proper results, even in the face of tribulation and troubles, *Romans 5:3* tells us that this develops *proven character*. As our patience is exercised, our personality develops into a solid, dependable character that God can entrust with greater responsibility.

2. *Patience develops Hope* - In the New Testament, "Hope" is always linked to the return of Jesus Christ and the final victory of the Kingdom of God. *Hope* proclaims that God will always bring about a victory and happy endings to all our battles. He'll do it at the return of His Son Jesus. Hope, as well as patience honors God by saying that we trust *His timetable* as perfect and we don't insist on our own timetable for God's plan to be worked out.

As we end our lesson today, I'd like to leave you with some valuable, vital truths from the Word of God about the value of the Fruit of Patience:

1. *Patience pleases God* - He affirms our trust in Him.
2. *Patience finds favor with God* - see 1 Peter 2:19-23. "Favor" means that God will intervene to tip the scales in our favor in a situation. Peter uses the example of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.
3. *Patience is the product of a good heart* - Luke 8:15 - A heart that wants to serve God and truly become like Jesus sees the value of patience and receives God's strength to be patient.
4. *Patience helps bring order to a crisis and prevents chaos and confusion* - Luke 21:19 - In patience possess ye your souls (mind, will, emotions). With patience we keep things under control.
5. *Patience is absolutely, totally necessary in any form of ministry. All believers are ministers, not just people in a pulpit.* 2 Timothy 4:2 states we must be patient and faithfully do what God calls us to do and we must be patient in helping others that God might put under our care. We must keep ministering God's kind of love to people until we see the proper results.
6. *Patience defeats evil* - It looks beyond present situations to the certainty of God's ultimate vindication (1 Peter 2:23).
7. *Patience is always rewarded by God* - (Read Romans 2:6,7; Romans 8:28 and Hebrews 10:36.) Patience allows God to work out His perfect plan which is always for our own good.
8. *Patience is necessary if we desire to be used by God in a place of greater responsibility* - Everyone of God's "heroes" went through God's School of Patience: Abraham, Moses, Job, etc. The developing of patience is the ONLY way to develop the proven character that God can trust with responsibility. He made them develop patience and He'll do the same to us.

THE FRUIT OF KINDNESS

Welcome to the next of our studies on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. This time, we are going to look at the fifth fruit listed in Galatians 5:22-23, the Fruit of *Kindness*. We are just at the halfway mark of our study of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Our biblical definition of kindness is: having a gentle quality of heart or spirit that does not want to hurt anyone through maliciousness and does not want to cause anyone pain because of the assertion of self or self-

centeredness. The Old King James translates the fruit as *gentleness*. The Greek word is *chrestotes*.

Kindness includes a gentleness or warmth or a genuine care that comes from the heart, a *tenderness* that shows true concern and a *compassion* that moves us to act on behalf of another person's welfare. Kindness is a quality of the spirit that tells others they are welcome and can be comfortable in our presence. 1 Corinthians 13:4 tells us that "Love is kind." We saw last time that love is patient. Patience is the first outward manifestation of love and kindness is the second manifestation of true Godly love. Kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that especially involves our whole being actively. Colossians 3:12 tells us to put on a heart of compassion and kindness. The Old King James tells us to "Put on the bowels of mercies, kindness." The fruit of kindness is more than a sentiment or a vague attitude - it's an involvement of our whole inner being, our innermost being, "the bowels of mercy and kindness" - a deep "gut feeling" of warmth and tenderness towards people.

We have to realize first and foremost with this fruit - *kindness* - that just like the other fruits, love, joy, peace and patience, it is first an expression of the character of Almighty God Himself and of Jesus Christ - and of course, the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Basically, the heart of God and the heart of Jesus Christ toward humanity is kind, warm, tender and They have put on the bowels of mercy and the gut feelings of compassion from Their heart.

The Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:3 says we have tasted the kindness of the Lord, and because of that, we should get rid of all malice and wickedness in our own hearts and be kind to each other in the same way that God is kind to us. Paul tells us the same thing in Ephesians 4:2, that by being kind to each other, we'll be walking in a way that is worthy of Jesus Christ because He conducted Himself with kindness and compassion at all times.

Although Jesus of Nazareth was known far and wide for His miracles and power, it was His warmth, tenderness and compassion that drew people to Him. Quite simply, He was a wonderful person to be around. His compassion attracted hurting people the way a magnet attracts metal. No matter how a person had sinned or made mistakes, whenever they met Jesus, they always felt they could "come back home." His compassion was like a candle in the window in the dark, stormy night of life, calling the weary traveler back home. Tax collectors, prostitutes, all kinds of sinners felt they had somebody who cared for them and wanted to heal what was broken in their lives. *The Kindness of Jesus was a perfect reflection of the Kindness of the One Who sent Him, Almighty God the Father.*

We see this kindness in Jesus' ministry. We see Jesus moved by the bowels of mercy and the deep gut feelings that drove Him to act on behalf of hurting people:

1. *Matthew 15:32* - Jesus taught the Word of God to a multitude for three days - 4000 men plus women and children. He felt compassion for them and He miraculously multiplied 7 loaves and 2 fish to feed them. He couldn't stand to see them hungry.

2. *Matthew 14:14* - Jesus saw a huge crowd, a multitude, with many sick people in it, and He felt kindness and compassion toward them and He healed their sick, because He couldn't stand to see them sick.

3. *Luke 7:13* - While traveling in a city called Nain, Jesus saw a funeral procession - a mother who had lost her only son. He had died young and she was grieving, her eyes were filled with tears, her little body was shaking and bent over with grief. The Bible says that Jesus felt compassion toward her. He couldn't stand what He saw; He had to do something. He told her, "Don't cry!" Then He raised the young man from the dead and gave him back to his mother.

4. *Mark 1:41* - A leper came to Jesus asking to be made clean - not just physically healed, but to have the social stigma of his disease removed. Jesus was moved with compassion, reached out and touched the leper, and he was immediately healed and cleansed. Jesus was even willing to make Himself appear unclean in the eyes of religious law of His day in order to exercise kindness.

So, you see, God's kindness is more than a little yellow smiley face saying "Have a Nice Day." Godly biblical kindness is moved toward compassionate action.

It's the very kind of compassionate kindness that God wants to reproduce in the life of each believer through the power of the Holy Spirit. Oh, what this world could be with the Fruit of Kindness! Oh, what a church the Body of Christ can be with the Fruit of Kindness! Let's look at the Kindness of the Almighty God seriously for a few points:

1. *Almighty God states that He cares about each and every human with the same kind of care, kindness, and compassion that a mother has for her children.* Isaiah 49:15 states that a mother will forget her own child before God will forget any one of us. Every time Jesus looks at the nail prints in His hands, He remembers He died for us as individuals. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7 Paul states that he had this same kind of care and that we should have this for others too.

2. *Almighty God has a kindness for us that includes a vulnerability - He even takes the risk of getting hurt to accomplish good in our lives.* In John

3:16 we see that both the Father and Jesus were willing to suffer hurt if that's what it took to redeem us - and so should we with others.

3. *The Kindness of God is a character quality that has to express itself in redemptive acts of love.* Godly kindness can't just stand by and watch bondage or suffering; it has to act to bring redemption. This is one of the three characteristics of God's holiness. (Maybe someday we'll do a study of the three characteristics of God's holiness in *OTV*.) One characteristic is that He *has to* act to redeem... and so should we with others.

Paul tells us in Titus 3:4-7 that it's the kindness of God that moved Him to bring us salvation.

Ephesians 2:7 tells us that it is God's kindness that has caused Him to make His own eternal life available to us through Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 6:6 that he made it a point to be kind even to his enemies.

In 2 Peter 1:7, Peter tells us to make kindness a part of our walk with God.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:2 that Christians should be kind to all other Christians and in 1 Timothy 2:24 he states we should be kind to everybody... EVERYBODY!

In closing today, I want to state that our whole purpose in our lessons on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit is not just to give a lot of information or produce interesting reading. If that's all that happens, I've failed. The real purpose is to stir something in your heart so that you'll release the personality of Jesus Christ that resides within you through the new birth. God bless you today.

THE FRUIT OF GOODNESS

In this lesson, we are going to study the sixth fruit of the Holy Spirit, the *Fruit of Goodness*. Our biblical definition of goodness is the putting of our God-given love into action resulting in works of mercy, kindness, and above all, righteousness. The Fruit of Goodness is a character quality produced in us by the Holy Spirit whereby *our spirit, mind and body are led and directed to act in a manner that consistently reflects God's own character*. In other words, our thoughts, words, and actions are consistent with and a reflection of God's own goodness. The Greek word for goodness is AGATHOSUNE.

The Apostle Paul further describes the Fruit of Goodness in 1 Corinthians 13. You might remember how the Apostle Paul writes about the detailed manifestations of AGAPE love in 1 Corinthians 13 and how his description of *agape* love parallels and defines his list of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. The specific verse in 1 Corinthians 13 that describes

goodness is verse 6 – “Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.” In other words, Goodness never approves of unrighteousness either in thought, word or action because God never approves of unrighteousness. Rather, Goodness always approves of righteousness, because God *always, always, always* approves of righteousness – or that which is true, good, pure and right.

In many of our churches, especially in Pentecostal or Charismatic churches or even some churches with Southern roots, we have a practice of people in the congregation shouting “Praise the Lord!” or “Amen!” after the preacher makes an especially true statement. We call this “getting a witness from the saints.” One of our favorites in many of our churches is when the pastor or preacher calls out “God is good!” The congregation calls back, “All the time!” Then the preacher calls out, “And all the time...” The congregation responds, “God is good!” It’s an agreed upon revealed truth that God is good. Since, by His own definition of Himself in 1 John 4:8, *God is love*, it follows logically that all His thoughts, words and actions will be good.

We see the goodness of God manifest itself in very specific ways:

1. *God cannot sin and He cannot be tempted to sin and He cannot tempt anyone to sin.* We see that in James 2:13; in Numbers 23:19, that God cannot tell a lie, and in Romans 3:4 that every man would be a liar but God be true.

2. *All of God’s ways toward man are good.* We see in Psalm 19:7-9 that His ways restore our soul, give us wisdom and joy and bring us to a place of cleanness and blessing.

3. *The Goodness of God brings satisfaction to our hearts because of His Truth and Faithfulness.* (Psalm 65:4)

4. *God’s Goodness is universal.* He’ll extend His goodness to all who will receive it. (Psalm 145:9) He’s no respecter of persons. He never has unfair favorites. (Acts 10:34) He has no unfair partiality. He shows His goodness in creation by sending rain and sunshine on all people so they can grow food and live. (Acts 14:17)

5. *God especially blesses people with His goodness when they make an effort to call on Him.* (Psalm 31:19-20)

6. *His Goodness makes Him quick to forgive sins when we come to Him with sorrow and repentance for our sins, mistakes and failure.* (Psalm 86:5)

7. *In fact, the Goodness of God chains people to repent, change and seek forgiveness of sins and new life from God.* (Romans 2:4)

8. *Every act of God reflects His goodness.* In James 2:17, we see that every good gift comes from God and, in the very beginning in Genesis, after everything God created, He looked upon it and saw that it was good.

As in all the other Fruits of the Holy Spirit, we see the Fruit of Goodness expressed perfectly through the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We read in Hebrews 1:3 that Jesus is the *exact* representation of the Almighty God the Father, and in Colossians 2:9 we read that the fullness of Deity existed in Jesus in bodily form. In John 1:1 we read that Jesus was with God and Jesus was God, or divinity, the Second Person of the Trinity, right in the beginning. Therefore, Jesus was true goodness in bodily form.

In John 10:10, Jesus is called the Good Shepherd. He's the One Who watches over us and protects us in ways that righteousness will prevail and come to pass in our life, even giving us His own righteousness as our covering.

In Acts 10:38, we read that Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and with power, and Jesus went around *doing good* and healing all who were oppressed by the devil. Jesus did acts in people's lives that brought healings, new life and freedom from the unfruitful works of death and darkness.

In Mark 10:17, a rich young man called Jesus "Good Teacher." Although this rich young man didn't *fully* understand Jesus' goodness and Jesus challenged him (v. 18, "Why do you call me good? God only is good"), nevertheless, he saw in his own imperfect way the very character and goodness of God. (Some Bible teachers mistakenly say Jesus was rejecting the title "good." Actually, he wasn't rejecting it, He was challenging the rich young man's immature understanding of the word "good." Jesus Himself always fully accepted and knew His own good character and equality with God the Father. {Philippians 2:6, John 5:18}) But even though this rich young man had an imperfect understanding of God's goodness, he recognized that goodness in Jesus.

God's desire is for us to walk in goodness, the Fruit of Goodness, and be a reflection of God the Father's and Jesus' goodness. In the book of Acts, we see one early Christian who lived that kind of life – a man named Barnabas (Acts 11:24). What a compliment God paid to Barnabas, having him remembered in the Bible as a good man. We should want to be remembered like that.

In closing this lesson, remember 1 Corinthians 13:6 – the goodness side of love. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.

The Living Bible translation says, love and goodness are never happy when *wrong* wins, but always happy when *right* wins.

1. *God calls us to live in Goodness in our Actions.* Jesus told us to let our light shine so that our good works, our good deeds would glorify our Father in Heaven and be a good reflection on Him. (Matthew 5:16) The Apostle Paul tells us to do *good to all* men when we have the opportunity. (Galatians 6:10) All our actions toward all people, whether friends or enemies, should reflect God's goodness.

2. *God calls us to live in Goodness in our Words.* The Apostle Paul tells us to use edifying words in both Ephesians 4:29 and Ephesians 5:4. In Proverbs 18:21, we read that life and death are in the power of the tongue. We either create or destroy with our words. We bring life or death with our words. God calls us to goodness in our words, so that if our words were examined or evaluated, they would always reflect the way God Himself or Jesus would talk.

3. *Finally, God calls us to live in Goodness even in our Thoughts.* In 1 Peter 3:16 we are told to have a good conscience. Paul tells us to love others with genuine love and get rid of hypocrisy. Our Lord Jesus told us to be pure of heart and that we should be good and clean in our inner persons, because out of our heart the rest of our life would flow. (Matthew 15:18-20)

THE FRUIT OF FAITH

Today we are going to study the seventh fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 – the Fruit of Faith. But before we look at faith as a fruit, we have to look at the subject of faith in general. The Greek word for faith used by the Apostle Paul and also the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke is PISTIS. The overwhelming number of times that we read the word “faith” in the new Testament, it is this Greek word PISTIS. And it has a very special application. Faith itself is the ability to reach into the invisible, spiritual world and grab hold of God's promises so that they come to pass in the visible, material world - more specifically, in the New Testament and the New and Better Covenant established by Jesus Christ, Faith is *always, always, always* in reference to obtaining what Jesus purchased for humanity through His life, suffering, death and resurrection.

Faith is the experience whereby a person appropriates or takes to himself as his own the effects and benefits of what we would call the Christ-Event. Jesus of Nazareth, at the moment of His baptism by John the Baptist, was

anointed as the Christ. From that moment on His life began to purchase and accomplish benefits for humanity. His life of obedience, His teachings, His suffering, His death, His resurrection and enthronement as Lord is known as the *Christ-Event*. The life and power He lived is known as the *Christ-Life*. Through the *Christ-Event*, He made the *Christ-Life* available to us through *faith*, through what Paul calls *pistis*. The Christ-Event made salvation, healing, perfect provision, perfect wisdom and everything that pertains to life and godliness available to each and every one of us who would take it and receive it by faith.

In our study of faith, we see that there are five basic operational principles of faith, or *pistis*:

1. Faith is the exercise of supernatural creative power.
2. All faith is a sharing in God's faith. Hebrews 11 tells us that God created the worlds by faith. He spoke and it happened.
3. Faith is based on an inner knowing that God is Almighty and Jesus Christ is Lord of creation.
4. In faith, the heart is emptied of all doubt so that visible present facts don't matter, but rather the truth of God's Word and promises are what matter. Faith is believing before seeing.
5. The operational principles of faith are that we believe in our heart the truth of God's promise and speak the reality of that promise from our mouth, and then, when necessary, act in a way consistent with our belief and speech as a *seed* of our faith – putting works to our faith.

In Ephesians 4:5, Paul tells us there is one Lord and one Faith, or *pistis*. Faith is Faith is Faith. We see in scripture that this one faith is manifested in our lives in four ways:

1. *Faith For Salvation* – (Ephesians 2:8) We are saved by grace through *faith*. Although man can know God as a Creator through nature, no man can come to a saving knowledge of God on his own. He cannot earn salvation through good works. No one can “find God,” God has to find them. The *first* work of faith in our life is when we receive the faith to believe and be born again into the Kingdom of God. *This faith is not automatically in us.* Romans 10:17 states, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Faith for salvation is made available to us when the Gospel is preached. The preaching of the Gospel opens a window of opportunity for us to exercise the initial “*pistis*” of reaching into the spirit world and taking hold of salvation and appropriating it to ourselves. This is why the preaching

and publishing of the Gospel is *so important*, because it creates this window of opportunity.

2. *There Is The “Measure of Faith”* – In Romans 12:3, we read that God gives every person something called “the measure of faith.” At the moment a person receives salvation and Jesus Christ comes to live in their heart, God places a deposit of faith in their heart that is sufficient to meet every circumstance or need that will arise as they obediently walk in God’s will or plan for them. Technically, we don’t need any more faith *for our own personal life* than the faith we get at the moment of salvation. We just have to learn to use the faith we already have by learning and growing in God’s Word and walking obediently in His plan for us.

3. *There Is The Gift of Faith* – This is one of the nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12. It is a special gift or a special allotment of the power of faith given supernaturally by the Holy Spirit to a Christian who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit and it is for the specific purpose of accomplishing some benefit for God’s word, God’s Kingdom, or for the church of Jesus Christ.

4. *Finally, we see Faith as a Fruit of the Holy Spirit, the Faith that’s listed in Galatians 5:22* – The faith that’s listed as a Fruit of the Holy Spirit is faith growing in us to use on behalf of others. It’s the Holy Spirit growing faith in us as we draw closer to Jesus to become conformed to the image of Jesus. *The Fruit of Faith doesn’t grow in us by seeking more faith; it grows automatically as we seek more of Jesus in our lives.* The faith listed by Paul in Galatians 5:22 is *clearly* the same faith that Paul lists in Galatians 5:6 – *the faith that works by love.* The Fruit of Faith is the outcome of the personality of Jesus Christ being grown in us. As a result of Christ in us, we want to use faith to help bring about God’s best in the life of others.

The Fruit of Faith is the life of Christ working in us at its best; the Fruit of Faith working by Love is the New Birth and the New Creation at its best. Faith that works by love is the New Man in Christ operating at its best, at its maximum.

So, the Fruit of Faith is when we are driven by God’s love within us to reach into the invisible realm of the spirit and grab hold of what Jesus provides for us through the Christ-life so those good things will come to pass in the lives of those we love *the same way Jesus would do.*

In closing, I want to state the five important truths about the Fruit of Faith:

1. *The Fruit of Faith or Faith that Works by Love is What God Desires to be the Most Important Characteristic of Those Who Are The New Creation.* Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 13:2 that faith to move mountains *without* love is worth *nothing* in God's eyes. Galatians 5:6 states that faith that works by love is the only thing that matters. Galatians 6:15 states that the new creation is the only thing that matters. Therefore, the new creation is synonymous with faith working by love. Jesus Christ, the New Man, was a man of faith working by love. All the new men and women in Christ are called to be people of faith working by love. Salvation is not just "fire insurance" to stay out of hell, but a new creation into a new way of living.

2. *The Fruit of Faith is What Jesus Called Great Faith.* Very often Jesus acknowledged faith. He'd say, "Your faith has made you whole." Sometimes He'd criticize His disciples for lack of faith – "O ye of little faith." But only twice in the New Testament did He acknowledge great faith. In Matthew 8, a Roman Centurion came and asked Jesus to heal his crippled servant. He risked his reputation and life by bowing to Jesus because he wanted his beloved servant healed. And in Matthew 15, a Syro-Phoenician woman pestered Jesus to heal her little daughter even though Jesus refused three times to test her. Her love made her go to any length for her daughter. Jesus said this was great faith.

3. *Jesus Christ In Living The Fruit Faith Had an Absolute Love of All Humanity.* His love reached out to all humanity, even His enemies. The Holy Spirit desires to establish this absolute love of humanity in the hearts of all Christians so that both our faith and love enriches everyone.

4. *The Fruit of Faith is the Only Power That Makes Real Changes in Human History.* Ever Since Adam's sin, this world has been under the slavery of the law of sin and death. Under this law, no matter how hard the world tries, everything ends up not mattering. "What will be will be." Galatians 4:8 says we were under the power of the phases of the moon and elements of the earth. Ephesians 6:12 says we were controlled by wicked spiritual powers. 1 Peter 1:18 states all our ways were futile. (How many modern poets complain about the absurdity and futility of life!) But faith working by love steps in and breaks the chain of futility and establishes something new that would not have existed without faith – salvation from sin, healing of disease, deliverance from addiction or poverty.

5. *The Fruit of Faith Boldly States That God and His Goodness Will Always Have the Last Word.* The resurrection of Jesus was the most important and powerful event in human history. The resurrection proved that faith working by love will always win even when outwardly all human reason and common sense says it should have lost. Because of Jesus, history

is no longer just plain, old-fashioned history. History is actually controlled by those who live by faith because of the Christ-Event and the Christ-Life. Thanks to Jesus, life is worth living.

THE FRUIT OF MEEKNESS

Today we are going to study the eighth Fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23, the Fruit of Meekness. The modern translations use the word *gentleness*; the old King James uses *meekness*. The Greek word is PRAVTES.

At first glance, because our sinful, fallen world esteems aggressiveness and the assertion of self and selfishness, there might be a tendency for us to look at meekness or gentleness as a character trait of weakness rather than strength. But that is a distorted and erroneous view when we look in detail at what the Holy Spirit uses as real strength. Searching the scripture for a Holy Spirit definition of godly meekness, we can define meekness in this way:

Meekness is the act of not striking back in revenge or anger, but instead committing a situation to God for Him to work it out for everyone's best. A person doesn't try to prove they are right or vindicate themselves through self-assertion but they trust God to vindicate them because they have been acting in obedience to God and under God's spiritual authority or command. The meek person trusts that God can and will protect His own works so a person doesn't have to do something ungodly or selfish to prove they are obeying God.

So, meekness is not weakness. Rather, it's confidence that God is strong enough to protect His work and that we never have to do wrong to prove we are right. When we look at the basic elements of meekness, we see:

1. People walking in obedience to God's will for their life.
2. People who have been challenged by someone as they walk in that obedience.
3. People who refuse to win by selfish assertion or in an aggressive manner out of character with the ways of Jesus Christ.
4. A confidence that God will do whatever defending that's necessary.

We see three outstanding examples of meekness in the Bible:

1. In the Old Testament we see Moses. In Numbers 12:3 Moses is called the meekest of all the men on the earth. When we study the life of Moses, however, we see that he didn't start out that way. In his early life, when he was an adopted Prince in Egypt, one day he saw an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew (Exodus, Chapter 2) and Moses didn't think it was right, so he killed the Egyptian and saved the Hebrew. Next day, he saw two Hebrews fighting and he told them they should stop because they were countrymen. But one asked, "Will you kill us like you killed the Egyptian? Who made you a ruler or a judge over us?" And Moses had no answer for that question because suddenly he realized he had acted in his own selfish strength to do what he thought was right. So, in fear, he fled to an exile in Midian and was a shepherd for 40 years.

But after 40 years, Almighty God spoke to Moses out of a burning bush and told Moses to go to Egypt and lead the Hebrews out of slavery. At first, Moses was reluctant because he remembered how he had failed before. But God assured him that he would be backed by God's full authority and if anyone asked Moses by what authority he was acting, he could use God's name and say, "I AM sent me."

We know that from this point on, Moses never had to defend himself again. Every time someone tried to fight or challenge him, they only made things worse for themselves. The Egyptians were defeated and even when God's own people complained about Moses' leadership in the wilderness, they opened themselves up to bad things happening to them and Moses would have to pray for God to heal them. (Read about Miriam's leprosy in Numbers 12 and the attack of the fiery serpents in Numbers 21.)

2. We see the supreme example of Godly meekness in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 11:28-30, the Lord Jesus proclaimed His own meekness. He promised us that if we came to Him, no matter what our own condition was, we would always find rest for our souls in the presence of His meekness. He would never strike back or dominate us by asserting Himself to prove us wrong. Because of His great authority and obedience to the Father, He would never have to strike at us to prove Himself right. *The rest and truth that we find in the presence of His meekness and holiness would reveal our own shortcomings and sins and bring conviction to our heart but also offer healing and forgiveness at the same moment.*

Jesus himself was the living embodiment of Godly meekness. He lived a life of perfect obedience to His Heavenly father's will. (Read John 5:19 and John 8:29.) Because He perfectly obeyed the Father, Jesus could always

have perfect confidence that God the Father would vindicate Him in the right way.

The supreme example of Jesus' meekness was when He was unjustly accused as a criminal and crucified. At Jesus' arrest, the Apostle Peter took a sword and tried to fight the soldiers. But Jesus made Peter put the sword away and He healed a person Peter had injured. In effect, He was telling Peter, "Look, we're going to win, but not through selfish human ways, but in a greater way than you can imagine because the Father will give us victory." Of course, Peter, who made the same mistake young Moses had made, fled in fear as young Moses had fled.

But later in Peter's ministry, we see in 1 Peter 2:21-24 that he had learned the lesson of meekness and heeded the meekness of Jesus in His crucifixion and His subsequent exaltation and victory as the supreme example to us. On the cross, Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him. His meekness and confidence in the Father were rewarded on Easter morning when Jesus was raised from the dead, enthroned as Lord of the Universe, and given the name above every name. (Philippians 2:5-11)

3. A third example of Godly meekness is seen in the life of the Apostle Paul when he had to discipline the Corinthian church. When the Apostle Paul found out that the church at Corinth was allowing a few of its members to practice sexual immorality and was not correcting them, Paul wrote a strong letter of correction, 1 Corinthians, warning them to make things right. Fearful of Paul, the Corinthian leaders made the correction.

Then Paul visited Corinth and he acted gently among them. Afterwards, Paul got word that some of the Corinthians were boasting that Paul wasn't "so tough" after all. But Paul wrote 2 Corinthians and in Chapter 10 tells them not to confuse his meekness with weakness. He stated he depended upon his authority with God to correct them and he didn't have to "knock them over the head" after they had corrected the situation. And furthermore, he warned the Corinthian church that unless they too start to walk in the meekness of Christ, they will eventually ruin the whole character of their church.

As always, I want to close our teaching by showing the benefits of this particular fruit and also how to develop meekness:

1. *What are the benefits of meekness?* God has a very special place of favor and vindication for those who are obedient and walk in meekness toward the world, trusting God to prove them right.

Isaiah 11:4 – God will vindicate the meek.

Psalm 76:9 – God will save and rescue the meek.

Psalm 147:6 – God will lift up the meek.

Psalm 25:9 and James 3:13 – God will teach the meek His wisdom.

Isaiah 29:9 – God will give joy to the meek who trust Him.

Isaiah 61:1 – God will give good news to the meek. He hears them and answers them.

Matthew 5:5 – Jesus promises that the meek will inherit the earth. When He returns to set up His thousand year kingdom on earth during the millennium, Jesus will place those who trusted Him in positions of honor and authority and publicly vindicate their trust in Him.

2. How can we as Christians develop the Fruit of Meekness in our lives?

A) We learn about meekness from Jesus. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus said, “Learn from Me – I am meek and humble of heart.” As with all the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, we grow in it as we grow in Jesus and seek to be conformed to His image and likeness.

B) We grow in meekness as we receive God’s Word into our hearts with meekness. (Read James 1:21.) The Word of God will show us God’s ways and God’s wisdom. God’s wisdom is for us to grow in dependence and trust upon His strength and lessen our dependence on our own human wisdom and strength. Trust in God’s strength is at the core of meekness.

C) Apply the principles of meekness in our everyday life situations by trusting God to vindicate us instead of asserting ourselves in an ego-way when we are challenged. Peter tells women in 1 Peter 3:4 that the way they live their own life will be the most powerful sermon they’ll ever preach to husbands who need conversion. Paul states in Galatians 6:1 that correction of other Christians who have fallen should always be done in meekness, not self-assertion.

Above all, we always remember that meekness is not weakness and God is able to protect His own work!

THE FRUIT OF TEMPERANCE

In this lesson we are going to conclude our study of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 as we look at the ninth fruit listed: the Fruit of Temperance, or Self-Control. The Greek word is EGKRATEIA and it means that a person is in control of their appetites, their cravings, their desires, and their passions. Specifically, the power in a person because of the

Risen Jesus Christ within enables that person to master created things and not be mastered or controlled by them.

Temperance, or Self-Control exercises the God-given strength and power of the new birth in three specific ways:

1. Temperance, or Self-Control is the God-given ability to exercise restraint in relation to any created thing. The temperate person can always say “no” to any created thing at any time they choose to say “no.”

2. Temperance, or Self-Control is the ability to use all things in a balanced way without excess, in the proper way the created thing was originally meant to be used by God. This includes things like food, hobbies or sports, and sex.

3. Temperance, or Self-Control means living a life of harmony or balance. Because one is in harmony with God, that same harmony and balance rules our total life.

Simply put, temperance, or self-control means that no created thing is ever master over us, but we are always master over created things. The life of self-control is one of the benefits or one of the “perks” of Jesus Christ being our Lord. If Jesus is Lord over our lives, then no other thing can have control or dominion over us. We read in Philippians Chapter 2 that every knee bows to the Name of Jesus. 1 John 4:4 states that greater is He (Jesus) in us than he (any thing or person) that is in the world (outside of us). In Luke 4:18, Jesus said He came to set the captive free – which means more than the opening of any spiritual, psychological or addictive prison door. Jesus didn’t come to give addicts clean needles; He came to give them clean lives through the Fruit of the Spirit of Temperance or Self-Control.

The Apostle Paul, who wrote about both the Gifts and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, summed up temperance or self-control perfectly in two scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 6:12 he stated that all things were lawful to him but he would not be mastered (or controlled) by anything. Then in 2 Corinthians 5:14 he stated that the love of Christ controls us. So, if we are going to be “addicted” to anything, it should be to the love of Christ.

Way back in the beginning of creation, when God created Adam and Eve and they were in God’s image and likeness, self-control was a normal part of their personality makeup. But sin shattered the image of God within us and man’s spirit died when his fellowship with God was broken through sin. At that point, the law of sin and death began to rule in this earth and it took human beings into captivity. The spirit, the part of us like God, died; it could not rule us anymore. Instead, our “soul,” our mind, emotions and will, and passions became the dominant part and began to control human behavior.

And, our mind, will, emotions and passions were slaves to the law of sin and death.

Jesus Himself told us in John 8:34 that everyone who sins is the slave of sin. Paul states in Romans 6:17 that we are all slaves of sin unless we are set free by the new creation of Christ living in us. Paul lists the things that the human race is enslaved to in Galatians 5:19-21 (read this passage – it’s a hefty list!). Although many are set free from these things through Christ, the human race in general still has not accepted Christ and the freedom that only He can bring, so that’s why our morning newspapers and evening TV news are filled with bad news instead of the Good News the Gospel brings.

The Apostle John in 1 John 2:16 tells us that all sins can be classified into one of three major categories: 1) *Lust of the eyes* – we covet wrongly; 2) *Lust of the flesh* – we are led by wrong desires and passions to act wrongfully or selfishly; 3) *The Pride of Life* – we are driven to assert our selfish ego over others even if it hurts them.

Although without Christ, we are slaves to the law of sin and death, the Apostle Paul tells us that if we are *in* Christ, we have been *set free* from the law of sin and death through the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2). This means that we can live a life led by the Holy Spirit and controlled by the Holy Spirit. This means that in Christ, with our spirits made alive, we have been restored to a life where we are in control of our emotions, passions and desires.

In closing our study of temperance, or self-control, I want to share some truths from scripture as I always do about the particular fruit we are studying:

2 Timothy 1:7 – God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind, or discipline and self-control. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of self-control.

2 Timothy 3:3 – As we draw closer to the return of Jesus, we’ll see less people in the world with self-control. (Read your newspaper.)

Titus 1:8 – Pastors *must* have self-control. In Chapter 2, Paul tells us old men, young men, old women, young women should have temperance and self-control in their lives.

2 Peter 1:6 – Self-control is one of the character traits that we *must* have if we are to live a godly life, a successful life, and a morally excellent life.

Philippians 4:5 – We are to let our moderation or temperance, or self-control, be known to all men. If we follow Christ, people should automatically think of us as people who are under control; we don’t “lose it.”

Proverbs 16:32 – The person who has self-control, especially over their speech, is better than someone who rules a city.

The most wonderful part of the Fruit of Temperance is that we are restored to the original place of authority God meant for us – our spirit, brought to life by the Holy Spirit, rules again. We never do anything again because we *have to*; we always do right because we *want to*. Above all, we don't obey and serve God because we have to, but now we serve God and obey Him because we want to.

I want to end our study of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit with three special thoughts:

1. In Galatians 5:23 Paul stated there is no law against the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. God allows us to exercise them as much as we want. God will never get angry and say, “Oh, you of too much love” or “You of too much faith.”

2. Remember on the hem of the ephod that wherever you had a pomegranate, you had a bell on either side. God's lesson for us is that whenever we exercise His Fruit, His Love, we also have a double portion of His power just waiting around us to go into action.

3. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is really what we call *Holy Ghost Charm School*. Parents used to send their daughters to something called charm school where they'd learn to sit, talk and act in a way that would make them refined ladies who would make excellent partners for their future husbands. The Church is known as the Bride of Christ, and we read in the Book of Revelation that at the end of history, there will be a great wedding feast for Jesus and His Church. The Fruit of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit putting the Church through Charm School so that it will be an excellent partner for all eternity for its future husband, Jesus Christ.