

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – PART 1 OF 3

Galatians 5:22-23

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the book of Galatians Paul deals with two mistakes.
 - i. Legalism: Relying upon the law for salvation.
 - ii. Libertinism: Using grace as an excuse to sin.
2. In response to libertinism, Paul made it clear that God doesn't want us to live in sin, but to pursue holiness – conformity to the character of God and obedience to the will of God (Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*).
3. In other words, God's will is that we become like Christ in our character, conduct, and convictions.
4. **1 John 2:6** "The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked."
5. All day long we should be asking, WWJD? What would Jesus do?
6. The Bible commands us to grow spiritually.
 - i. **2 Peter 3:18** "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity."
 - ii. What does it mean to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? It means becoming more like Christ.
7. So, what is Christ like?
8. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul gives us a famous list of Christlike virtues called the fruit of the Spirit.
9. **Galatians 5:22-23** "22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things."
10. This is a very important passage.
 - i. **J. I. Packer** calls this "a nine-point profile of Christlikeness"; "Christlikeness of attitude and disposition"; and "the ninefold patter of habitual reaction to life's pressures."
 - ii. This is the definition of spiritual maturity.
 - iii. **Adrian Rogers** "God prefers fruits of the spirit over religious nuts."
 - iv. **RC Sproul** "The measuring rod by which we determine our spiritual growth is most clearly seen in the fruit of the Spirit." *Growing in Holiness*, 139
 - v. These nine virtues teach us how to act like Christ; how to be spiritually mature.
 - vi. But they are also very beneficial to us. These nine traits teach us the keys to healthy relationships. These are the keys to a healthy marriage; to good relationships with your kids; with your siblings; with your church family; with coworkers; with teammates.

II. HOW TO GROW IN THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1. Rely upon the Holy Spirit.
 - i. They are called the “fruit of the Spirit” because the Holy Spirit enables us to produce them. Without the Holy Spirit’s help, you cannot live this way.
 - ii. This means you must constantly pray for God’s help to grow in Christ.
2. Develop your understanding.
 - i. The more you understand Christlike character, the easier it is to become like Christ.
 - ii. This is why we are going to go into great detail to define and describe each of the fruits of the Spirit.
3. Strive to be like Christ.
 - i. Cultivating the fruit of the Spirit is a partnership between you and God. On the one hand, it is the fruit of the Spirit. It is not possible without God’s help, and so you constantly need to ask for His help.
 - ii. On the other hand, the Bible repeatedly commands Christians to cultivate each of the virtues. It commands you to love your neighbor, to rejoice always, to pursue peace, to be patient, etc.
 - iii. This means you must strive for growth, putting all your effort into becoming like Christ. Try your best to be loving; try your best to be patient; try your best to be joyful.
 - iv. When you fall short, and you will, you need to repent. Go to God in prayer, admit your sin, ask for forgiveness, and try again.
4. Practice the spiritual disciplines.
 - i. **1 Timothy 4:7** “...train yourself in godliness.”
 - ii. Spiritual growth is not just a matter of trying, but of training.
 - iii. If you want to learn to play the piano, you can’t just sit down and immediately play like a master. You have to train for hours and hours. The same goes for growing in the fruit of the spirit.
 - iv. How do you train for spiritual growth? By practicing the spiritual disciplines, or the means of grace. These include personal Bible reading, private prayer, going to church, etc. Through the means of grace we abide in Christ (stay close), and then He helps us to produce fruit (Jn 15:5).

III. LOVE, JOY, AND PEACE

1. Love.

- i. “Love” includes loving God and loving others, but today we’re just going to focus on loving others.
- ii. We can learn how to love others by studying God’s love for us.
- iii. **Romans 5:8** “But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- iv. Six Facts About God’s Love
 1. God’s love is active. He did not merely feel love for us; He took action on our behalf by sending His Son to die for our sins.

2. God's love is unconditional. God does not only love the beautiful, the smart, the rich, the famous, or the athletic. He does not only love religious people, or people who are careful to follow His rules. He does not only love white people, or black people, or Americans, or English speakers. God loves everyone in the world, no matter who they are or what they have done (John 3:16).
 3. God's love is unending. It does not stop when we disobey Him or fail Him. If it did, then He would have never loved us in the first place. His love goes on, and on, and on.
 4. God's love is generous. The ultimate demonstration of God's love is the cross of Jesus Christ, in which God gave His only Son, and Christ gave His life, to pay for our sins.
 5. God's love is sacrificial. God did not give conveniently, He gave sacrificially, painfully, costly. Jesus left the glory of heaven, forfeited the privileges of deity, took on a human body, and suffered and died for us because of His love.
 6. God's love is beneficial. God loves us in a way that truly benefits us. He always does what is best for us.
- v. God wants us to imitate Him (Eph 5:1).
- vi. What is love?
1. Oh baby, don't hurt; don't hurt me, no more.
 2. The New Testament word for love is *agape*. It is God's kind of love.
 3. The world is very confused about love. Perhaps it is best to start with what love is not.
 - a. Agape is not the same as liking someone. We are supposed to love people even if we do not like them.
 - b. Agape is not the same as approving of someone's behavior. You can love someone and hate their sin at the same time.
 - c. Agape is not the same as agreeing with someone. You can disagree with someone and still love them.
 - d. Agape is not the same as being a doormat. The truly loving person knows how and when to say "No."
 - e. Agape is not the same as feeling good about someone. We must love people even if we don't feel like it, and even when people make us feel bad.
 - f. Agape is not love for everything. We are commanded to love everyone, not everything. In fact, we cannot fully love others unless we hate sin.
 - g. Agape does not elevate people above God. Our love for others must never cause us to compromise our love for God. Disobeying God is never the way to love others.

4. Love is doing what is best for people, not what makes them feel good. It is giving people what they need, not what they want.
 5. Think about the love of a parent. To truly love their children, parents must do what is best for their children, not what makes them feel good. Sometimes the best thing for a child is a spanking. Parents must meet the needs of their children, not their wants. Kids often want things that are not good for them, such as eating candy all day long. We must love others in the same way, doing what is best for them, and meeting their needs. This is not always what people want, or what makes them feel good. Sometimes love means speaking a hard truth, or saying “No”, or making your kids do something hard or uncomfortable.
- vii. Three Tips for Loving Others: Sometimes it is difficult to know how to show love, so God gave us three helpful tips.
1. The first tip is called imitation.
 - a. **1 John 4:8** “God is love.”
 - b. By studying and imitating how God loves people in the Bible, we can learn how to love others.
 2. The second tip is called the “Great Commandment”.
 - a. **Matthew 22:39** “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
 - b. Consider how much you love yourself. You feed and clothe and bathe yourself. You protect yourself. You educate yourself. You go to the doctor when you are sick. You give yourself a ride when you need to go somewhere. You love yourself unconditionally. You forgive yourself. That’s the degree that God wants you to love others.
 3. The third tip is called the “Golden Rule”.
 - a. **Luke 6:31** “Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.”
 - b. Treat others the way you want to be treated. In every situation, consider how you want others to treat you, and that will help you know how you should love them.

2. Joy.

- i. The apostle Paul had every reason to be sad. By the time he wrote the letter to the Philippians he had been in a Roman jail for almost four years, chained eighteen inches from a guard. He wasn’t in jail for doing anything wrong, but for doing what God called him to do – preaching about Jesus. In jail he was awaiting his fate – release, further imprisonment, or execution. Yet despite these dire circumstances, Paul was filled with joy. He wrote the following.

- ii. **Philippians 2:17 NLT** “But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.”
- iii. Paul is the perfect example of joy.
- iv. Joy is an inner happiness not dependent on outward circumstances (Expositor’s Bible Commentary).
- v. Joy is not the same as happiness. Happiness is based on your worldly circumstances. Joy is based on your spiritual circumstances. Happiness is based on what happens to you. Joy is based on what happens inside of you. Happiness is based on how people treat you. Joy is based on God’s kindness to you. Happiness disappears at the first sign of unfavorable conditions. Joy abides through every season of life. Happiness results from getting what you want. Joy results from knowing that God wants you. Happiness can be experienced by anyone. Joy is only for Christians.
- vi. The key to becoming more joyful is understanding that it is a result of our choices. If you make the right choices, you will be more joyful. If you make the wrong choices, you will lose your joy.
- vii. What choices lead to joy?
 - 1. You must choose to praise the Lord.
 - a. **Philippians 4:4** “Rejoice in the Lord always.”
 - b. The more you praise and celebrate the Lord for who He is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do, the more joyful you will be. Your emotions are heavily influenced by what you choose to think about and focus on. Focusing on God in praise and worship will help you stay joyful.
 - 2. You must choose to trust in God’s word.
 - a. **Proverbs 16:20** “... the one who trusts in the Lord will be happy.”
 - b. God’s word provides plenty of fuel for joy – if you believe it. God’s word promises that our trials are only temporary; heaven awaits us; God is in charge of everything that happens to us; God will use everything for our good; God is always with us, watching, listening, and empowering us; God loves us and sent Jesus to die for our sins; and our salvation is secure.
 - 3. Fourth, you must choose to walk closely with God.
 - a. **Psalms 16:11** “... in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures.”
 - b. The closer you are to God, the more joyful you will be. This means you must be holy and avoid all sin. You must spend much time with God in prayer and in His word. And you must

spend time worshiping and serving God with church family. As you make godly choices, you will experience God's joy.

- viii. One reason we know that joy is a choice is that it is a command.
- ix. **1 Thessalonians 5:16** "Rejoice always."
- x. If it is a command, then it must be pretty important to God. Why?
 - 1. First, when people see your joy, they will be attracted to the source of your joy – Jesus Christ. On the other hand, sadness and negativity are likely to push them away. You are a living advertisement for Christ. Does your attitude make Jesus look good or bad?
 - 2. Second, God wants you to be joyful because He loves you. When you love someone, you want them to feel good and be happy. It must hurt our Heavenly Father when we choose sadness over joy.
 - 3. Third, God wants you to be joyful because it is an act of love to those around you. No one likes to be around someone who has a sad, negative attitude all the time. A gloomy person sucks the joy and fun out of the room. It's not kind to inflict a bad attitude on people. How can you lift people up with encouragement if you are weighing them down with sadness?
 - 4. Fourth, God wants us to be joyful because it is energizing.
 - a. Nehemiah 8:10 "... the joy of the Lord is your strength."
 - b. You can accomplish far more for God when you are joyful than when you are sad.

3. Peace.

- i. Saul was the first king of Israel, but he wasn't satisfied. He was jealous of David, his popular and successful army commander. He was afraid that David was going to steal his crown. So, Saul set out to murder David. Obsessed with this one goal, he hunted David all over Israel. Twice he threw a spear at David, intending to kill him. On another occasion, he tried to trap David by sending him into an impossible battle with the Philistines. Saul ordered his son and all his servants to kill David. Despite Saul's determination to destroy David, David never sought revenge. On two occasions David had the opportunity to easily kill Saul, but he spared him. No matter how hard Saul tried to pick a fight with David, he was unsuccessful. David was committed to peacefulness.
- ii. Peacefulness is working hard to get along with others.
- iii. Consider the relationship between peace and peacefulness. Peace is relational harmony; the absence of conflict. Peacefulness is striving for relational harmony. Peace is not the same as friendship, but it is necessary for friendship. Peace is not the same as unity, but it is necessary for unity. Peacefulness is working hard for the peace that is necessary for unity and friendship. You can't always be at peace with others, but you can always be

peaceful. You can always work hard for peace. You can do everything within your power for peace. Peace isn't always possible, but you must do everything possible to be at peace with others.

- iv. **Romans 12:18** "If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
- v. Why is it important to be peaceful?
 1. It is important to be peaceful because it impacts your relationship with God. You cannot have a right relationship with God unless you strive for peace with men. God will not hear your prayers until you seek peace with the person who is angry with you, and until you forgive the person who has offended you (Mt 5:23-24; Mt 6:14-15).
 2. It is important to be peaceful in order to have good relationships with others. Oneness with your spouse, influence with your children, unity at church, and productivity at work – all of these are impossible without peace (Eph 4:3). God created us for relationships, but relationships break down without peace. Peacefulness gives you the best chance for right relationships with others.
- vi. How can we work for peace?
 1. First, when someone sins against you, you must go to them and point out the offense (Mt 18:15). Do not wait for them to approach you; you take the initiative. The purpose is not to fuss at them, but to restore the relationship.
 2. Second, if someone has something against you, then you must go and make peace (Mt 5:23-24). Even if you are not guilty, you must go. Peace has broken down and needs to be restored.
 3. Third, when people sin against you, you must forgive them (Eph 4:32). It does not matter what they have done, or how many times they have done it, you must forgive as God has forgiven you.
 4. Fourth, don't disturb the peace. Avoid behaviors that disturb the peace.
 - a. Avoid offensive behavior.
 - i. **Proverbs 17:19** "One who loves to offend loves strife; one who builds a high threshold invites injury."
 - ii. Avoid actions that anger, aggravate, hurt, frustrate, or insult others.
 - b. Avoid arguing and bickering.
 - i. **Proverbs 26:21** "As charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife."
 - c. Avoid mocking.
 - i. **Proverbs 22:10** "Drive out a mocker, and conflict goes too; then quarreling and dishonor will cease."

- ii. Avoid making fun and teasing others in a hurtful way.
- d. Avoid a hot temper.
 - i. **Proverbs 15:18** “A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but one slow to anger calms strife.”
 - ii. Don’t be so sensitive and easily offended. Develop thick skin; lighten up; learn to laugh at yourself.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. **Stephen Neill**, *Christian Holiness* “I am really expected to be so much like Jesus Christ that others will know at once and unmistakably that I am a Christian.”
2. Can people tell that you are a Christian?
3. As Christians, we are supposed to be like Christ.
4. Some people want to be unique and different. Some people want to fit in. But as Christians, we are supposed to be like Christ.