

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – PART 3

Galatians 5:22-23

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Every Biblical Christian church should be chasing the same mission. To make disciples. Jesus gave us this mission right before He ascended into Heaven.
2. **Matthew 28:18-20** 18 Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
3. This is referred to as the Great Commission. To make disciples.
4. Disciple-making can be broken down into two tasks: Evangelism and discipleship. Evangelism is persuading unbelievers to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. Discipleship is helping believers grow to maturity in Christ.
5. How do we help people become mature in Christ? We teach to become more and more like Christ.
6. What is Christ like?
7. That brings us to the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22-23, we are presented with a list of nine Christlike virtues that God wants us to cultivate in our lives. This is the third and final week in our discussion of the fruit of the Spirit. We’ve already looked at the first six: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and goodness. Today we will examine the final three so that we can grow in Christlikeness.

II. TEXT

1. **Galatians 5:22-23** “22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control.”

III. FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL

1. Faithfulness.
 - i. Jesus made several important promises to His disciples. He told them He would be killed and raised the third day (Mt 16:21). He told them He would send the Holy Spirit to them (Acts 1:4-5). He told them He was going to ascend to heaven (Jn 20:17). And in each case, Jesus was faithful. He kept His word and did what He said He would do. This is called faithfulness.
 - ii. What is faithfulness? Faithfulness is keeping your word.
 - iii. It is doing what you said you would do. Being where you said you would be. Showing up when you said you would show up. Going where you said you would go. Avoiding what you said you would avoid. To be faithful is to be trustworthy, reliable, and dependable.
 - iv. Faithfulness is not simply keeping your promises; it is keeping your word. Your word is your bond. By itself, your word is a promise. So, if you agree to

do something, even if you did not promise, it is a lie when you fail to keep your word. Your word is your commitment to a course of action that must be backed up with faithfulness.

- v. Faithfulness is a key to winning the favor of men.
 - 1. Proverbs 3:3-4 “Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you.... Then you will find favor and high regard with God and people.”
 - 2. Relationships depend on trust, and trust and faithfulness are twins. Unfaithfulness hurts. When you say you will do something, people immediately make plans and decisions that depend on your being faithful. When you fail to keep your word, it causes problems for people. If people cannot trust you, then they will distance themselves from you. But as you grow in faithfulness, people will trust you more, and they will want to depend on you more and more.
- vi. How can we grow in faithfulness?
 - 1. Stop making promises.
 - a. **Matthew 5:34-37** “But I tell you, don’t take an oath at all.... Do not swear.... But let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ mean ‘no.’ Anything more than this is from the evil one.”
 - b. **James 5:12** “Above all, my brothers and sisters, do no swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your ‘yes’ mean ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ mean ‘no,’ so that you won’t fall under judgment.”
 - c. The only reason to say “I promise” is because your word alone is untrustworthy. From now on realize that your word by itself is a promise.
 - 2. Be careful about giving your word.
 - a. Before you give your word, be sure that you are willing and able to follow through. Do not say “yes” when you have no intention of following through. Do not say “yes” just to avoid offending or disappointing someone. It is much more offensive to break your word. Do not say “yes” if you are unsure of your schedule, or if you first need to get your parent’s consent.
 - 3. Get organized.
 - a. Often the cause of unfaithfulness is disorganization – forgetting the commitments you have made or over-committing yourself. Simple tools like an alarm clock, a wrist watch, a to-do list, and a personal calendar can help you avoid forgetfulness and over-commitment.
 - 4. Apologize if you break your word.

- a. If ever you are unfaithful, be sure to give a sincere apology. Do not make excuses. Simply admit your fault, apologize, and renew your commitment to faithfulness in the future.

2. Gentleness.

- i. How do you act when you get angry? Think about how God acts. Even though He is angry with us for our sins, He never loses His temper. He never does anything mean. No matter what we do, God remains calm and kind.
- ii. Gentleness is staying calm and kind, even when you are angry.
- iii. Even if you have cultivated the grace of patience – slow to anger – you will still get angry at times. Anger is a natural human emotion. Not all anger is evil. God gets angry, and he never sins. The Bible tells us to be angry and not sin (Eph 4:26). What does it mean to be angry and not sin? Gentleness. Stay calm and kind.
- iv. **Colossians 3:12** “Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience”
- v. **Two Practical Reasons to Cultivate**
 - 1. It is attractive.
 - a. The Bible says that wives can attract their husband by cultivating a gentle and quiet spirit.
 - b. **1 Peter 3:3** “Don’t let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold and jewelry or fine clothes, but rather what is inside the heart – the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit....”
 - c. Think about it. Have you ever lost your temper and then said, “I’m glad I acted like that. That really made me look good”? Not me. Every single time I’ve lost my temper it embarrassed me. I was ashamed. It’s embarrassing because it shows weakness; it shows that you lack emotional control.
 - d. People who are harsh are unattractive. Nobody likes a person like that. Gentleness, in both men and women, is attractive.
 - 2. It is persuasive.
 - a. **Proverbs 25:15** “A ruler can be persuaded through patience and a gentle tongue can break a bone.”
 - b. Whether you are teaching, or debating, or selling, or restoring one who has fallen away, or having a conversation with your spouse, the gentle approach is the most persuasive. Yelling, screaming, threatening, getting physical – that may change a person’s outward behavior, but it doesn’t change a person’s mind and heart. And if you want to truly persuade someone over the long-haul, you have to be gentle.
- vi. How to cultivate gentleness:

1. Avoid harsh speech.
 - a. Harsh speech is loud and offensive. When you get angry, keep your voice down, and don't say anything hurtful.
 - b. **Proverbs 15:1** "A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath."
2. Do not harm or destroy.
 - a. The word "gentleness" is often used to describe a soft wind, or the way that you should hold a newborn baby (Acts 27:13; 1 Thess 2:7). When you get angry, do not harm anyone or destroy anything.
3. Go easy on those who fail.
 - a. There are two possible ways to respond to someone who fails: Harshness or gentleness. You can either come down hard on that person, or you can go easy on them.
 - b. **Galatians 6:1** "Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted."
 - c. Gentleness does not turn a blind eye to failure, but when it corrects it remains calm and kind.
4. Do not demand too much of those under your authority.
 - a. Gentleness applies to leadership. As a parent, or a pastor, or a manager, or employer, do not be overbearing. Do not demand too much. Do not be impossible to please. Do not make life miserable for those under your care.
 - b. Follow the example of Jesus.
 - c. **Mt 11:28-30 NIV** "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
5. Do not offend the people you are trying to reach.
 - a. **1 Peter 3:15-16** "But in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame."
 - b. When you are trying to win someone over to your way of thinking, avoid offending or insulting them. It is useless to win

the debate but lose the person. Gentleness and respectfulness go hand in hand.

6. Do not try to force people to do what you want.
 - a. The Bible says that a pastor must not be a bully, but gentle (1 Tim 3:3).
 - b. A bully is the opposite of gentle. A bully is someone who gets angry and forces his will on others.
 - c. We try to force people to do what we want by raising our voice, getting violent and destructive, and making threats. All these behaviors are sinful.
 - d. Be gentle. Do not force your way on people. Learn to gently lead people rather than push them.

3. Self-control.

- i. **Proverbs 25:28 (ESV)** "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls."
 1. What is a city without walls is?
 - a. Defenseless.
 - b. Unattractive.
 - c. Poor.
 - d. Foolish.
 2. That's a person without self-control.
- ii. **Charles Swindoll** "Every one of us has gotten angry and lost our temper, only to regret it. Every one of us has allowed our schedule to get so overloaded that, looking back over the week, we must admit to ourselves, if we're honest, we've not stopped to pray even once. Every one of us has eaten too much, even when we swore we wouldn't. Who hasn't fought yet again the old battle with lust or greed or materialism or anger or envy? There is an answer to this daily dilemma, a solution that is easy to identify. There is a secret to holding back. Self-control . . . that's the key . . . that's the answer."
- iii. Amnon had everything a person could desire in this world. He was the son of the great king David. As a prince he lived in extravagant wealth and luxury. He was famous. As for marriage, just about any girl in all of Israel would be thrilled to marry royalty. But there was one thing he lacked. He was in love with his half-sister, the beautiful Tamar. Unfortunately, he could not control his feelings. With the help of his wicked friend Jonadab, he pretended to be sick and asked his father to send Tamar to care for him. When she went to his house to care for him, he raped her. When Tamar's full brother, Absalom, learned about the incident, he murdered Amnon. It was Amnon's lack of self-control that ultimately led to his demise. He was unable to keep his passion in check.

- iv. What is self-control? Self-control is doing what is right, even when you don't feel like it.
- v. It goes by many different names: self-discipline, self-mastery, the moral muscle, mind over body, and impulse-control.
- vi. Self-control is about letting God's Spirit and God's word control you, rather than being controlled by your feelings, passions, impulses, and desires.
 - 1. You will often have desires, urges, and impulses that do not conform to the will of God, and that are not good for you. To be the person that God wants you to be, and to live the life that God wants you to live – the best kind of life – you must be able to resist those feelings and desires and do what is right. That's what self-control is all about.
- vii. There are two kinds of self-control. Self-control is the ability to resist the desire to do what is not good for you, and the ability to resist the desire to not do what is good for you. To be successful and happy in life, you need both.
- viii. Self-control is about freedom. Freedom is not the liberty to do whatever you want, but the strength to make yourself do what you should do, even when you don't feel like it. You are a slave to whatever controls you. If you don't develop self-control, then you will always be a slave to your mood, to your emotions, to your feelings, to your desires.
- ix. Self-control affects every area of your life.
 - 1. Self-control is the ability to save up and pay cash rather than go into debt.
 - 2. Self-control is the ability to live within your budget.
 - 3. Self-control is the ability to break a bad habit or establish a good habit.
 - 4. Self-control is the ability to wake up early for a quiet time.
 - 5. Self-control is the ability to go to church even when you'd rather stay home.
 - 6. Self-control is the ability to stick to your diet.
 - 7. Self-control is the ability to go to the gym to work out even you don't feel like it.
 - 8. Self-control is the ability to keep your mouth shut when you have nothing good to say.
 - 9. Self-control is the ability to have Bible time with the kids, even when you'd rather watch TV.
 - 10. Self-control is the ability to think about things that are pure when impure thoughts pop in your mind.
- x. **M. Scott Peck** (famous psychiatrist, author of *The Road Less Traveled*) "With total discipline we can solve all problems."
- xi. How to develop self-control:

1. Make a strong resolution. Make a firm decision. “No more smoking. No more ice cream. No more fast food, from this day forward. No more sleeping in and skipping my quiet time.”
2. Allow no exceptions. “Just this once” is the oldest lie in the book. When you give in just once, it weakens your will and leads to more compromise. No compromise.
3. When you fail, repeat steps one and two right away. Developing a new habit sometimes takes time and persistence.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Before we close our discussion of the fruit of the Spirit, let’s do a quick review of each one:
 - i. Love: 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.
 - ii. Joy: Joy is an inner happiness not dependent on outward circumstances.
 - iii. Peace: Peacefulness is working hard to get along with others.
 - iv. Patience: Patience is being slow to anger when facing delay, hardship, or wrongdoing.
 - v. Kindness: Kindness is seeking to be helpful and beneficial to others.
 - vi. Goodness: Goodness is helping the needy.
 - vii. Faithfulness: Faithfulness is keeping your word.
 - viii. Gentleness: Gentleness is staying calm and kind, even when you are angry.
 - ix. Self-control: Self-control is doing what is right, even when you don’t feel like it.
2. Try to imagine how your life would be different today if you had acted according to the fruit of the Spirit without fail for the past five years, ten years, or your lifetime.
3. Try to imagine what our country would be like if everyone behaved like this.
4. But probably as we have discussed the fruit of the Spirit you have felt some conviction. Some guilt. Some embarrassment as you realize and admit that you have not always acted this way. You often don’t act like Christ.
5. That’s where God wants you to be. He wants you to realize that you are a sinner; You need a Savior; You cannot work your way to heaven; you cannot earn your way to heaven; you are not good enough. You are a sinner.
6. Because that’s why God sent Jesus. To save sinners. God knows you are a sinner. And He still loves you. So, He sent Jesus to pay the penalty for your sins. And if you will put your faith in Christ, God will forgive you and give you eternal life.