

Passages To Ponder



Passages Of Scripture Worthy Of Frequent Meditation

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To God Be The Glory!

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Beatitudes Of The Kingdom

INTRODUCTION

1. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...
 - a. Profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness - **2 Ti 3:16**
 - b. Enabling the man of God to be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work - **2 Ti 3:17**
2. But some passages of Scripture are worthy of special note...
 - a. That reveal much of what it means to be a disciple of Christ
 - b. That lead us toward the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ
3. In this series, we shall examine eight such passages of Scripture, and in so doing...
 - a. Note the **context**
 - b. Explore the **meaning**
 - c. Suggest the **application**

[We begin as Jesus began His Sermon On The Mount, with “**Beatitudes Of The Kingdom**”, noting first...]

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE BEATITUDES

A. THE SETTING OF THE SERMON...

1. The preaching of John the Baptist - **Mt 3:1-3**
2. The preaching of Jesus Christ - **Mt 4:17,23**
-- **Their ministry had focused on “the gospel of the kingdom”**

B. THE THEME OF THE SERMON...

1. Note the repeated use of the phrase “the kingdom of heaven”
2. Sprinkled throughout the sermon - **Mt 5:3,10,19-20; 6:10,33; 7:21**
-- **The theme of the sermon is “the kingdom of heaven”**

C. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SERMON...

1. Jesus used the beatitudes to begin His sermon - **Mt 5:1-12**
2. The first and last beatitude both reference the kingdom of heaven - **Mt 5:3,10**
-- **Thus we can rightly call this passage, “the beatitudes of the kingdom”**

[The word “**beatitude**” means “**a state of supreme happiness**”. Thus Jesus describes the blessedness of those who would be citizens of the kingdom. Let’s dig deeper into...]

II. THE MEANING OF THE BEATITUDES

A. THEY DESCRIBE THE CHARACTER OF THE CITIZENS...

1. **They are poor in spirit - Mt 5:3**
 - a. Humble, as opposed to those proud in spirit
 - b. Convicted of one’s own spiritual poverty and need for salvation

2. **They mourn - Mt 5:4**
 - a. Because of their spiritual poverty, their sinfulness
 - b. Like David did after his adultery with Bathsheba - **Psa 51:3-4**
 3. **They are meek - Mt 5:5**
 - a. Gentle, easy to be entreated
 - b. Through awareness of their own spiritual poverty
 4. **They hunger and thirst for righteousness - Mt 5:6**
 - a. Looking for that which will meet their spiritual poverty
 - b. Not a half-hearted search, but persistent longing to be filled
 5. **They are merciful - Mt 5:7**
 - a. Possessing a forgiving spirit toward others
 - b. Fully aware of their own need for forgiveness
 6. **They are pure in heart - Mt 5:8**
 - a. Possessing singleness of heart
 - b. Sincere, honest, without hypocrisy
 7. **They are peacemakers - Mt 5:9**
 - a. Working to be at peace with God and man
 - b. Willing to follow in the steps of the Prince of Peace
 8. **They are persecuted for righteousness' sake - Mt 5:10-12**
 - a. Willing to suffer for the kingdom of God and Jesus' sake
 - b. Whether it involve reviling, slander, or all forms of persecution
- **Such are qualities of those who would experience the blessedness of the kingdom**

B. THEY DESCRIBE THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CITIZENS...

1. **Theirs is the kingdom of heaven - Mt 5:3**
 - a. The same as the kingdom of God - cf. **Mt 4:17, Mk 1:14-15**
 - b. The rule or reign of God, now manifested through His Son Jesus Christ
 - c. The blessedness includes having God's providential rule in one's life - e.g., **Mt 6:30-33**
2. **They shall be comforted - Mt 5:4**
 - a. For the sorrow over their spiritual poverty, and other needs
 - b. Both now, and in the future - cf. **2 Co 1:3-5; Re 21:4**
3. **They shall inherit the earth - Mt 5:5**
 - a. In one sense, even now - cf. **Mt 6:33; Mk 10:29-30**
 - b. In a future sense, with the new heavens and new earth - cf. **2 Pe 3:13; Re 21:1-3**
4. **They shall be filled - Mt 5:6**
 - a. With that righteousness they thirst after - **Ph 3:8-9**
 - b. Made possible through their faith and the blood of Christ - **Ro 1:16-17; 5:9**
5. **They shall obtain mercy - Mt 5:7**
 - a. Experiencing mercy through the blood of Christ - **Re 1:5-6**
 - b. Escaping the wrath of God to come - **Ro 5:9**
6. **They shall see God - Mt 5:8**
 - a. Presently, through their Lord Jesus Christ - **Jn 14:6-7**
 - b. In the future, face to face - **Re 21:3; 22:3-4**
7. **They shall be called sons of God - Mt 5:9**
 - a. Even now, honored to be called His sons - **1 Jn 3:1-2**
 - b. Much more so in the future - **Re 21:5-7**
8. **Theirs is the kingdom of heaven - Mt 5:10-12**
 - a. With a great reward in heaven
 - b. Honored to join the company of prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah

-- **Such is the blessedness of those who would become citizens of the kingdom**

[The Beatitudes thus describe both the **character** and **blessedness** of the citizens of the kingdom. Before we conclude our meditation on this passage, a thought or two regarding...]

III. THE APPLICATION OF THE BEATITUDES

A. THE BEATITUDES ARE NOT MULTIPLE CHOICE...

1. The characteristics of those who would be blessed are interrelated
 2. Only those who possess all the qualities will become citizens of the kingdom
 3. It is not enough...
 - a. To be poor in spirit, but not hunger and thirst for righteousness
 - b. To mourn, but not be pure in heart
 - c. To be meek, but not be peacemakers
 - d. To be persecuted, but not for righteousness' sake
- **Thus we cannot “pick and choose” those qualities we desire, leaving others aside**

B. FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE CHARACTERISTICS...

1. The blessedness will follow, as promised by Jesus
 2. Seek to develop a true sense of:
 - a. Spiritual poverty
 - b. Sorrow for sin
 - c. A willingness to be entreated
 - d. A longing for righteousness
 - e. A merciful spirit toward others
 - f. Singleness of heart in serving God
 - g. Seeking peace with God and man
 - h. Gladly bearing reproach and persecution for Christ and His kingdom
- **Prayer and the Word of God will greatly aid such development of character**

CONCLUSION

1. The **“Beatitudes Of The Kingdom”** is a wonderful passage of Scripture...
 - a. Containing the words of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. Introducing the greatest sermon ever preached
 - c. Describing the blessedness and character of those who would enter the kingdom
2. The **“Beatitudes Of The Kingdom”** is a worthy passage of Scripture...
 - a. Worthy of our prayerful meditation
 - b. Worthy of our careful application

In light of what Jesus taught about the kingdom of heaven throughout His earthly ministry, we cannot afford to neglect the **“Beatitudes Of The Kingdom.”** Are you interested in becoming a citizen of that kingdom...? - cf. **Jn 3:3-5; Ac 2:36-38**

Passages To Ponder

Defilements Of The Heart

INTRODUCTION

1. In “**Beatitudes Of The Kingdom**”, we found Jesus describing...
 - a. The **blessedness** of those who would be citizens of the kingdom
 - b. The **character** of those who would be citizens of the kingdom
2. The character of those who would enter the kingdom of heaven include...
 - a. **Poor in spirit** - humble, cognizant of their spiritual poverty
 - b. **Mourn** - especially in regards to their sinfulness
 - c. **Hunger and thirst for righteousness** - in response to their sinful condition
3. Yet many people do not appreciate the extent of their spiritual poverty and need for righteousness...
 - a. How evil their hearts can be - **Ecc 9:3**
 - b. How wicked their hearts can become - **Jer 17:9**

[Jesus, who knew the hearts of men (cf. **Mk 2:8; Re 2:23**) vividly described “**The Defilements Of The Heart**” in **Mk 7:21-23**. To fully appreciate what Jesus said, let’s first review...]

I. THE CONTEXT

A. THE CHALLENGE BY THE PHARISEES...

1. Jesus’ disciples eat with defiled hands! - **Mk 7:1-2**
2. By failing to follow the tradition of the elders to wash their hands! - **Mk 7:3-5**

B. THE RESPONSE BY JESUS...

1. **First, to the Pharisees - Mk 7:6-13**
 - a. They let traditions supplant God’s Word
 - b. Making their worship hypocritical and vain
 - c. Case in point: ‘Corban’ as an excuse not to care for parents
 - d. Rendering the Word of God of no effect through their tradition
2. **Second, to the multitude - Mk 7:14-16**
 - a. Nothing that enters from the outside defiles a man
 - b. True defilement comes from within a man
3. **Third, to His disciples - Mk 7:17-23**
 - a. Who asked Him to explain His parable
 - b. Jesus uses the intake of food to illustrate His point
 - 1) Which passes through the stomach and is eliminated
 - 2) Thus purifying all foods - cf. **1 Ti 4:3-5**
 - c. He then describes that which cause true defilement
 - 1) That which comes out of a man
 - 2) Evil which proceeds from the heart of man

[The Pharisees were guilty of emphasizing traditions of men in the form of external rituals, to the point of neglecting the Word of God. Jesus addressed the real problem: “**The Defilements Of The Heart**”...]

II. THE MEANING

A. MAN HAS A HEART PROBLEM...

1. His heart is source of much evil - **Mk 7:21-22**
2. It is this evil that defiles him - **Mk 7:23**

B. EVIL THOUGHTS LEAD TO TRUE DEFILEMENT...

1. **Evil thoughts**
 - a. The general term translated 'evil thoughts' precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow - **Bible Knowledge Commentary**
 - b. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions - **ibid.**
2. **Adulteries** - illicit sexual relations by a married person
3. **Fornications** - illicit sexual activities of various kinds (including pre-marital sex, homosexuality)
4. **Murders** - taking life intentionally
5. **Thefts** - stealing (which includes shoplifting, pilfering)
6. **Covetousness** - greediness, which makes one an idolater - **Ep 5:5; Co 3:5**
7. **Wickedness** - evil acts done with malice
8. **Deceit** - acting with guile and intent to defraud
9. **Lewdness** - unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior
10. **An evil eye** - a Hebrew idiom for stinginess - **Pro 28:22**
11. **Blasphemy** - slander, verbal abuse against God or man
12. **Pride** - arrogance, boastful opinion of one's self, often with disdain toward others
13. **Foolishness** - lack of common sense, with moral and spiritual insensitivity

[Implied is that human traditions with their external rituals do not seriously address **the real problem** man faces: defilement caused by sinful hearts! Accordingly, let's make...]

III. THE APPLICATION

A. WE MUST TAKE THE PROBLEM SERIOUSLY...

1. Mankind has always had a heart problem - **Gen 6:5; 8:21**
2. Thus we are all sinners - **Ja 1:14-15; Ro 3:23**
3. As such we are enslaved to the power of sin - **Jn 8:34; cf. Ro 7:18-20**
4. Unless the problem of sin is adequately addressed...
 - a. We will die spiritually - **Ro 6:23**
 - b. We will die eternally - **Re 21:8**

B. THE SOLUTION IS FOUND IN THE WORD OF GOD...

1. It contains the power to save our souls - **Ja 1:21**
2. It points us to Jesus, who offers true freedom from sin - **Jn 8:31-32,36**
3. Jesus offers freedom from:
 - a. The **guilt of sin**, through His blood - **Mt 26:28; Ep 1:7**
 - b. The **power of sin**, through His Spirit (Holy Spirit) - **Ro 8:9,12-13; Ep 3:16**

C. JESUS OFFERS THE SOLUTION TO SIN...

1. **Initially in baptism:**

- a. Where we receive the **remission of sins** - **Ac 2:38**; cf. **22:16**
- b. Where we receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit** - **Ac 2:38**; cf. **Ti 3:5-7**
- 2. **Continually through prayer:**
 - a. When we confess our sins, there is **forgiveness through His blood** - **1 Jn 1:9**
 - b. When we ask for help, there is **strength from the indwelling Spirit** - **Ep 3:16,20-21**

CONCLUSION

1. Do we appreciate **the problem of sin** in our lives...?
 - a. How it proceeds from a spiritually sick heart?
 - b. How easily we become enslaved to sin?
 - c. How devastating it is on our relationships with God and man?
2. Do we appreciate **the solution to sin** that Jesus offers...?
 - a. The shedding of His blood to atone for our sins?
 - b. The sending of His Spirit to empower our fight against sin?
3. The **“Defilements Of The Heart”** is a passage worthy of careful meditation...
 - a. Reminding us of the seriousness of our heart problem
 - b. Reminding us of the solution to be found in Him who knows our heart

Are we willing to follow the prescription of the “Great Physician”...? - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; 1 Jn 1:9**

Passages To Ponder

Qualities Of Love

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series, we are considering passages worthy of careful reflection...
 - a. Such as the **“Beatitudes Of The Kingdom” - Mt 5:3-12**
 - b. Such as the **“Defilements Of The Heart” - Mk 7:21-23**
2. Another such passage is **1 Co 13:1-13...**
 - a. Where we find Paul describing what is love
 - b. Found in a discussion of spiritual gifts

[What is love? Let’s first review the context, in which Paul is addressing a problem at Corinth involving spiritual gifts...]

I. THE CONTEXT

A. THE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS...

1. They all proceed from the same Spirit - **1 Co 12:1-11**
2. They all benefit the body of Christ - **1 Co 12:12-31**
- **Thus Paul stressed the value of every spiritual gift**

B. THE LIMITATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS...

1. Without love they are meaningless - **1 Co 13:1-3**
2. They will eventually cease - **1 Co 13:8-13**
- **Thus Paul illustrated the need for more than spiritual gifts**

C. THE EXERCISE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS...

1. For the purpose of edification - **1 Co 14:1-26**
2. Done decently and in order - **1 Co 14:27-40**
- **Thus Paul instructed them in the proper use of spiritual gifts**

[It is in this context of spiritual gifts that we find Paul’s description of love. Let’s now examine...]

II. THE MEANING

A. THE NECESSITY OF LOVE...

1. Necessary in the exercise of spiritual gifts - **1 Co 13:1-2**
2. Necessary in the exercise of great sacrifice - **1 Co 13:3**
- **With the use of hyperbole, Paul illustrates the necessity of love**

B. THE QUALITIES OF LOVE...

1. **Suffers longs** - endures slights and wrongs patiently and long, like God Himself (**Psa 103:8**)
- **B. W. Johnson**
2. **Is kind** - obliging, willing to help or assist - **Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
3. **Does not envy** - is not jealous of what others have or have become - **Pulpit Commentary**

4. **Does not parade itself** - does not brag or boast of one's abilities or possessions - **Barnes**
 5. **Is not puffed up** - swelled with pride and elated with a vain conceit of himself - **Gill**
 6. **Does not behave rudely** - behave in an ugly, indecent, unseemly or unbecoming manner (cf. **1 Pe 3:8**, "be courteous") - **The Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
 7. **Does not seek its own** - does not seek its own happiness to the injury of others (cf. **1 Co 10:24,33**) - **Barnes**
 8. **Is not provoked** - does not fly into a rage, but keeps the temper under control - **B.W. Johnson**
 9. **Thinks no evil** - puts the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others; not malicious, censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute improper motives to others - **Barnes**
 10. **Does not rejoice in iniquity** - Does not rejoice over the "vices" of other people; does not take delight when they are guilty of crime, or when, in any manner, they fall into sin. It does not find pleasure in hearing others accused of sin, and in having it proved that they committed it. - **ibid.**
 11. **Rejoices in the truth** - lit., "with the truth"; truth is personified as is love, and when love sees truth manifested in the lives of others, love greatly rejoices along with it, cf. **2 Jn 4; 3 Jn 3-4**
 12. **Bears all things** - lit., "covers, protects"; but as used by Paul elsewhere, it can also mean to endure, suffer (cf. **1 Co 9:12; 1 Th 3:1,5**); thus in regards to the sins or failings of others, there is willingness to bear with them patiently - **Barnes**
 13. **Believes all things** - in regard to the conduct of others, there is a disposition to put the best construction on it; to believe that they may be actuated by good motives, and that they intend no injury; and that there is a willingness to suppose, as far as can be, that what is done is done consistently with friendship, good feeling, and virtue. Love produces this, because it rejoices in the happiness and virtue of others, and will not believe the contrary except on irrefragable evidence. - **ibid.**
 14. **Hopes all things** - that all will turn out well. This must also refer to the conduct of others; and it means, that however dark may be appearances; how much so ever there may be to produce the fear that others are actuated by improper motives or are bad people, yet that there is a "hope" that matters may be explained and made clear; that the difficulties may be made to vanish; and that the conduct of others may be made to "appear" to be fair and pure. Love will "hold on to this hope" until all possibility of such a result has vanished and it is compelled to believe that the conduct is not susceptible of a fair explanation. This hope will extend to "all things" - to words and actions, and plans; to public and to private contact; to what is said and done in our own presence, and to what is said and done in our absence. Love will do this, because it delights in the virtue and happiness of others, and will not credit anything to the contrary unless compelled to do so. - **ibid.**
 15. **Endures all things** - bears up under, sustains, and does not complain. Bears up under all persecutions at the hand of man; all efforts to injure the person, property, or reputation... The connection requires us to understand it principally of our treatment at the hands of our fellowmen. - **ibid.**
- **We see that love is best defined by what it does or does not do**

C. THE PERMANENCY OF LOVE...

1. **Love never fails**
 - a. To fall away, to fail; to be without effect, to cease to be in existence
 - 1) While other endowments of the Holy Spirit must soon cease and be valueless, love would abide, and would always exist

- 2) The “argument” is, that we ought to seek that which is of enduring value; and that, therefore, love should be preferred to those endowments of the Spirit on which so high a value had been set by the Corinthians. - **Barnes**
 - b. Spiritual gifts (e.g., prophecies, tongues, and knowledge) will fail, cease, vanish away - **1 Co 13:8-12**
 - 1) Such gifts were to reveal and confirm the Word - cf. **Mk 16:19-20; He 2:3-4**
 - 2) Once the Word was completely revealed and confirmed, the need for such gifts ceased - cf. **2 Ti 3:16-17; 2 Pe 1:3; Ju 3**
 2. **Love abides**
 - a. **Along with faith and hope - 1 Co 13:13a**
 - 1) Spiritual gifts like prophecies, tongues, and knowledge would cease
 - 2) Yet the virtues of faith, hope and love would “abide” (Grk., **meno** - remain, dwell, continue, tarry, endure)
 - 3) Implying a period of time between the cessation of spiritual gifts and the fulfillment of faith and hope
 - b. **Greater than faith and hope - 1 Co 13:13b**
 - 1) We now walk by faith, not by sight - **2 Co 5:7**
 - 2) We now hope for what is unseen - **Ro 8:24-25**
 - 3) When Christ comes, the need for faith and hope will be no more!
 - a) We will then walk by sight, not faith!
 - b) We will see that for which we eagerly await, and no longer need hope!
 - 4) Yet throughout eternity, in the presence of Christ, “love never fails!”
- **Thus we see the supremacy of love: over spiritual gifts, even over faith and hope!**

[Now for a thought or two regarding...]

III. THE APPLICATION

A. WE MUST DESIRE LOVE...

1. Without love, any ability we have is of little value (such as teaching, preaching, etc.)
 2. Without love, any knowledge we obtain will only hurt us - cf. **1 Co 8:1**
 3. Without love, any service rendered is not pleasing to God - cf. **Re 2:1-5**
- **This makes clear why we should want to love**

B. WE MUST DEVELOP LOVE...

1. Let God teach us - cf. **1 Th 4:9-10**
 2. By sending His Son, the Father teaches what it means to love - **1 Jn 4:9-11**
 3. By coming to this earth, the Son teaches what it means to love - **1 Jn 3:16**
- **This makes clear how we can learn to love as we should**

C. WE MUST DEMONSTRATE LOVE...

1. It's how we show the world we are truly Christ's disciples - **Jn 13:34-35**
 2. It's how we show the world there is a God, that He truly loves them - **Jn 17:20-23**
- **This makes clear why we need to love**

CONCLUSION

1. The heart of man is capable of great things...
 - a. **Great evil**, as seen from the “**Defilements Of The Heart**” - **Mk 7:21-23**

b. **Great love**, as seen from the “**Qualities Of Love**” - **1 Co 13:1-13**

2. What fruit will our hearts produce...?
 - a. Will our hearts be a curse or blessing to those around us?
 - b. It all depends on whether we will let Jesus change us

By pondering a passage like **1 Co 13:1-13**, perhaps it will encourage us to allow Jesus to transform us through **the benefits of His sacrificial blood poured out on the cross** and **the blessings of His sanctifying Spirit poured out on the day of Pentecost...** - cf. **Ti 3:4-7**

Passages To Ponder

Works Of The Flesh

INTRODUCTION

1. So far in this series we have briefly examined...
 - a. “Beatitudes Of The Kingdom” - **Mt 5:3-12**
 - b. “Defilements Of The Heart” - **Mk 7:21-23**
 - c. “Qualities Of Love” - **1 Co 13:1-13**
2. Briefly summarizing each passage, we have considered...
 - a. The character and blessedness of those who would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. The source of evil and sin that defiles mankind
 - c. The kind of love that is possible in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ
3. Whether our hearts will be the source of much good or evil depends on...
 - a. The outcome of a battle within each of us
 - b. Whether we succumb to the flesh or follow the leading of the Spirit

[Our next two “**Passages To Ponder**” deal with this inner conflict. In this study we will first examine the “**Works of The Flesh**” as described in **Ga 5:19-21**. Beginning with...]

I. THE CONTEXT

A. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH...

1. They are in opposition against each other - **Ga 5:16-17**
 2. There is certainly a war between the flesh and human spirit - **1 Pe 2:11; Ro 7:23**
 3. Yet the context suggests that it is the Holy Spirit under consideration
 - a. Note Paul’s earlier references to the Spirit - **Ga 3:2-3; 4:6; 5:5**
 - b. Paul’s later argument (“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”) makes no sense if the human spirit is meant - **Ga 5:25**
 - c. Reaping everlasting life “of the Spirit” must also refer to the Holy Spirit - **Ga 6:8**
- **While the flesh pulls us in one direction, the Spirit would have us go in another!**

B. CHRISTIANS MUST SERVE ONE OR THE OTHER...

1. If we follow the lusts of the flesh, we can not do the will of the Spirit - **Ga 5:17b**
 2. Following the flesh will enslave, placing one in a dilemma - cf. **Ro 6:12-13,16; 7:14-23**
 3. But with the help of the Spirit, our spirits can overcome the flesh! - cf. **Ro 8:12-14**
 4. If led by the Spirit, we are not under the (condemnation of) law - **Ga 5:18**
- **We must walk in the Spirit, otherwise we will succumb to the lusts of the flesh**

[Key to winning any battle is knowing the adversary. What are the lusts of the flesh waging war against both our spirits and the Holy Spirit? They include the “**Works Of The Flesh**” found in **Ga 5:19-21...**]

II. THE MEANING

A. THERE ARE SINS OF MORAL IMPURITY...

1. **Adultery** - not found in the oldest manuscripts, but certainly included in the next sin
 2. **Fornication** - any sexual immorality (adultery, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, etc.)
 3. **Uncleanness** - moral impurity, especially with a repulsive quality
 4. **Lewdness** - sexual excess, shameless behavior in both dress and conduct
- **These sins are perversions of the sexual instinct (Barclay)**

B. THERE ARE SINS OF IDOLATRY AND SORCERY...

1. **Idolatry** - the adoration of images or other things in place of God - cf. **Ep 5:5; Co 3:5**
 2. **Sorcery** - not just witchcraft, but the use of drugs to manipulate self or others
- **These sins are perversions of worship and drugs (Barclay)**

C. THERE ARE SINS VIOLATING THE LAW OF LOVE...

1. **Hatred** - enmity or hostility toward others that builds barriers
 2. **Contentions** - strife, quarreling, discord, often the result of hatred and enmity
 3. **Jealousies** - zealous envy that often casts grudging looks
 4. **Outbursts of wrath** - the blaze of temper which flares into violent words and deeds
 5. **Selfish ambitions** - self-centered attitude that often leads to the next two sins
 6. **Dissensions** - literally standing apart, resulting in division
 7. **Heresies** - factions created as a result of dissension
 8. **Envy** - like jealousy, but that which expresses itself in hostile deeds
- **These sins are perversions of noble ambition, righteous indignation, and devotion to principle (Barclay)**

D. THERE ARE SINS OF INTEMPERANCE...

1. **Murders** - not found in the oldest manuscripts
 2. **Drunkenness** - intoxication due to alcohol
 3. **Revelries** - feasts and drinking parties in which there is excess
 4. **And the like** - indicating the list is not exhaustive, but illustrative
- **These sins are perversions of the joy of social fellowship (Barclay)**

[A more detailed treatment of these sins can be found in my study, [The Flesh And The Spirit](#). But with this quick review of the “**Works Of The Flesh**” on our mind, let’s make...]

III. THE APPLICATION

A. WE MUST ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS...

1. They wage war against the soul - **1 Pe 2:12**
 2. We’ve lived long enough under their influence - **1 Pe 4:1-3**
 3. We must not make provision for the lusts of the flesh - **Ro 13:12-14**
 4. Such conduct will keep us out of the kingdom of God! - **1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:21**
- **The works of the flesh endanger our souls and threaten our eternal salvation!**

B. WE MUST WALK IN THE SPIRIT...

1. Only then will we not fulfill the lust of the flesh - **Ga 5:16**
2. **By setting our minds on the things of the Spirit**
 - a. That is what ensures our living according to the Spirit - **Ro 8:5**
 - b. The things of the Spirit would be that which the Spirit has revealed
 - c. I.e., the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit - cf. **Ep 6:17**
 - d. Just as Jesus used the Word to resist temptation - cf. **Mt 4:4,7,10**

3. **By praying for the strength of the Spirit**
 - a. Whose strength enables us to put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**
 - b. Whose strength can be accessed through prayer - cf. **Ep 3:16,20-21**
- **We will walk in the Spirit to the degree we follow the Word and persist in prayer!**

CONCLUSION

1. The **“Works Of The Flesh”** should be taken seriously...
 - a. They endanger our relationships with others
 - b. They endanger our souls’ eternal salvation!
2. By frequent meditation on the **“Works Of The Flesh”**...
 - a. We will be reminded of what those sins are
 - b. We will be more likely to make the effort to put them aside

But winning the battle does not involve simply putting aside the **“Works Of The Flesh”**. We must also produce the **“Fruit Of The Spirit”** (**Ga 5:22-23**) which we will examine in our next study...

Passages To Ponder

Fruit Of The Spirit

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue this series, let's review what we have covered so far...
 - a. "Beatitudes Of The Kingdom" - **Mt 5:3-12**
 - b. "Defilements Of The Heart" - **Mk 7:21-23**
 - c. "Qualities Of Love" - **1 Co 13:1-13**
 - d. "Works Of The Flesh" - **Ga 5:19-21**

2. Briefly summarizing each passage, we have considered...
 - a. The character and blessedness of those who would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. The source of evil and sin that defiles mankind
 - c. The kind of love that is possible in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ
 - d. The works of the flesh that can prevent one from entering the kingdom of God

[After describing the works of the flesh in **Ga 5:19-21**, the apostle Paul then described the "**Fruit Of The Spirit**" which we will now examine as a passage to ponder. Following the format of previous studies, we begin with...]

I. THE CONTEXT

A. THE FLESH LUSTS AGAINST THE SPIRIT...

1. They are in opposition against each other - **Ga 5:16-17**
2. If we follow the lusts of the flesh, we can not do the will of the Spirit - **Ga 5:17b**
 -- **The flesh pulls in one direction, but the Spirit would have us go in another!**

B. CHRISTIANS MUST SERVE THE SPIRIT...

1. If led by the Spirit, we are not under the law (its condemnation) - **Ga 5:18,23b**
2. As Christians, we have crucified the flesh (in baptism) - **Ga 5:24**; cf. **Ro 6:3-6,11-12**
3. Since we were made alive by the Spirit (again, in baptism), it is only fitting that we walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:25**; cf. **Ti 3:5**
 -- **We must walk in the Spirit, thereby producing the fruit of the Spirit**

[When a person walks in the Spirit, they will show evidence of such by the fruit that is born. What that fruit is we will now examine...]

II. THE MEANING

A. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT INCLUDES...

1. **Love** - active good will, best exemplified by God and Jesus - **1 Th 4:9**; **1 Jn 3:16**; **4:10**
2. **Joy** - gladness, delight, especially in response to God's grace - **Ph 4:4**; **Jn 15:11**
3. **Peace** - harmony, concord with God, man, and self, made possible by the Prince of Peace - **Ro 5:1**; **Ep 2:14-17**; **Ph 4:6-7**
 -- **Virtues that find their source in God (Bible Knowledge Commentary)**

B. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT INCORPORATES...

4. **Longsuffering** - patience, self-restraint in the face of provocation - e.g., **Lk 23:34; Ac 7:60**
 5. **Kindness** - sweetness of temper that places others at ease, born of mercy - **Ep 4:31-32**
 6. **Goodness** - benevolence, kindness in action - **Ga 6:10; e.g., Ac 9:36,39**
- **Virtues that reach out to others (Bible Knowledge Commentary)**

C. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT INTEGRATES...

7. **Faithfulness** - the virtue of reliability; dependable, trustworthy - cf. **Lk 16:10-12**
 8. **Gentleness** - kind treatment of others, born of humility - cf. **Ga 6:1; 2 Ti 2:24-25**
 9. **Self-control** - ability to hold oneself in; mastering desires and passions, assisted by the Spirit Himself - cf. **Ro 8:11-14**
- **Virtues that guide our general conduct (Bible Knowledge Commentary)**

[A more detailed treatment of these virtues can be found in my study, [The Flesh And The Spirit](#). But with this review of the “Fruit Of The Spirit” on our mind, let’s make...]

III. THE APPLICATION

A. NOTE THAT “FRUIT” IS SINGULAR...

1. It is the “fruit of the Spirit”, not the “fruits of the Spirit”
 2. “...indicating that these qualities constitute a unity, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit.” - **Bible Knowledge Commentary**
 3. “The Holy Spirit produces one kind of fruit, that is, Christlikeness. All the virtues now listed describe the life of the child of God.” - **Believer’s Bible Commentary**
- **One who truly walks in the Spirit will produce all nine virtues, not a partial set**

B. NOTE THAT “FRUIT” IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT...

1. It comes by walking in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16**
 2. It comes by being led by the Spirit - **Ga 5:18**
 3. It comes from those who live in the Spirit - **Ga 5:25**
- **Without the aid of the Spirit, we cannot bear this fruit!**

C. NOTE HOW ONE RECEIVES THE AID OF THE SPIRIT...

1. First, one must be born again of water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:5**
 - a. I.e., baptism, for thereby one receives the gift of the Spirit - **Ac 2:38-39**
 - b. I.e., baptism, for therein one experiences a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit - **Ti 3:5**
 2. Then one must walk in the Spirit
 - a. By setting our minds on the things of the Spirit
 - 1) That is what ensures our living according to the Spirit - **Ro 8:5**
 - 2) The things of the Spirit would be that which the Spirit has revealed
 - 3) I.e., the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit - cf. **Ep 6:17**
 - b. By praying for the strength of the Spirit
 - 1) Whose strength enables us to put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**
 - 2) Whose strength can be accessed through prayer - cf. **Ep 3:16,20-21**
- **We are aided by the Spirit to the degree we follow the Word and persist in prayer!**

CONCLUSION

1. Which would you rather have...?
 - a. A life **infused** with love, joy, and peace, by the Spirit of Almighty God?
 - b. A life **inflicted** by hatred, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath, due to fleshly lusts?

2. Which would you rather have...?
 - a. A life **developing** longsuffering, kindness, and goodness, with the help of the Holy Spirit?
 - b. A life **devastated** by contentions, envy, and selfish ambitions, due to fleshly lusts?

3. Which would you rather have...?
 - a. A life **exuding** faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, with the aid of the Spirit?
 - b. A life **exhausted** by jealousies, contentions, and immorality, due to fleshly lusts?

Jesus gives us a choice. Through **His blood** He can cleanse us of sin, and through **the Spirit** He can empower us to live holy and righteous lives. Are we willing to accept His gracious choice...?

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” - Ga 5:16

Passages To Ponder

Unity Of The Spirit

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue, we once again review what we have covered so far...
 - a. “Beatitudes Of The Kingdom” - **Mt 5:3-12**
 - b. “Defilements Of The Heart” - **Mk 7:21-23**
 - c. “Qualities Of Love” - **1 Co 13:1-13**
 - d. “Works Of The Flesh” - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - e. “Fruit Of The Spirit” - **Ga 5:22-23**

2. To briefly summarize, we have considered...
 - a. The character and blessedness of those who would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. The source of evil and sin that defiles mankind
 - c. The kind of love that is possible in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ
 - d. The works of the flesh that can prevent one from entering the kingdom of God
 - e. The fruit born in the life of those led by the Spirit of God

[Our next passage to ponder describes the “**Unity Of The Spirit**” (**Ep 4:4-6**). We start by noticing...]

I. THE CONTEXT

A. WALK WORTHY OF OUR CALLING...

1. Paul urges us to walk in a manner worthy of their calling - **Ep 4:1**
2. We were called to obtain the glory of Christ, by the gospel of Christ - **2 Th 2:13-14**
3. We should therefore walk (conduct ourselves) accordingly - **1 Th 2:12**
- **We have been called by God, our walk should reflect our calling!**

B. WALK WITH CHRIST-LIKE QUALITIES...

1. With all lowliness and gentleness - **Ep 4:2a**
2. With longsuffering and bearing with one another in love - **Ep 4:2b**
- **We have been called to follow Christ, our walk should reflect that fact!**

C. WALK WITH DILIGENCE TO KEEP UNITY...

1. Endeavoring to keep the “unity of the Spirit” - **Ep 4:3a**
2. To do so “in the bond of peace” - **Ep 4:3b**
3. Jesus prayed for unity among His followers - cf. **Jn 17:20-23**
4. Jesus died to make peace, and to make us one in Him - **Ep 2:13-18**
- **We have been called to be one in Christ, and to be diligent in preserving that unity!**

[What that unity involves is now described in our passage to ponder, **verses 4-6...**]

II. THE MEANING

A. THERE IS ONE BODY...

1. The body of Christ, the church - **Ep 1:22-23**

2. Paul speaks here of the church in the universal sense, as did the Lord - cf. **Mt 16:18**
 - a. The body of saved believers throughout the world
 - b. Of which Christ is the head, and savior of the body - **Ep 5:23**
 3. There may be many local churches (congregations), but only one universal church, with one head - Jesus Christ!
- **One is added to this body when they obey the gospel of Christ - Ac 2:38-41,47**

B. THERE IS ONE SPIRIT...

1. The Holy Spirit, already described in this epistle:
 - a. As the Holy Spirit of promise - **Ep 1:13**
 - b. As the guarantee of our inheritance - **Ep 1:14**
 2. It is through this Spirit:
 - a. Both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father - **Ep 2:18**
 - b. God habitats those who are being built a holy temple - **Ep 2:21-22**
 3. It is by this Spirit:
 - a. The mystery of Christ was revealed to the apostles and prophets - **Ep 3:5**
 - b. God strengthens the inner man with might - **Ep 3:16; cf. Ro 8:12-13**
- **One receives this Spirit when they obey the gospel of Christ - Ac 2:38; 5:32; Ga 4:6**

C. THERE IS ONE HOPE...

1. The resurrection of dead, as stressed elsewhere by Paul:
 - a. In his defense speeches - **Ac 23:6; 24:15**
 - b. In his epistles - **Ro 8:23-24; 1 Co 15:19-23; Ph 3:10-11,20-21**
 2. Which also includes such concepts as:
 - a. Salvation - **1 Th 5:8**
 - b. Eternal life - **Ti 1:2; 3:7**
- **One has this hope for those who die in Christ - 1 Th 4:13-18**

D. THERE IS ONE LORD...

1. Jesus, of course - **1 Co 8:5-6**
 2. Whom God has made "both Lord and Christ" - **Ac 2:36**
- **One has Jesus as their Lord when they do what He says - Lk 6:46**

E. THERE IS ONE FAITH...

1. The faith, which Jude says was "once for all delivered to the saints" - **Ju 3**
 2. That "pattern of sound words" which Paul taught Timothy - **2 Ti 1:13**
 3. We find this pattern of sound words in the pages of the New Testament
- **One has this faith if they continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine - Ac 2:42**

F. THERE IS ONE BAPTISM...

1. The baptism:
 - a. Commanded by Jesus - **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. Proclaimed and commanded by His apostles - **Ac 2:38; 10:48**
 - c. By which those who submit to are added to the Lord's body, the church - **Ac 2:42,47**
 2. The baptism in which a penitent believer:
 - a. Is immersed in water - **Ac 8:36; 10:47-48; cf. Ro 6:3-4; Co 2:12**
 - b. For the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - c. Is born again of both water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5**
- **One receives this baptism when they respond to the gospel - Mk 16:15-16; Ac 8:35-38**

G. THERE IS ONE GOD...

1. The Father who together with the Son and Holy Spirit make up the Godhead - cf. **Mt 28:19**
 2. Note that Paul emphasizes:
 - a. His personality (“Father of all”)
 - b. His transcendence and omnipresence (“above all, and through all, and in you all”)
- **One has access to the Father only through Jesus Christ - Jn 14:6**

[These seven “ones” constitute the “Unity Of The Spirit” that Christ has attained for us, and that we must endeavor to maintain. In regards to our responsibility, let’s now consider...]

III. THE APPLICATION

A. OUR DUTY IS TO MAINTAIN UNITY...

1. Note that the unity of the Spirit has been **attained**
 - a. The one **Spirit**, one **Lord**, and one **God** have always existed
 - b. The one **body** was created through the work of Christ on the cross - **Ep 2:16**
 - c. The one **hope** was made certain by virtue of Christ’s resurrection - **1 Pe 1:3**
 - d. The one **faith** has been revealed once for all - **Ju 3**
 - e. The one **baptism** has been commanded for all - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16**
 2. Our duty is to **maintain** that unity
 - a. By walking in a worthy manner - **Ep 4:1-3**
 - b. By speaking the same thing, with the same mind and judgment - **1 Co 1:10-13**
 - c. By contending earnestly for the faith revealed once for all - **Ju 3**
- **We maintain unity by worthy conduct and united defense of the faith - cf. Ph 1:27**

B. OUR UNITY CANNOT BE SELECTIVE...

1. For example, we cannot downplay the **one baptism**
 - a. People practice different baptisms, for different reasons
 - b. They say it doesn’t matter, that we can have whatever baptism we want
 - c. Yet to deny the one baptism is no different than to deny the one Lord!
 - d. Can we say: “Pick the Lord (Moses, Jesus, Mohamed) of your choice”?
 2. For example, we cannot change the **one hope**
 - a. The one hope pertains to the resurrection of the body
 - b. Some professing Christians deny the bodily resurrection
 - c. That is both a denial of the one faith as well as the one hope!
- **We maintain unity by remaining faithful to all of the seven “ones”!**

CONCLUSION

1. Following Christ means looking both inward and outward...
 - a. Looking **inward** to produce the fruit of the Spirit - in our individual lives
 - b. Looking **outward** to preserve the unity of the Spirit - with other brethren in Christ
2. Let us look both inward and outward as we follow Christ.....
 - a. Bearing the **fruit of the Spirit**, as we grow together in the knowledge of Christ
 - b. Maintaining the **unity of the Spirit**, as we walk together in the church of Christ

Christ has done so much for us; are we willing to make the effort to do what He asks of us...?

Passages To Ponder

Apparel Of Christ

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series, “Passages To Ponder”, we have briefly examined these passages so far...
 - a. “Beatitudes Of The Kingdom” - **Mt 5:3-12**
 - b. “Defilements Of The Heart” - **Mk 7:21-23**
 - c. “Qualities Of Love” - **1 Co 13:1-13**
 - d. “Works Of The Flesh” - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - e. “Fruit Of The Spirit” - **Ga 5:22-23**
 - f. “Unity Of The Spirit” - **Ep 4:4-6**
2. Summarizing these passages, we have pondered...
 - a. The character and blessedness of those who would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. The source of evil and sin that defiles mankind
 - c. The kind of love that is possible in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ
 - d. The works of the flesh that can prevent one from entering the kingdom of God
 - e. The fruit born in the life of those led by the Spirit of God
 - f. The unity of the Spirit which we must be diligent to preserve

[Our next to last passage in this series describes the “**Apparel Of Christ**” (**Co 3:12-17**). Note first...]

I. THE CONTEXT

A. CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH CHRIST...

1. In verse one Paul writes “If then you were raised with Christ” - **Co 3:1**
2. “If” here is the condition of the first class, assumed as true - **RWP**
3. We were raised with Christ in baptism - **Co 2:12-13**
- **Being raised with Christ offers new opportunities!**

B. CHRISTIANS ARE TO SEEK THINGS ABOVE...

1. Where Christ is, sitting at God’s right hand - **Co 3:1**
2. Setting our minds on things above, not on earthly things - **Co 3:2**
3. For in Christ we died; another allusion to baptism - **Co 3:3**; cf. **Ro 6:3-4**
4. Our life is now in Christ; hidden to the world, but one day to made evident to all - **Co 3:3-4**
- **Being raised with Christ should lead to a new mindset!**

C. CHRISTIANS ARE TO PUT OFF THE OLD MAN...

1. By putting to death fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness - **Co 3:5**
2. For God’s wrath will come on those who practice such things - **Co 3:6**
3. We once walked in such things, but now we are to put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, lying - **Co 3:7-9**
4. Such sins we examined in “Defilements Of The Heart” and “Works Of The Flesh”
- **Being raised with Christ should lead to a new lifestyle!**

D. CHRISTIANS ARE TO PUT ON THE NEW MAN...

1. Renewed in knowledge according to image of God who created us - **Co 3:10**
2. No longer Greek nor Jew, etc., but like Christ - **Co 3:11**
- **Being raised with Christ should lead to Christlikeness!**

[What Christlikeness entails is seen as we now consider the “**Apparel Of Christ**” in **Co 3:12-17**; that is, those things that we should **put on** (Grk., **clothe**) as “God’s elect people, holy and beloved”...]

II. THE MEANING

A. THE NECESSARY APPAREL...

1. **Tender mercies** (bowels of mercy, KJV)
 - a. Grk., **splagchnon** {splangkh'-non} **oiktirmos** {oyk-tir-mos'}
 - b. The first word literally means “bowels...for the bowels were regarded by the Hebrews as the seat of the tender affections, esp. kindness, benevolence, compassion”
 - c. The second word describes “compassion, pity, mercy”
 - d. Thus we are to have “bowels in which compassion resides”, or as we might say today, a heart of compassion
2. **Kindness**
 - a. Grk., **chrestotes** {khray-stot'-ace}
 - b. Gentleness, kindness
3. **Humility** (humbleness of mind, KJV)
 - a. Grk., **tapeinophrosune** {tap-i-nof-ros-oo'-nay}
 - b. The having a humble opinion of one’s self; a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind
4. **Meekness**
 - a. Grk., **praotes** {prah-ot'-ace}
 - b. Gentleness, mildness, meekness
5. **Longsuffering**
 - a. Grk., **makrothumia** {mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah}
 - b. Patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs
6. **Bearing with one another** (forbearing one another, KJV)
 - a. Grk., **anechomai** {an-ekh'-om-ahee}
 - b. To sustain, to bear, to endure
7. **Forgiving one another**
 - a. Grk., **charizomai** {khar-id'-zom-ahee}
 - b. To do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favor to, gratify; to grant forgiveness, to pardon
 - c. We must forgive just as the Lord forgave us!
8. **Love, the bond of perfection** (bond of perfectness, KJV)
 - a. Grk., **agape** {ag-ah'-pay}
 - b. Active good will, benevolence
 - c. “which binds the m all together in perfect unity” (NIV)
 - d. The perfect tie that binds the other virtues together (like a belt binds pieces of clothing)
 - e. Without love, the other virtues cannot last; with it, they can be easily maintained

-- **Such is the spiritual apparel we are to adorn in our life with Christ!**

B. THE NECESSARY ACCESSORIES...

1. **The peace of God - Co 3:15**
 - a. We are to let the peace of God rule in our hearts
 - b. For in Christ, who is our peace, has made us one body - cf. **Ep 2:13-16**
 - c. For which we should be thankful!
2. **The word of Christ - Co 3:16**

- a. We are to let the word of Christ dwell us in richly in all wisdom
- b. By teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
- c. As we sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord
- 3. **The authority of Christ - Co 3:17**
 - a. We are to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. That is, by His authority
 - c. With an attitude of gratitude (giving thanks to God)
- **These “accessories” will reinforce the spiritual apparel we are to put on!**

[Properly adorned with the “**Apparel Of Christ**”, we will live up to our calling as “God’s elect people, holy and beloved” (**Co 3:12**). Finally, a few thoughts regarding...]

III. THE APPLICATION

A. ADORNMENT BEGINS WITH BEING RAISED WITH CHRIST...

- 1. The premise in this passage is that we have been raised with Christ - **Co 3:1**
- 2. Which, as noted earlier, involves baptism - cf. **Co 2:11-12**
- 3. For in baptism we put on Christ (in principle) - cf. **Ga 3:27**
- **Only then can we really put on the new man (in practice)**

B. ADORNMENT REQUIRES A NEW MIND SET...

- 1. Seeking those things above, where Christ is - **Co 3:1**
- 2. A mind set on things above, not on things on the earth - **Co 3:2**
- 3. As Paul wrote elsewhere, a mind set on things:
 - a. Virtuous and praiseworthy - cf. **Ph 4:8**
 - b. Of the Spirit, not of the flesh - cf. **Ro 8:5-8**
- **Only then can we really put off the old man and put on the new man**

C. ADORNMENT REQUIRES A CONCENTRATED EFFORT...

- 1. It does not come naturally, without effort
- 2. We must cast off the old man with its works of darkness- cf. **Ro 13:12-13**
- 3. We must make the effort to put on the new man (the Lord Jesus Christ) - cf. **Ro 13:14**
- 4. As Paul wrote elsewhere, we must work out our salvation - cf. **Ph 2:12-13**
- **We have God’s aid, but not without diligent effort on our part!**

CONCLUSION

- 1. What a wonderful opportunity God has given us...
 - a. To be raised with Christ, forgiven of all sin!
 - b. To put aside the old man, with its sinful corruption!
 - c. To put on the new man, created in the image of Christ!
- 2. But is an opportunity only for those who avail it by...
 - a. Dying with Christ in baptism
 - b. Setting one’s mind on things above
 - c. Putting off sinful conduct
 - d. Adorning the “Apparel Of Christ”

May passages like **Co 3:12-17** motivate us to take advantage of this God-given opportunity...!

Passages To Ponder

Knowledge Of Christ

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series, “Passages To Ponder”, we have briefly examined these passages so far...
 - a. “Beatitudes Of The Kingdom” - **Mt 5:3-12**
 - b. “Defilements Of The Heart” - **Mk 7:21-23**
 - c. “Qualities Of Love” - **1 Co 13:1-13**
 - d. “Works Of The Flesh” - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - e. “Fruit Of The Spirit” - **Ga 5:22-23**
 - f. “Unity Of The Spirit” - **Ep 4:4-6**
 - g. “Apparel Of Christ” - **Co 3:12-17**

2. Summarizing these passages, we have pondered...
 - a. The character and blessedness of those who would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. The source of evil and sin that defiles mankind
 - c. The kind of love that is possible in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ
 - d. The works of the flesh that can prevent one from entering the kingdom of God
 - e. The fruit born in the life of those led by the Spirit of God
 - f. The unity of the Spirit which we must be diligent to preserve
 - g. The apparel we are to put on since we’ve been raised with Christ

[Our last passage in this series focuses the “**Knowledge Of Christ**” (2 Pe 1:3-11). Note first the context in which we learn the **value** of this knowledge...]

I. THE CONTEXT

A. GRACE AND PEACE ARE MULTIPLIED...

1. Grace and peace are common forms of greeting in the New Testament
 2. Note that these two blessings are “multiplied” in the knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2 Pe 1:2**
 3. All men experience God’s favor (grace) and its result (peace) to some degree - cf. **Mt 5:45**
 4. But only in Christ can one enjoy the “fullness” of God’s favor and peace - **Ep 1:3**
- **God’s grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge of Christ!**

B. ALL THINGS PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS ARE PROVIDED...

1. Note that God provides all things pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to glory and virtue - **2 Pe 1:3**
 - a. **Life** in this context refers to our spiritual life and well-being
 - b. **Godliness** refers to the pious conduct which comes out of devotion to God
 2. It is through this knowledge we enjoy the true, full life available by God’s divine power!
 - a. Which includes “exceedingly great and precious promises” - **2 Pe 1:4a**
 - b. Which enables us to be “partakers of the divine nature” - **2 Pe 1:4b**
 - c. Which frees us from the “corruption that is in the world through lust” - **2 Pe 1:4c**
- **All that relates to true life and godliness is through the knowledge of Christ!**

C. SPIRITUAL MYOPIA AND AMNESIA ARE AVOIDED...

1. Our religion is **shortsighted** if we are not growing in the knowledge of Jesus! - **2 Pe 1:9a**
 - a. For what is the ultimate objective of being a Christian?
 - b. Is it not to become like Christ? - cf. also **Ro 8:29; Co 3:9-11**

2. Failure to grow indicates we have **forgotten** why we were redeemed! - **2 Pe 1:9b**
 - a. To have our sins forgiven, yes...
 - b. ...but also to become what He wants us to be - like His Son!
- **Avoiding spiritual myopia and amnesia comes through the knowledge of Christ!**

D. WE WILL NEVER STUMBLE...

1. Peter says “if you do these things you will never stumble” - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - a. If you are diligent to make your calling and election sure
 - b. If you add to your faith virtue, knowledge, etc. - **2 Pe 1:5-8**
 - c. If you abound in these eight graces
 - d. Which is what it means to grow in the knowledge of Christ (**see below**)
 2. This does not mean we will never sin - cf. **1 Jn 1:8,10**
 - a. The word “stumble” in Greek means “to fall into misery, become wretched; cf. the loss of salvation” (Thayer)
 - b. We will never stumble so as to fall short of our ultimate salvation!
- **Assurance of our salvation comes through the knowledge of Christ!**

E. AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM...

1. The “everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” - **2 Pe 1:11**
 - a. The “heavenly kingdom” referred to by Paul in **2 Ti 4:18**
 - b. In other words, the ultimate destiny of the redeemed!
 2. What is meant by the idea of an “abundant entrance”?
 - a. “You may be able to enter, not as having escaped from a shipwreck, or from fire, but as it were in triumph.” (**Bengel**)
 - b. By possessing the eight graces, we will be able to live victoriously in this life and to joyously anticipate what lies ahead - cf. **2 Ti 4:6-8**
- **An abundant entrance into the kingdom comes through the knowledge of Christ!**

[The overall context our passage reveals the **advantages** of growing in the knowledge of Christ. Now let’s consider what growing in the knowledge of Christ actually **means** ...]

II. THE MEANING

A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRIST-LIKE GRACES...

1. The “graces” listed in **2 Pe 1:5-7**
2. Briefly defined...
 - a. **Faith** is “conviction, strong assurance”
 - b. **Virtue** is “moral excellence, goodness”
 - c. **Knowledge** is “correct insight”
 - d. **Self-control** is “self-discipline”
 - e. **Perseverance** is “bearing up under trials”
 - f. **Godliness** is “godly character out of devotion to God”
 - g. **Brotherly kindness** is “love toward brethren”
 - h. **Love** is “active goodwill toward others”
3. Now note carefully **2 Pe 1:8**
 - a. We must “abound” in these graces
 - b. Only then can it be said that we are “growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ”
4. It is more than simply increasing our intellectual knowledge of Jesus!
 - a. Such knowledge has a place, but it is just one of the graces necessary

- b. Peter is talking about growing in a fuller and personal knowledge of Jesus Christ!
 - 1) Which comes by developing the Christ-like attributes listed in this passage
 - 2) The more we grow in these graces, the more we really know Jesus (for He is the perfect personification of these graces)
 - 5. That it involves more than intellectual knowledge is also evident from the Greek word used or knowledge in **2 Pe 1:2-3,8**
 - a. The word is **epignosis** {ep-ig'-no-sis}, meaning "to become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly, to know accurately, know well" (**Thayer**)
 - b. Such knowledge comes only as we demonstrate these "Christ-like graces" in our lives
- **The true knowledge of Christ requires that we develop Christ-like character!**

B. IN CONJUNCTION WITH EACH OTHER...

- 1. Notice the word "**add**" (or "supply") in **2 Pe 1:5**
 - a. Before each grace mentioned, the word is implied
 - b. The word in Greek is **epichoregeo** {ep-ee-khor-ayg-eh'-o}
 - 1) "Originally, to found and support a chorus, to lead a choir, to keep in tune"
 - 2) "Then, to supply or provide"
 - c. This word suggests the idea of "each grace working in harmony with the others to produce an overall effect"
 - 2. Notice also the preposition "**to**" (or "in") in **2 Pe 1:5-7**
 - a. This implies "each grace is to temper and make perfect the grace that goes before it"
 - b. To illustrate this point:
 - 1) "**to knowledge (add) self-control**" - the grace of self-control enables one to apply properly the knowledge one has
 - 2) "**to self-control (add) perseverance**" - self-control in turn needs the quality of perseverance to be consistent day after day
 - 3. Therefore each grace is necessary!
 - a. They must all be developed in conjunction with each other
 - b. We cannot be selective and just pick the ones we like and leave others behind
- **The true knowledge of Christ requires that we develop all of these characteristics!**

C. WITH ALL DILIGENCE...

- 1. Notice the repeated use of the word "diligence" - **2 Pe 1:5,10**
 - 2. It means "earnestness, zeal, sometimes with haste"
 - 3. To grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ requires much effort
 - 4. We do not "accidentally" or "naturally" develop these graces!
 - 5. We may have been Christians for a number of years; but unless...
 - a. We "add" to our faith these Christ-like qualities with all "diligence"
 - b. We are simply repeating the first year over and over again!
- **The true knowledge of Christ requires due diligence to grow on our part!**

[With this understanding of what it means to grow in the knowledge of Christ, let us conclude with the following **exhortations** in connection with...]

III. THE APPLICATION

A. WE MUST NEVER FORGET...

- 1. What we experienced **in the past**:
 - a. Purification from our sins! - **2 Pe 1:9**

- b. Escape from the corruption in the world through lust! - **2 Pe 1:4**
- 2. What we experience **in the present**:
 - a. Grace and peace multiplied! - **2 Pe 1:2**
 - b. All things that pertain to life and godliness! - **2 Pe 1:3**
 - c. Participation in the divine nature! - **2 Pe 1:4**
 - d. Making our call and election sure! - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - e. Ensuring that we never stumble! - **2 Pe 1:11**
- 3. What we will experience **in the future**:
 - a. Exceedingly great and precious promises! - **2 Pe 1:4**
 - b. An abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom! - **2 Pe 1:11**
- **We must remember all these blessings of growing in the knowledge of Christ!**

B. WE MUST MAKE THE EFFORT...

- 1. Spiritual growth does not come without effort
- 2. We must give all diligence! - **2 Pe 1:5**
- 3. We must be even more diligent! - **2 Pe 1:10**
- 4. Paul would concur with Peter - cf. **Ph 2:12-13; 3:8-14**
- **We must make diligent effort to grow in the knowledge of Christ!**

C. WE MUST DEVELOP A CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER...

- 1. Building on faith
- 2. Striving for excellence
- 3. Increasing in knowledge
- 4. Controlling the self
- 5. Bearing up under trials
- 6. Seeking to please God
- 7. Loving the brethren
- 8. With active good will toward all men
- **That is what it means to grow in the true knowledge of Christ!**

CONCLUSION

- 1. When studying this passage with a new convert, he exclaimed:
 - a. "This is what it is all about!"
 - b. "This is what it means to be a Christian!"
- 2. I believe he was not far from the truth...
 - a. Yes, being a Christian means more: we must keep all that Christ commands - **Mt 28:20**
 - b. But without developing a Christ-like character, we fall far short of the knowledge of Christ!

By pondering on this passage and others like those examined in this series, diligently applying them to our lives, we shall more likely "make our calling and election sure" and truly experience that abundant entrance into "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" ...!

"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen." - 2 Pe 3:18