

The Flesh And The Spirit



Sermons Based On Paul's Discourse On The Works Of The Flesh And The Fruit Of The Spirit

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Flesh And The Spirit

Which Shall We Serve?

INTRODUCTION

1. As Christians, we enjoy wonderful freedom in Christ...
 - a. There is freedom from sin - **Jn 8:31-34**
 - b. There is freedom from the Law of Moses - **Ro 7:6**
 - c. There is freedom from the traditions of men - **Ga 4:9**
2. It is truly the desire of Christ that we be free - cf. **Ga 5:1**
 - a. But we must not allow freedom to become “license” (i.e., freedom without any restraint)
 - b. If we are not careful, desires of the flesh can wreak self-destruction - **Ga 5:13-15**
3. To prevent this, the apostle Paul commands us to walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16**
 - a. If we do so, we will not succumb to the desires of the flesh
 - b. And whatever dangers there might be in fulfilling the lust of the flesh are thereby diminished
4. To encourage us to walk in the Spirit and not carry out the desire of the flesh, we will spend several lessons examining this section of scripture - **Ga 5:16-26**
5. Perhaps a good place to begin is by asking these questions:
 - a. Why make any effort to walk in the Spirit?
 - b. Why not just succumb to the desires of the flesh?

[At least five reasons are given in our text, and the first one we shall consider is this...]

I. THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH ARE CONTRARY TO ONE ANOTHER - Ga 5:17

A. LIKE TWO OPPONENTS, FIGHTING FOR OUR SOUL...

1. They are in opposition against each other - **Ga 5:17a**
2. Is “the Spirit” referring to the Holy Spirit, or the human spirit?
 - a. I believe it has reference to the Holy Spirit
 - b. The context of the epistle certainly suggests this to be the case
 - 1) Through “the Spirit” we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness- **Ga 5:5**
 - 2) Paul’s argument “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” would not make sense if the human spirit is meant - **Ga 5:25**
 - 3) Reaping everlasting life “of the Spirit” must refer to the Holy Spirit - **Ga 6:8**
3. So while the flesh pulls us in one direction, the Spirit of God would have us go in another!

B. A CHRISTIAN MUST SERVE ONE, OR THE OTHER...

1. If you follow the lusts of the flesh, you can not do the will of the Spirit - **Ga 5:17b**
2. Like the dilemma described in **Ro 7:14-23**, following the flesh will enslave
3. But with the help of Spirit, the flesh can be overcome! - cf. **Ro 8:12-14**

[So we must choose who will be our master: the lusts of the flesh, or the Spirit of God; we cannot serve both! As we continue, we are given more reasons to serve the Spirit...]

II. IF YOU ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT, YOU ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW - Ga 5:18

A. WHAT DOES MEAN TO BE “UNDER THE LAW”...?

1. In the context, “the law” has primary reference to the “Law of Moses” - cf. **Ga 4:21**
2. The purpose of the law was primarily twofold:
 - a. To reveal sin - cf. **Ga 3:19a; Ro 3:20**
 - b. To condemn the sinner as guilty - cf. **Ro 3:19**
3. To be “under the Law”, then, is to be under a state of condemnation!
 - a. For the law does not provide forgiveness
 - b. It only provides condemnation!

B. THOSE WALKING IN THE SPIRIT ARE NOT UNDER THE CONDEMNATION OF THE LAW...

1. Because obedience to the gospel revealed by the Spirit results in freedom
 - a. Freedom from condemnation - **Ro 8:1**
 - b. Freedom from the law of sin of death - **Ro 8:2; 6:17-18**
-- Made possible through the sacrifice of Christ! - **Ro 8:3-4**
2. Because those walking according to the Spirit (cf. **Ro 8:4**) do things against which there is no law to condemn them! - cf. **Ga 5:22-23**

[If we desire to be free from the condemnation of sin under the law of God, then we must “walk in the Spirit”. There is another reason why we should seek to “walk in the Spirit” and not “fulfill the lust of the flesh”...]

III. FULFILL THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH, AND YOU WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD - 5:19-21

A. THIS IS A REFERENCE TO THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM...

1. Spoken of by Christ - **Mt 25:34**
2. Looked forward to by Paul - **2 Ti 4:18**
3. Referred to by Peter - **2 Pe 1:10-11**

B. NOTE THE EMPHASIS BY PAUL...

1. A double warning!
2. “of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past...” - **Ga 5:21**
3. He wants to be sure they don’t miss it!

C. THE END OF THOSE WHO FULFILL THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH...

1. They have no inheritance in the kingdom of God - **Ga 5:21; Ep 5:5**
2. Indeed, the wrath of God will come upon them - **Ep 5:6-7**

[Which shall it be? Walk in the Spirit, or fulfill the lusts of the flesh? The choice should be clear: one offers freedom from condemnation, and the other offers no hope of the heavenly kingdom! But Paul gives us two more reasons to make the right choice...]

IV. THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST’S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH - Ga 5:24

A. IN BAPTISM, WE DIED TO SIN, HAVING BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST...

1. Our old man was crucified with Him, that we might no longer be slaves of sin - **Ro 6:1-6**
2. We died with Christ (in baptism) that we might be free from sin and live a new life with Him! - **Ro 6:7-10**

B. AS CHRISTIANS, WE ARE TO CONTINUE TO “CRUCIFY SELF”...

1. We continue to “put to death” the “members which are on earth” - **Co 3:5-7**
2. We must be involved in the process of “putting off” the old man - **Co 3:8-11**
3. If we are not doing this, there is no hope - cf. **Ro 8:13**

[Putting off the works of the flesh, therefore, is fundamental to the Christian life. We started the process when we were baptized into Christ, and we are to continue the process as we grow in the Lord. We are not alone in this effort. As Paul indicated in **Ro 8:13**, it is by the Spirit we are able to put to death the deeds of the body. That leads back to a fifth and final reason we ought to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh...]

V. IF WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT, LET US ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT - Ga 5:25

A. WE OWE OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT...!

1. It was the Holy Spirit who made the Gospel known to mankind
 - a. As Jesus said He would - **Jn 16:7-13**
 - b. The apostles attributed the gospel message to the Holy Spirit - **1 Co 2:9-13**
2. When one responds to the gospel of God’s grace, they are renewed by the Holy Spirit - cf. **Ti 3:5**
3. It is the Spirit in us who gives us new life! - **Ro 8:11-13**

B. SINCE WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT, SHALL WE NOT WALK IN THE SPIRIT...?

1. It is by the Holy Spirit that God has made our new life possible
2. It is only proper that we should live out our new life...
 - a. Being led by the Spirit - **Ga 5:18**; cf. **Ro 8:14**
 - b. Walking in the Spirit - **Ga 5:25**; cf. **Ro 8:1-2**

CONCLUSION

1. We have these five reasons why we should walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh:
 - a. The Spirit and the flesh are contrary to one another
 - b. If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law
 - c. Fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and you will not inherit the kingdom of God
 - d. Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh
 - e. Since we live in the Spirit, we should also walk in the Spirit
2. But lest anyone remain unconvinced, consider another point made by Paul...
 - a. We reap what we sow! - **Ga 6:7-8**
 - b. And the type of corruption reaped by those who give into the works of the flesh is varied:
 - 1) It is physical, mental, social and spiritual
 - 2) Look around you and you can see the truthfulness of this; only the foolish do not see it
3. But also seen is the type of life which is enjoyed both now and in heaven by those who follow the Spirit (as suggested in **1 Ti 4:8**)

The question we each face is this...

The Flesh or the Spirit: Which shall we serve?

The Flesh And The Spirit

Overcoming The Conflict

INTRODUCTION

1. We saw in our previous lesson that to prevent turning our freedom in Christ into opportunities for the lust of the flesh, we need to “walk in the Spirit”
2. We considered five reasons Paul gave to “walk in the Spirit”, instead of engaging in the “works of the flesh”...
 - a. The Spirit and the flesh are contrary to one another - **Ga 5:17**
 - b. If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law - **Ga 5:18**
 - c. Fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and you will not inherit the kingdom of God - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - d. Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh - **Ga 5:24**
 - e. Since we live in the Spirit, we should also walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:25**
 - With a sixth reason found in **Ga 6:7-8** (We reap what we sow!)
3. But it is one thing to know we should “walk in the Spirit”, and another thing to actually do so...
 - a. Therefore I hope to illustrate how the Christian can be victorious in this spiritual “conflict” between the Spirit and the flesh
 - b. The basis for our study will once again be **Ga 5:16-26**

[From these verses we can glean four points related to “**Overcoming The Conflict**”. I will save what I believe to be the most important point for last, and therefore start with the idea...]

I. VICTORY COMES THROUGH AN AWARENESS OF THE CONFLICT - Ga 5:17

A. KNOWING THE STRENGTH OF ENEMY IS NECESSARY TO WIN ANY WAR...

1. Jesus understood this principle - cf. **Lk 14:31**
2. Paul wants us to be aware of the strength of the enemy - **Ga 5:17**
 - a. The flesh is in opposition to the Spirit
 - b. Neither side is content with some sort of truce
 - c. One or the other is going to be in control!

B. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE BATTLE WILL BE ONGOING...

1. The flesh sets it desire against the Spirit
2. As long as we are in the flesh, there is going to be warfare!
3. Unless, of course, we totally surrender to the flesh!

[With awareness of the conflict that exists, we are on the road to victory. Sadly, many people lose the battle because they assume that whatever the flesh wants must be right. For those who desire to win, though, it is also helpful to know that...]

II. VICTORY COMES THROUGH AN AWARENESS OF THE ENEMY AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT - Ga 5:19-21

A. THE ENEMY IS “THE WORKS OF THE FLESH”...

1. Briefly defined, the “works of the flesh” include:
 - a. Sins of immorality
 - b. Sins of idolatry
 - c. Infractions of the law of love
 - d. Sins of intemperance (i.e., excesses)
2. Each of these we will examine more closely in future lessons

B. THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT ARE GRAVE...

1. In our text, we learn that they can cause one to forfeit the kingdom of God
2. In **Ga 6:7-8**, we learn they also produce “corruption” (both physical and spiritual)

[Awareness of the enemy and the consequences of defeat help us to focus our attack and to provide the motivation to attack forcefully. Otherwise, our attempts will be aimless and halfhearted. Next...]

III. VICTORY COMES THROUGH HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE - Ga 5:24-25

A. NO VICTORY IS WON WITH A DEFEATIST ATTITUDE...

1. If we approach the conflict by saying...
 - a. “There is no hope”
 - b. “I am too weak”
 - c. “I cannot win”
2. The battle is over before it even starts!

B. BUT CHRISTIANS CAN APPROACH THIS CONFLICT WITH OPTIMISM...

1. **Because they have “crucified the flesh with its passion and desires” - Ga 5:24**
 - a. As we saw in the previous lesson, that occurred when we were crucified with Christ through baptism into His death - **Ro 6:3-8**
 - b. They are therefore not “indebted to the flesh” - cf. **Ro 8:12**
 - c. This is not to say the conflict with flesh ceases to exist, but that in Christ the conflict can be overcome!
2. **Because they “live in the Spirit” - Ga 5:25**
 - a. The Spirit has given us new life in Christ! - **Ti 3:5-6; cf. Ro 8:2, 11**
 - b. Living in the Spirit, it now becomes possible to “walk in the Spirit”

[This leads to the last and perhaps most important point when it comes to “Overcoming The Conflict”, which is found toward the beginning of our text...]

IV. VICTORY COMES THROUGH “WALKING IN THE SPIRIT” - Ga 5:17

A. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “WALK IN THE SPIRIT”...?

1. The term “walk” suggests one’s conduct, or manner of life
2. The phrase “in the Spirit” (or “by the Spirit”, ASV) suggests two possibilities:
 - a. That one’s conduct be in accordance to the Spirit - cf. **Ro 8:1**
 - b. That one’s conduct be aided by the Spirit - cf. **Ro 8:11-13**
 - Since both of these are supported by Paul in his writings, I assume that “walking in the Spirit” involve both concepts
3. “The entire life of the believer is to be lived ‘by the Spirit’, under His guidance and direction, by His aid and help and power. If a man so lives, he will not yield to the sinful desires of the flesh.” - **Charles R. Erdman**

4. To use another phrase of Paul's, to "*walk in the Spirit*" is the same (or at least the consequence) of being "*led by the Spirit*" - cf. **Ro 8:14**

B. HOW DOES ONE "WALK IN THE SPIRIT"

1. Do we "walk in the Spirit" (or are "led by the Spirit") through...
 - a. Listening to some "small still voice"?
 - b. Heeding some subtle influence or intuition?
 - c. Following some overwhelming compulsion?
2. The answer is "No!", and fortunately so...
 - a. Otherwise, there would be the problem of determining whether it was the Holy Spirit or just wishful human spirit that was seeking to lead us in some direction
 - b. The Bible warns about the dangers of trusting the impressions of the heart or mind to guide us - cf. **Pro 14:12; Jer 10:23**
 - c. God has graciously given us an objective (as opposed to subjective) means to direct us - cf. **Psa 119:133**
3. We "walk in the Spirit" (or are "led by the Spirit")...
 - a. **First, when we "set our minds on the things of the Spirit"** - cf. **Ro 8:4-5**
 - 1) Just as those who "set their minds on the things of the flesh" walk according to the flesh
 - 2) What are the "things of the Spirit"?
 - a) Those things that the Holy Spirit was sent to reveal - cf. **Jn 14:25-26**
 - b) I.e., the revealed Word of truth - cf. **Jn 16:12-13**
 - 3) Therefore, whenever one is setting their mind on the **Word of God** (the "things of the Spirit"), and seeking to walk thereby...
 - a) They are "walking in the Spirit"
 - b) They are being "led by the Spirit"
 - b. **But also, when we "strengthened by the Spirit"** - cf. **Ro 8:12-14**
 - 1) In conjunction with our own efforts to walk according to the "things of the Spirit" (i.e., the Word of God), we are aided by the Spirit of God
 - a) As Paul explained to the Philippians, when we seek to "work out our salvation", God is also at work in us - **Ph 2:12-13**
 - b) The instrumental agent by which God strengthens us is His Spirit - **Ep 3:16**
 - 2) **Prayer** is a key element in receiving this wonderful strength
 - a) Just as Paul prayed for the Ephesians that God would so strengthen them - **Ep 3:16**
 - b) And so we are taught to go to God's throne of grace when we need "grace to help in time of need" - **He 4:16**
4. To "walk in the Spirit", then, involves living a life where one is under the Spirit's direction and aided by His power
5. We can ensure that we "walk in the Spirit" by...
 - a. Diligently setting our minds on the "things of the Spirit" (i.e., the Word of God)
 - b. Fervently praying for the strength God gives through His Spirit as we endeavor to live according to His Word
6. The Word of God and prayer are therefore crucial to "**Overcoming The Conflict**" between the flesh and the Spirit!

CONCLUSION

1. Fellow Christian, do you earnestly desire to overcome the conflict that goes on between the flesh

and the Spirit...?

- a. Where the lusts of the flesh pull you in one direction?
- b. And the Spirit of God would have you go in an opposite direction?

2. In our text (**Ga 5:16-26**)...

- a. We find not only the motivation (cf. our last lesson)
- b. But also the solution to **“Overcoming The Conflict”** (cf. this lesson)

3. In our next study, we shall begin taking a closer look at those things listed as **“the works of the flesh”** (remembering the importance of awareness of the enemy)

4. For the time being, I encourage you to accept the challenge to **“walk in the Spirit”**...

- a. It begins when you “crucify the flesh with its passion and desires”, and begin to “live in the Spirit” - **Ga 5:24-25**; cf. **Ro 6:3-11; 8:11-13**
- b. And it continues as you are “led by the Spirit” through the means of the Word of God and prayer - cf. **Ro 8:14**

Have you responded to the command to be baptized into Christ, where you can enjoy the blessing of the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”? - cf. **Ti 3:5-7**

The Flesh And The Spirit

Sins Of Moral Impurity

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ro 1:18-32**, we find a description of moral decay that sounds similar to today...
 - a. While we have enjoyed great advances in technology, we are still in the “dark ages” as far as morality is concerned
 - b. The challenge for Christians to live holy lives is not much different today, than in the first century A.D.
2. But passages like **1 Co 6:9-11** remind us that there is hope...
 - a. People in the first century were able to make remarkable changes in their lives
 - b. Today the same Power is available to change us as well!
 - 1) We too can be “*washed*”, “*sanctified*”, and “*justified in the name of Jesus*”
 - 2) How? Note that Paul says it is “*...by the Spirit of our God*”!
3. In our previous lesson, we saw that by “*walking in the Spirit*” it is possible to overcome the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit
 - a. By setting our minds on the things of the Spirit (via the Word of God)...
 - b. And obtaining the aid of the Spirit (via prayer)...
 ...we can produce the “fruit of the Spirit” in our lives, instead of the “works of the flesh”
4. But we also noted that one step in “**Overcoming The Conflict**” was through an awareness of the enemy...
 - a. Otherwise we might be succumbing to the enemy, and not even know it!
 - b. Fortunately, Paul has provided a list of such things that comprise the “works of the flesh” - **Ga 5:19-21**

[With this lesson, we begin a careful examination of the words used to describe the “works of the flesh”. We start with a look at those sins that might be classed together as “**Sins Of Moral Impurity**”.

The KJV and NKJV begin with a word (“adultery”) that is not found in some of the oldest manuscripts. But it is certainly covered by the next word, which we shall focus upon first...]

I. PORNEIA (fornication, immorality, sexual vice)

A. A GENERIC WORD FOR UNLAWFUL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS...

1. Originally, it meant “to act the harlot” and then “to indulge unlawful lust”
2. As used in the New Testament, we find it having at least four different meanings...
 - a. Premarital sex - **1 Co 7:1-2**
 - b. A synonym for adultery - **Mt 19:9**
 - c. A generic sense referring to all forms of unchastity - **1 Co 6:13,18**
 - d. A specific sense referring to harlotry and prostitution - **Re 2:20-21**
3. It therefore includes any sort of sexual intercourse between partners who are not married to each other (premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, prostitution, incest)
4. God’s disdain for such immorality is seen in the fact...

- a. There are seven lists of evil in the writings of Paul
- b. Fornication is listed in five of them, and is the first in each of them

B. THIS WORD BECAME SYNONYMOUS WITH FIRST CENTURY LIFE...

1. As it truly reflected...
 - a. Their attitude toward **“adultery”**: “We keep mistresses for pleasure, concubines for day-to-day needs of the body, but we have wives in order to produce children legitimately and to have a trustworthy guardian of our homes” (Demosthenes)
 - b. Their attitude toward **“divorce”**: “Roman women were married to be divorced and were divorced to be married. Some of them distinguished the years, not by the names of the consuls, but by the names of their husbands.” (Seneca)
 - c. Their attitude toward **“family”**: “Caligula lived in incest with his sister Drusilla, and the lust of Nero did not even spare his mother Agrippina.” (Suetonius)
 - d. Their attitude toward **“those of the same sex”**:
 - 1) “It were better not to need marriage, but to follow Plato and Socrates and to be content with the love of boys.” (Lucian)
 - 2) “Of the first fifteen emperors, Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct.” (Gibbons)
2. Does it require much insight to see that this word has come to reflect life in the twentieth century as well?
 - a. Adultery is considered inevitable, even acceptable by many
 - b. Divorce has been made “no-fault”
 - c. Families have been torn asunder by incest
 - d. Homosexuality has become an “acceptable alternative lifestyle”

[Indeed, the works of the flesh are as rampant today as they were in the first century. As we continue, we see other words that remind us of the times in which we live...]

II. AKATHARSIA (uncleanness, impurity)

A. THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD...

1. It originally had reference to dirt or dirtiness in a physical sense
2. In the Greek OT, it is used to denote ritual and ceremonial impurity which made it impossible for the worshipper to approach God - cf. **Lev 22:3-9**
3. It then came to be used in a moral sense, of that moral depravity which disgusts the person who sees it

B. THREE IDEAS ARE THEREFORE INHERENT IN THE WORD...

1. The quality of that which is soiled and dirty; some minds are like that
2. An impurity where there is a repulsive quality that awakens disgust in those persons who are decent
3. That which separates man from God; in contrast, compare **Mt 5:8; Re 3:4**

[There appears to be a progression of thought in the order of these words used by Paul. While **“porneia”** indicates sin within a specific area of life (that of sexual relation), **“akatharsia”** indicates a general defilement of personality, tainting every sphere of life. The next word indicates a love of sin so reckless and audacious that one has ceased to care what God or man thinks of their actions...]

III. ASELGIA (lasciviousness, licentiousness, sensuality)

A. THE BASIC MEANING OF THE WORD...

1. In the NT it seems to be linked with sexual excess in a public way
2. **Barclay** distinguishes three characteristics of this sin:
 - a. It is wanton and undisciplined action
 - b. It has no respect for the persons or rights of anyone else
 - c. It is completely indifferent to public opinion and to public decency

B. THE GENERAL IDEA IS ONE OF SHAMELESS BEHAVIOR...

1. **Thayer** defines this word by giving these examples:
 - a. “filthy words”
 - b. “indecent bodily movements”
 - c. “unchaste handling of males and females”
2. This word is one that best describes...
 - a. What is often seen in much of modern dance, music, and theater
 - b. What goes on at many concerts, and on many talk shows
3. The context in which it is often found in the Scriptures helps to understand this word - cf. **Ro 13:11-14; Ep 4:17-19; 1 Pe 4:1-4**

CONCLUSION

1. With these three words (**porneia, aktharsia, aselgeia**), we learn that the “works of the flesh” involve sins of moral impurity
2. It has been said that “chastity” (the condition of being morally pure or chaste) was the one completely new virtue which Christianity introduced into the pagan world
3. Three reasons made this introduction difficult...
 - a. Immorality in sexual matters was not immorality to Grecian society; it was established custom and practice
 - b. Certain philosophies separated the actions of the body from the spirit
 - c. In many cases, prostitution was connected with religion-- It should not be surprising, then, to find Paul having to deal with this problem - cf. **2 Co 12: 20-21**
4. Today, we find ourselves facing similar problems...
 - a. We live in a culture that calls immorality “The New Morality”
 - b. We are influenced by philosophies (evolution and secular humanism) that downplay the need for the spirit to control the flesh
 - c. More and more religions are giving their stamp of approval to various forms of sexual immorality
5. In response to the culture in which we live...
 - a. We must first proclaim Jesus’ diagnosis of the problem: that sinful conduct exists, and it comes from within man - cf. **Mk 7:21-23**
 - b. We can then offer the gospel’s solution to the problem: forgiveness of sin, and the power to live holy lives! - cf. **1 Co 6:9-11**

Have you been “washed”, “sanctified”, and “justified” in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God? Paul explains how this is done in **Ti 3:4-7** (cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**)...

NOTE: In defining the words in this study, I depended heavily upon William Barclay’s Flesh And Spirit - An Examination of Galatians 5:19-23 (Baker Book House), and Ferrell Jenkins’ Flesh And Spirit - A Word Study (Guardian Of Truth Foundation). The same will be true in the following outlines in this study.

The Flesh And The Spirit

Idolatry And Sorcery

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue our examination of the “works of the flesh” listed in **Ga 5:19-21...**
 - a. We come to sins which modern man may think do not affect him
 - b. These are the sins of “idolatry” and “sorcery” - **Ga 5:20a**
2. However, as we examine them more closely, I believe we shall find that these sins are not as far removed from us as we might think...
 - a. Indeed, most people practice idolatry!
 - b. And many people engage in some form of sorcery!

[This is true of many Christians as well, so perhaps we should give these words our careful attention...]

I. EIDOLOLATREIA (idolatry)

A. CONCERNING IDOLATRY AS COMMONLY CONSIDERED...

1. In the beginning stages of idolatry, no one worships the idol or image itself
 - a. The idol simply served two purposes:
 - 1) To localize the god it represents
 - 2) To visualize the god it represents
 - b. It is simply designed to make it easier to worship the god represented by the idol
2. Inevitably, however, people will wind up worshipping the idol or image itself
 - a. We see this in various forms of Catholicism
 - b. Where the leaders say the image is not an idol, only an “icon”
 - c. But who can deny that the average worshipper begins to view the image itself as something “holy” and to be “revered”?
 - d. Thus that which is “created” begins receiving adoration rightfully due the “Creator”
3. According to **Ro 1:18-23**, the basic error of idol worship is the worship of the “created thing” rather than the “Creator of all things”!

B. CONCERNING IDOLATRY AS THAT WHICH DISPLACES GOD...

1. Idolatry is not just the adoration or worship of images
2. Paul defines “covetousness” as idolatry - **Ep 5:5; Co 3:5**
 - a. Any strong desire for material things that replaces our desire for God is a form of idolatry!
 - 1) Our hearts are such that they are drawn to whatever is our treasure - **Mt 6:21**
 - 2) If our treasure is earthly things, our heart (devotion) is drawn away from God
 - 3) We cannot serve material things and God at the same time! - **Mt 6:24**
 - b. Thus we can be idolaters when we make things other than God Himself our priority in life, such as:
 - 1) Our job
 - 2) Our house
 - 3) Our family
 - 4) Our hobby

[So when we find admonitions like this one...

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” - 1 Jn 5:21

...let’s not be so presumptuous to believe that we are too “modern” or sophisticated to need such a warning. We might need it more than we realize! The same can be said for warnings against the next sin...]

II. PHARMAKEIA (witchcraft, sorcery, magic)

A. INFORMATION RELATED TO THIS WORD...

1. PHARMAKEIA is found to be used in three ways
 - a. Medically, to the use of drugs with no bad meaning at all
 - b. The misuse of drugs so as to poison, not cure
 - c. The practice of sorcery and witchcraft, which often used drugs to cast spells and alter the behavior of others
2. The practice of witchcraft and sorcery is strongly condemned in the Bible
 - a. In the Old Testament - **Exo 22:18**
 - b. In the New Testament - **Re 21:8**
3. In **Ac 19:18-20**, we find a remarkable example of repentance related to the practice of magic

B. EXAMPLES OF THIS SIN TODAY...

1. There is an increasing number of religions based upon the occult, and that make use of drugs in their religion
2. The “recreational” use of drugs also falls into this category...
 - a. Remember that altering the behavior of others through such drugs was a basic function of sorcery and witchcraft
 - b. What difference is there between using drugs to alter others’ behavior, and your own?
 - c. This is not to discount the proper medicinal use of drugs
 - d. But just as the Bible condemns drunkenness, which is an altered state brought on by alcohol (a drug), so it would seem to condemn similar use of other drugs

CONCLUSION

1. As we continue our study of the “works of the flesh”, we should keep in mind that each one of these sins is a perversion of something which in itself is good; as illustrated by Barclay...
 - a. **Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness** - perversions of the sexual instinct which in itself can be a beautiful thing and a part of true love between a man and a woman
 - b. **Idolatry** - a perversion of worship
 - c. **Sorcery** - a perversion of the proper use of drugs
 - d. **Hatred, contentions, jealousies** - perversions of that noble ambition and desire to do well which can spur one to greatness
 - e. **Outbursts of wrath , selfish ambitions** - perversions of righteous indignation without which the passion for goodness cannot exist
 - f. **Dissensions, heresies, envy** - perversions of the devotion to principle which can produce the martyr
 - g. **Drunkenness, revelries** - perversions of the happy joy of social fellowship

2. Indeed, the following is so true: **“The awfulness of the power of sin lies precisely in its ability to take the raw material of potential goodness and turn it into the material of evil.”**
(Barclay)

I implore us all to devote our lives in the proper worship of God and His Son Jesus Christ, and to abstain from the misuse of anything God has created for good purposes!

The Flesh And The Spirit

Infractions Of The Law Of Love - I

INTRODUCTION

1. Our study of the “works of the flesh” as found in **Ga 5:19-21** now focuses on a rather large group of sins that can be categorized together as “**infractions of the law of love**”
 - a. There are eight such sins listed
 - b. They are “hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy” (NKJV)

2. Many people, find it hard to conceive that these eight sins are really all that terrible...
 - a. Notice this news clipping that made the front page of the **Orlando Sentinel (1/7/81)** under the heading, “**Pope Widens Sin Definition**”:

“Pope John Paul II said today that sins of the flesh are not limited to fornication, orgies and drunkenness, but include idolatry, jealousy, envy and unfriendliness.
 “The pope made the remarks to his weekly general audience at the Vatican, his forum for the past 14 months on the subject of sex and sin.
 “In his latest discussion of the subject, the pope cited St. Paul, the first-century apostle, as giving Christianity a very wide definition of sins of the flesh.
 “It is significant that when Paul speaks about the works of the flesh, he mentions not only fornication, impurity, libertinage, drunkenness and orgies which are the sins of sensual pleasure,’ the pope said, ‘but also speaks of other sins to which we are not accustomed to attribute a carnal and sensual character: idolatry, witchcraft, unfriendliness, discord, jealousy, dissent, divisions, factionalism, and envy.’”
 - b. The paper makes it sound like the pope is declaring something new, but as the pope himself stated, this is what Paul taught in the very passage we are studying
 - c. Indeed, what is said of immorality and drunkenness is also said of these eight sins: “*...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God*”

3. Therefore there is a great need...
 - a. To be informed as to what these sins entail
 - b. To make a concentrated effort to put them out of our lives

[In this lesson, we shall look at the first two sins, which are closely related to one another. Starting with...]

I. ECHTHRA (enmities, hatred)

A. THE WORD DEFINED...

1. Closely related to the word “echthros” which is the Greek word for **enemy**
2. “echthra” means **enmity, hostility**
3. Notice how it is used in...
 - a. **Lk 23:12** - “they had been at enmity with each other”
 - b. **Ro 8:7** - “the carnal mind is at enmity against God”
 - c. **Ja 4:4** - “friendship with the world is enmity with God”

4. It was used to describe the enmity or hostility between...
 - a. **Social classes** - the “haves” and the “have nots”
 - b. **Races** - as existed between Greeks and Barbarians, Jews and Gentiles
 - c. **Man and man** - as often exists where there is hostility for one reason or another
5. Thus it describes a state and attitude of mind toward other people which involves barriers between them and you

B. WHY THIS SIN IS SO CONTRARY TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE...

1. Because Jesus died to remove the barriers that separate men from one another - **Ep 2: 13-16**
 - a. It is true that He died to reconcile us back to God
 - b. But it is just as true that He died to reconcile man back to man!
 - c. As we grow in Christ, we are to be so renewed in Him that distinctions lose their meaning - **Co 3:9-11**
 - When we are at enmity with one another, we undo the work of Christ on the cross and in our lives!
2. Enmity is the direct opposite of love (agape); consider the contrast:
 - a. **agape** - an attitude of mind which will never allow itself to be bitter to any man; always seeking the highest good of others
 - b. **echthra** - the attitude which puts up barriers and draws the sword of division
 - When we allow the work of the flesh to rule (e.g., echthra), we cannot allow the Spirit to produce the proper fruit in our lives (e.g., love)

[The sin of “enmity” involves any sort of hostility or prejudice towards others; as such it has no place in the life of the Christian. This is also true of...]

II. ERIS (contentions, strife, variance)

A. THE WORD DEFINED...

1. **Eris** is the expression of enmity or hatred; it is the outcome in actual life of that state of mind
2. Other versions translate the word “eris” as “wrangling”, “quarreling”, “fighting”, “discord”
3. Paul uses this word to describe one of the evils that was characteristic of the pagan world - **Ro 1:28-29**
4. Sadly, it can also describe the condition that may exist in a church - cf. **1 Co 1:11; 3:3**

B. UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH THIS SIN...

1. This particular sin invades churches more often, perhaps, than many others
 - a. Because of our tendency to categorize sins, we may allow this one to linger and fester more than such sins as fornication, adultery
 - b. Yet this sin is most destructive of Christian fellowship; it will just as easily destroy (maybe even more so) a local congregation as will sins of moral impurity
2. Overcoming “contentions”...
 - a. Begins with realizing that it is often the expression of “hatred” or “enmity”, which has no place in the heart of the Christian
 - b. As illustrated in the case of Corinth, it often arises when members place too high a value on personalities, and not on Jesus Christ - cf. **1 Co 1:12**
 - c. The key, then, is to exalt Jesus Christ as Lord, and let His attitude and example govern our dealings with one another - cf. **1 Co 2:2; 2 Co 4:5; Ph 2:3-5**

CONCLUSION

1. Notice again these brief definitions...
 - a. **echthra** - enmity or hostility that one may harbor in one's heart toward another
 - b. **eris** - strife or quarreling that results from such hostility
2. That such sins can keep us out of the kingdom of heaven just as easily as fornication, idolatry and sorcery, ought to cause us to seriously reflect about our spiritual growth and development as Christians
3. Perhaps more than ever since we started this study, we see the challenge we face as we live the Christian life...
 - a. It is not a matter of simply abstaining from what some people might call the "big" sins
 - b. It is a matter of undergoing a complete transformation of character, made possible only as we submit to the working of the Spirit in our lives!
 - c. As Paul wrote to the brethren in Rome:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." - Ro 12:1-2

Are you seeking to be so transformed by the renewing of your mind? It begins with a "**washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit**"... - cf. **Ti 3:5; Jn 3:5; Mk 16:16**

The Flesh And The Spirit

Infractions Of The Law Of Love - II

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue discussing the “works of the flesh” as found in **Ga 5:19-21**, we are focusing on that large group of sins that can be categorized as “**infractions of the law of love**”
2. They include “hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy” (NKJV)
3. Our last study examined the first two:
 - a. **hatred (echthra)** - hostility that one may harbor in one’s heart toward another
 - b. **contentions (eris)** - strife or quarreling that results from such hostility
4. In this lessons we will focus on two more sins...
 - a. **jealousies (zelos)** - **Ga 5:20**
 - b. **envy (phthonos)** - **Ga 5:21**
5. Though not together in the same verse, they often occur together in the Scriptures...
 - a. There are cases where one has to be defined in contrast to the other
 - b. And it helps to better understand them when we consider them together

[With that in mind, let’s take a look at the first one...]

I. ZELOS (jealousies, emulations)

A. THIS WORD CAN BE USED IN BOTH A GOOD SENSE AND A BAD SENSE...

1. Examples where it is used in a **good sense**
 - a. **Isa 9:7** - “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this”
 - b. **Ro 10:1-2** - “...they have a zeal for God...”
 - c. **2 Co 11:2-3** - “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy.”
 - In these and many other such passages, it is used to describe an excitement of mind, ardor, fervor of spirit, for something that is good
2. Examples where it is used in a **bad sense**
 - a. **1 Co 3:3** - “For where there are envy...”
 - b. **2 Co 12:20** - “For I fear...lest there be...jealousies...”
 - In such cases, there is a fervor of spirit that is misdirected, resulting in a form of envy and jealousy that is destructive of personal relationships

B. IN OUR TEXT, “ZELOS” IS CLEARLY USED IN A BAD SENSE...

1. When we find ourselves swelling up with zeal for something which is not good or right to desire, then that is “zealos”
2. Zeal that is misdirected is mostly directed toward self, i.e., “selfish”
 - a. When we are zealous for God, that is good
 - b. When we are jealous in behalf of others’ good welfare, that is good
 - c. But when we are jealous for selfish reasons, it is wrong!

3. We saw where such jealousy was a mark of carnality in the Christians at Corinth - cf. **1 Co 3:1-3**
4. In view of the coming of Christ, “zeLOS” (envy) is one of the “works of darkness” we need to cast off - **Ro 13:11-14**
5. Indeed, remember “that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” - **Ga 5:21**

[We learn a little more about “zeLOS” when we compare with “phthonos”, so let’s move on to consider that word...]

II. PHTHONOS (envy, envyings)

A. COMPARED WITH “ZELOS”...

1. William Barclay offers this distinction between the two:
 - a. **zeLOS** is the envy which casts grudging looks
 - b. **phthonos** is the envy which has arrived at hostile deeds
2. We might also add this distinction:
 - a. **zeLOS** is less serious, less bitter, less malignant than **phthonos**
 - b. But **zeLOS**, left unchecked, can result in **phthonos**
3. Whereas **zeLOS** has both a good and bad sense, **phthonos** is always bad

B. EXAMPLES OF “PHTHONOS” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. It was **phthonos** that moved the Jewish leaders to deliver Jesus to Pilate - **Mt 27:18; Mk 15:10**
2. **phthonos** is indicative of a reprobate mind that has denied God - **Ro 1:28-29**
3. It is often the result of striving over words - **1 Ti 6:3-4**
4. It is typical of our lives prior to salvation - **Ti 3:3**
5. But it is part of that which we are to “lay aside” - **1 Pe 2:1**

C. AN EXAMPLE TO HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND “PHTHONOS”...

1. Some were preaching Christ “even from envy...” - **Ph 1:15**
2. Their motive was to cause Paul harm - **Ph 1:16**
 - a. Thus **phthonos** is more than a desire to have something which someone else has (that would be **zeLOS**)
 - b. It is a desire to have it at the detriment or loss of the other person
3. I.e., **phthonos** describes that strong desire of something...
 - a. Not just because someone else has it (again, that would be **zeLOS**)
 - b. But because we don’t want that person to have it (this is **phthonos**)
4. It is therefore a sin which generates harmful actions toward others

CONCLUSION

1. Once again I hope we are impressed with the high standard of conduct to which Christians have been called...
 - a. The world thinks lightly of such things as jealousy and envy, often considering it to be normal behavior
 - b. While it may be normal behavior for the unregenerate, such sins have no place in the hearts and lives of those who have been “born again”! - **Ti 3:3-5**

2. As we realize this high standard of godly living expected of Christians...
 - a. I hope we will not be discouraged, even though we often fall short
 - b. But rather that we will accept the challenge placed before us
 - c. And remember that it is only as we “walk in the Spirit” that we will not “fulfill the lust of the flesh” - **Ga 5:16**

Let us therefore encourage one another to put away “jealousies” and “envy”, and instead to...

“...put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” (Ro 13:14)

The Flesh And The Spirit

Infractions Of The Law Of Love - III

INTRODUCTION

1. In this study, we shall conclude our survey of those works of the flesh we have characterized as **infractions of the law of love**
2. As listed in **Ga 5:19-21**, they are eight in number and include such things as “hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy” (NKJV)
3. We have already considered four of these eight...
 - a. **hatred (echthra)** - hostility that one may harbor in one’s heart toward another
 - b. **contentions (eris)** - strife or quarreling that results from such hostility
 - c. **jealousies (zelos)** - envy which casts grudging looks
 - d. **envy (phthonos)** - envy which has arrived at hostile deeds
4. As we consider the remaining four, we shall also summarize why these eight sins are properly included in a list that has such heinous sins as fornication, idolatry, sorcery, etc.

[Let’s start by taking a closer look at...]

I. THE FOUR REMAINING INFRACTIONS OF THE LAW OF LOVE

A. THUMOS (outbursts of anger, wrath)...

1. This word describes...
 - a. The blaze of temper which flares into violent words and deeds
 - b. The explosive temper which is uncontrolled
2. Not to be confused with...
 - a. Righteous indignation, which is proper and controlled (e.g., the righteous indignation of God - **Ro 2:4-11**)
 - b. Anger which is properly checked and not allowed to produce an occasion for sin - cf. **Ep 4:26-27**
3. Some try to excuse their explosive tempers as simply hereditary...
 - a. “That is just the way I am”
 - b. “I am just a fiery Irishman, a hot Italian, etc.”
 - c. “It is human nature”
4. But Christians, no matter what their “nature”, are blessed to become partakers of “divine nature”, and must therefore put away these things - cf. **2 Pe 1:3-4; Ep 4:31-32; Co 3:8-11**

B. ERITHEIA (selfish ambitions, disputes, strife)...

1. This word describes a self-centered attitude in the doing of any work; for example...
 - a. Working solely for money
 - b. Seeking and holding political office purely for personal interests and ambition
 - c. Doing the work of the Lord out of a desire for recognition, personal ambition, or rivalry
2. It is used to describe those who were preaching Christ out of jealousy - cf. **Ph 1:17**
3. It is this word which describes those who create party divisions in the church...

- a. Who are acting out of vainglory and a desire to be first
- b. Rather than out of a true desire to stand for truth
4. It is contrary to that “mind of Christ” described in **Ph 2:3-5**

C. DICHOSTASIA (dissensions, seditions)...

1. This word literally means “a standing apart”
2. It describes a condition where all fellowship, all togetherness are gone
 - a. This was the condition in the church at Corinth - cf. **1 Co 3:3**
 - b. Paul taught we should mark those who cause such divisiveness - **Ro 16:17**
3. Such dividedness may be due to:
 - a. Personal division (where two people refuse to speak to each other)
 - b. Class division (i.e., class warfare between the rich and poor)
 - c. Party division (where devotion to party rises above devotion to principle)
 - d. Racial division (e.g., Jew vs. Gentile, Greek vs. barbarian, white vs. black)
 - e. Theological division (misusing labels and fixing them unfairly on others)
 - f. Ecclesiastical division (church division, especially in the form of denominationalism)
4. This sin is committed when we confuse...
 - a. Prejudice with principle
 - b. Unreasonable stubbornness with unwavering resolution

D. HAIREISIS (heresies, factions)...

1. This word appears close in meaning to “dichostasia” (dissensions)
2. As used in the NT, it most commonly denotes a body of people belonging to a particular school of thought or action
 - a. Such as the “sect” of the Sadducees - **Ac 5:17**
 - b. Or the “sect” of the Pharisees - **Ac 15:5**
3. The early Christians were often accused of being a “sect” - **Ac 24:5; 24:14; 28:22**
4. Peter used it to describe those false teachers who will bring in destructive divisions - **2 Pe 2:1**
5. Thus it refers to divisiveness, especially that brought about by false teaching
6. Only later in history did this word come to mean a belief or doctrine which is contrary to orthodoxy or the truth

[Like the sins of “**hatred, contentions, jealousies...envy**”, the four sins of “**outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies**” all contribute to disrupting the fellowship and unity that should be found in the body of Christ. That such is true may help us to appreciate...]

II. WHY THESE SINS ARE INCLUDED IN THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

A. BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS DID ON THE CROSS...

1. It is true that He died to reconcile man back to God - cf. **2 Co 5:18-21**
2. But also to reconcile man back to man in one body! - cf. **Ep 2:13-16**

B. BECAUSE WE ARE TO PRESERVE THIS RECONCILIATION...

1. Not only the “vertical” reconciliation we have with God, which we preserve by living holy lives (which is why we must avoid sins of moral impurity)
2. But also the “horizontal” reconciliation we have with one another, which we preserve by maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the body of peace - cf. **Ep 4:1-3**

C. THEREFORE, INFRACTIONS OF THE LAW OF LOVE...

1. Undo the work of Christ on the cross!
 - a. Dare we commit sins of moral impurity to jeopardize our reconciliation with God?
 - b. Then neither should we violate the law of love and jeopardize our reconciliation with one another!
2. Are in direct violation to:
 - a. The will of Christ concerning unity - cf. **Jn 17:20-23**
 - b. The command of Paul concerning division - cf. **1 Co 1:10-13**

CONCLUSION

1. Indeed, these “infractions of the law of love” are serious offenses...
 - a. Not only because they undo the work of Christ on the cross
 - b. But because they can keep us out of the kingdom of heaven! - **Ga 5:21**
2. We are not only to avoid these sins ourselves, but those who persistently engage in them...
 - a. As instructed by Paul - **Ro 16:17-18**
 - b. One reason for avoiding such is found in **Pro 23:24-25...**

*“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go,
Lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”*

How much better it would be to develop a friendship with Christ, to learn of His ways, and develop those qualities that constitute the fruit of the Spirit! - cf. **Ga 5:22-23**

The Flesh And The Spirit

Sins Of Intemperance

INTRODUCTION

1. For several lessons we have focused on the “works of the flesh” listed in **Ga 5:19-21**
2. We have broken them up into several categories, including...
 - a. **Sins of moral impurity** (adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness)
 - b. **Idolatry and sorcery**
 - c. **Infractions of the law of love** (hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy)
3. In this study, we shall end our study of the works of the flesh by considering two sins...
 - a. They are **drunkenness** and **revelries**, which can be classified as **sins of intemperance**
 - b. (Some of the oldest manuscripts do not include “murder”, which probably would be best categorized as one of the “infractions of the law of love”)
4. We shall also make an observation on the manner in which Paul concludes his list of the “works of the flesh”

[We begin by considering the two...]

I. SINS OF INTEMPERANCE

A. METHE (drunkenness)...

1. This word describes the state of intoxication due to alcohol
2. The Bible is very strong in...
 - a. Its condemnation of drunkenness - cf. **1 Co 5:11; 6:9-10**
 - b. Its warning about the dangers of drinking - cf. **Pro 20:1; 23:29-35**
3. What about “drinking” that does not lead to “drunkenness”?
 - a. The level of alcohol in modern day alcoholic beverages makes it difficult to distinguish between the two
 - 1) Levels of alcohol are much higher today due to advanced distilling techniques
 - 2) Some of the strongest drinks in the past were not much stronger than our mild beers today, thus making it much easier to get drunk today
 - 3) In ancient Greece there was very little drunkenness, for the normal practice was to dilute two parts of wine to three parts of water
 - b. The Christian is also bound by the principle of influence - cf. **Ro 14:13-21**
 - 1) Should Christians engage in an activity (social drinking) that contributes to...
 - a) The number one drug problem in our country? (1 in 9 are alcoholics)
 - b) The senseless killing of 25,000 innocent victims a year? (half of all driving related accidents involve driving under the influence of alcohol)
 - c) An estimated 25% of divorces? (which God hates - **Mal 2:16**)
 - 2) The responsibility of the Christian regarding influence is clear - **Ro 14:21; 1 Co 10:31-33**
 - a) Only the insensitive and selfish Christian would try to justify engaging in social

drinking today

- b) The mature Christian considers whether the practice glorifies God, and benefits his fellow man

B. KOMOS (revelries, revellings, carousing)...

1. This word refers to feasts and drinking parties that were often extended till late at night and indulge in revelry
2. Such behavior is condemned not only here, but also in **Ro 13:12-14**
3. Some modern day forms of this sin would include what goes on at...
 - a. Mardi Gras in New Orleans
 - b. Many New Year's parties
 - c. Some office Christmas' parties
 - d. Some music concerts
4. It does not require too much wisdom to see why such behavior is condemned
 - a. How many friendships, marriages, etc., have been destroyed by unrestrained behavior that goes on at such functions?
 - b. Even the "innocent" can often get caught up in the excitement and do something that ruins the rest of their life!
5. In **1 Pe 4:3-4**, Peter states that...
 - a. Such behavior as Christians is unbecoming
 - b. The world thinks us strange for not engaging in such things

[The world may think us strange because we refrain from such things as **drunkenness** and **revelries**; but as Peter goes on to say in **1 Pe 4:5**, all will have to give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. It is in view of the Judgment that prompts Christians to take the "works of the flesh" seriously. And not just those specifically mentioned in **Ga 5:19-21**, but as Paul goes on to say...]

II. "...AND THE LIKE"

A. CONCLUDING HIS LIST IN THIS WAY IMPLIES...

1. His list is not to be taken as all inclusive
2. The sins listed are to give us a basic idea of the kind of things we are to avoid
3. We must apply discernment on many activities which may not be specifically condemned in the Scriptures
 - a. Many people want a "Thou shall not..." for anything to be wrong
 - b. But the Bible does not list everything that is wrong (if it did, you would have to carry it around in a wheel barrow)
 - c. Instead, we are given basic principles of conduct, with some specific examples to illustrate such principles
 - d. We are expected to exercise discernment concerning good and evil using the principles found in the Scriptures - cf. **He 5:12-14**

B. DETERMINING THINGS THAT ARE "LIKE" THESE SINS...

1. Today we are often faced with issues that may not be specifically mentioned in the Bible
 - a. E.g., questions related to dancing, drugs, movies, music, smoking, television programs.
 - b. How do I know when something not specifically addressed is right or wrong?
2. One helpful way is to compare the activity in question to the two lists found in **Ga 5:19-23**
 - a. Is the active "like" the works of the flesh?
 - b. Or is it "like" the fruit of the Spirit?

3. The better we understand these “works of the flesh” (as well as what constitutes the “fruit of the Spirit), the better we are to make decisions conducive to godly living

CONCLUSION

1. Such has been the purpose of this study: to learn what sort of things constitute the “works of the flesh” so that we know what to avoid
2. For remember what Paul has written...

***“Those who practice SUCH THINGS will not inherit the kingdom of God”
(Ga 5:21)***

3. Whether it be one of those things specifically listed, or something “such like” them, the consequences will be devastating!
4. One last note: the use of the word “**practice**” in the above verse implies that Paul is warning against those who persistently engage in such sins and refuse to repent...
 - a. We have all been guilty of one or more of the things that can keep us out of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. But by God’s grace anyone can receive forgiveness, as implied in this passage:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Co 6:9-11)

If you are willing to give up the “practice” of such sins, you too can have your sins washed away! - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Love

INTRODUCTION

1. Having considered the manifold works of the flesh, we now focus our attention to “the fruit of the Spirit”
2. Have you noticed that the word **fruit** is singular, while **works** is plural?
 - a. This suggests that the individual works of the flesh are varied and not necessarily related
 - b. But the fruit of the Spirit, though possessing various characteristics, is in reality **one**, made possible by the combination of all nine characteristics in these verses
 - c. A person may be guilty of the works of the flesh when only committing one of the works
 - d. But a person cannot be said to be producing the fruit of the Spirit unless all nine qualities are demonstrated together in his or her life
 - 1) Similar to the graces as listed in **2 Pe 1:5-8**
 - 2) Where the expression “*add to your...*” implies the graces are intricately connected to each other and are all necessary to growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ
3. So while a person may possess one or more of these graces listed in **Ga 5:22-23**, that alone does not constitute the fruit of the Spirit; one who is led by the Spirit will produce them all!
4. As we begin our examination of the fruit of the Spirit, it is only natural that the virtue of **love** should head the list...
 - a. For God is love - **1 Jn 4:8**
 - b. Love is the greatest virtue of all - **1 Co 13:13**

[But what is love? What place does it have in the life of the Christian? How can we best demonstrate our love toward God and man? These are some of the questions we shall seek to answer in this lesson as we begin with...]

I. THE DEFINITION OF LOVE

A. THE GREEKS HAD FOUR WORDS WHICH WE TRANSLATE “LOVE”...

1. **EROS** - carnal, sexual love
2. **PHILIA** - the love of close friendship
3. **STORGE** - the love of family relationships
4. **AGAPE** - that love which seeks only the highest good of others
 - a. It is this love that is Paul mentions in our text, and defines in **1 Co 13:4-8a**
 - b. Jesus uses the same word in **Mt 5:43-48**

B. TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT “AGAPE”...

1. “Agape has to do with the mind: it is not simply an emotion which rise unbidden in our hearts; it is a principle by which we deliberately live. Agape has supremely to do with the will.” - **Barclay**
2. It is not an uncontrolled reaction of the heart, but a concentrated exercise of the will
3. It is a caring love one which becomes involved with the need of others

4. It does not depend upon the one being loved having to earn such love
5. It is not an exclusive love...
 - a. Expressed only to select few
 - b. But an all-embracing benevolence, shown toward all

C. THE PERFECT ILLUSTRATION OF “AGAPE”...

1. It begins with the God of love - cf. **2 Co 13:11**
 - a. His love is a completely undeserved love - **Ro 5:8**
 - b. His love is an inseparable love - **Ro 8:35-39**
 - c. Indeed, His love is a great love willing to save sinners! - **Ep 2:4-7**
2. It finds its complete fulfillment in Christ
 - a. God’s love reaches its peak in His Son Jesus Christ - cf. **Ro 8:39**
 - b. Jesus has fully demonstrated such love - **Jn 15:13**
 - c. Therefore we come to know what love really is when we look at Jesus Christ - cf. **1 Jn 3:16**

II. LOVE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

A. THE PLACE OF LOVE...

1. It is to be the “atmosphere” in which the Christian walks - **Ep 5:1-2**
2. It is to be the “tie that binds” the “garment” the Christian is to put on - **Co 3:12-14**
3. It is to be the “universal motive” for all that we do - **1 Co 16:14**
4. It is to prevent our Christian liberty from turning into destructive selfishness - **Ga 5:13**
5. It is to characterize our preaching and teaching of the truth - **Ep 4:15**

B. THE DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE...

1. Demonstrating our love toward God
 - a. Improper demonstrations:
 - 1) Some think we prove our love by shouting from the roof top
 - 2) Others, by putting it on a bumper sticker and honking if they love Jesus
 - 3) And others, think that whatever they do “in the name of the Lord” will be pleasing to Him

-- Yet consider Jesus’ words in **Mt 7:21-23**
 - b. Proper demonstration of love toward God:
 - 1) Keeping His commandments - **Jn 14:15,21,23-24; 15:10,14**
 - 2) Loving our brethren - **1 Jn 4:20-21**

-- Do we really love God? What is our attitude toward keeping His commandments and loving the brethren?
2. Demonstrating our love toward man
 - a. Showing love toward those who are brethren in Christ
 - 1) Love for one another is fundamental to the doctrine of Christ - **1 Jn 3:11; Jn 13:34-35**
 - 2) We best demonstrate our love toward our brethren by...
 - a) Helping them when they are in physical need - **1 Jn 3:16-18**
 - b) Helping them when they are in spiritual need - **1 Pe 4:8; Ja 5:19-20**
 - c) Loving God and keeping His commandments - **1 Jn 5:2**
 - b. Showing love toward those who are not Christians
 - 1) Love for others must go beyond loving those who love us - cf. **Lk 6:27-36**
 - 2) We demonstrate that we are truly the children of God (and led by the Spirit) when

out of love we:

- a) Do good to them that hate us
- b) Bless those that curse us
- c) Pray for those that spitefully misuse us
- d) Don't resist them when they do evil to us
- e) Do unto them as we would have them do unto us
- f) Treat them as our Father in heaven treated us!

CONCLUSION

1. It should not be surprising to learn that one who produces the fruit of the Spirit demonstrates the virtue of **love** in his or her life
 - a. The Father demonstrated love in offering His Son as a sacrifice for sin
 - b. The Son personified love in the way He lived and died for us
 - c. The Spirit of God revealed what love is through the Word
 - Shall not the one born of God and walking by the Spirit manifest love in both his attitude and actions?
2. Even if we already excel in the matter of love...
 - a. There is always room for growth - cf. **1 Th 4:9-10**
 - b. There is always the need for prayers such as this one:

“And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you” (1 Th 3:12)

We have spoken of God's wonderful love for us; have you yet responded to that love? - cf. **Ro 2:4-5**

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Joy

INTRODUCTION

1. Those who are influenced and directed by the Holy Spirit will produce *“the fruit of the Spirit”* in their lives - cf. **Ga 5:22-23**
 - a. We noted in our previous study that there is not a plurality of fruits, but one fruit
 - b. Yes, only one fruit that is made up of several interrelated graces or virtues, all of which will be manifested if one is truly walking in the Spirit
2. Prominent, of course, will be the virtue of **love**, which we observed...
 - a. Was defined as **active good will**, that which seeks the highest good of others
 - b. Is best exemplified by Jesus Christ, who through His example has taught us what love really is - cf. **Jn 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16**
 - c. Should be the “universal motive” for all that we do - **1 Co 16:14**
3. As noted in **Ga 5:22**, the fruit of the Spirit also involves **joy**...
 - a. It is interesting to note the relationship between the Holy Spirit and joy in several passages:
 - 1) The kingdom of God is *“joy in the Holy Spirit”* - cf. **Ro 14:17**
 - 2) The Thessalonians had received the word *“with joy of the Holy Spirit”* - **1 Th 1:6**
 - 3) And of course, our text in **Ga 5:22**
 - b. Therefore, one who is led by the Spirit, and walking by the Spirit, will be someone filled with much joy in his or her life!

[But what is joy? How can Christians be filled with joy? As we seek to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, let's take a closer look at **joy**...]

I. THE DEFINITION OF JOY

A. THE GREEK WORD IS “CHARA”...

1. Which Thayer defines as **“joy, gladness”**
2. Vine adds **“delight”**
- By one count the word is used **60** times in the NT

B. THE VERB FORM OF “CHARA” IS “CHAIREIN”...

1. Which is most often translated **“to rejoice”**
2. It is used **72** times in the NT

C. CLOSELY RELATED IS THE WORD “CHARIS”...

1. Which is the word most often translated as **“grace”**
2. **Vine** defines grace in the objective sense as **“that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard”**
3. Therefore grace is what produces joy!

D. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GRACE AND JOY...

1. One's joy is directly proportional to the grace one has received, or at least to the perception

of grace that one has received

- a. Receive a small gift, and your joy might be minimal
 - b. Receive a large gift, and your joyous reaction is greater
2. When Christians' don't have much joy in their lives, something is wrong: "If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere." - **Billy Sunday**
 3. Here is one explanation why Christians may be joyless: "The reason why many poor souls have so little heat of joy in their hearts, is that they have so little light of Gospel knowledge in their mind. The further a soul stands from the light of truth, the further he must needs be from the heat of comfort." - **William Gurnall**

E. THE JOY OF THE LORD IS ABIDING....

1. The Lord certainly does not want Christians to be joyless - cf. **Jn 15:11**
2. The joy He gives is "*inexpressible and full of glory*", able to sustain us in the worst of circumstances - cf. **1 Pe 1:6-8**
 - a. Unlike the "*passing pleasures of sin*" (**He 11:25**) which are fleeting
 - b. Even the good things in life eventually prove to be "*vanity*" (**Ecc 2:10-11**)
3. Therefore He has made it possible for the Christian to say with Paul: "*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*" - **Ph 4:4**

[A failure to remember those things graciously given us which make for joy in our lives can explain why some Christians do not have the degree of **joy (gladness, delight)** they should have. But Christians have every reason to be joyful. We just need to remember what it is that produces joy. Let's review just a few...]

II. SOURCES OF JOY FOR THE CHRISTIAN

A. JOY IS A CONSEQUENCE OF FAITH...

1. Joy comes from having a **confident trust** (faith) in God - cf. **Ph 1:25**
 - a. Without faith in God and Christ, we cannot experience abiding joy
 - b. Why is faith essential to joy?
 - 1) It dispels the attitudes that prevent joy from occurring
 - 2) Such as **worry** (cf. **Mt 6:25-30**), **doubt** and **fear** (cf. **Mt 14:27-31**)
 2. Since joy is based upon faith, this emphasizes the importance of the Word of God in producing joy...
 - a. For faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**
 - 1) The Word of God produces faith
 - 2) In turn faith produces joy - cf. **Ro 15:13**
 - b. The very teachings of Jesus are designed to give us joy - **Jn 15:11; 17:13**
- **Thus the need to read and study the Bible daily!**

B. JOY IS ALSO THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE...

1. Obedience to the Word of God fosters joy in the hearts of the obedient
 - a. Notice the conversion of the Samaritans - **Ac 8:5-8**
 - b. Also the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:35-38**
 - c. And the conversion of the Thessalonians - **1 Th 1:6**
 2. Conversely, disobedience dispels joy and produces fear! - cf. **He 10:26-27**
- **Could lack of joy be an indication of lack of obedience on your part?**

C. JOY IS BASED UPON FORGIVENESS...

1. The guilt of sin is a major reason why many people lack joy
 - a. Awareness of such guilt causes stress, unhappiness, and worry
 - b. Even as Paul illustrated in describing the condition of one struggling with the problem of sin - cf. **Ro 7:22-24**
 2. But where there is forgiveness, there can be joy!
 - a. Consider the 32nd Psalm of David...
 - 1) He introduces his theme by speaking of the “blessedness” (or joy) of one whose sins are forgiven - **Psa 32:1-2**
 - 2) He describes how the guilt of his sin affected him inwardly - **Psa 32:3-4**
 - 3) But at last he confessed his sin and was forgiven - **Psa 32:5**
 - 4) He describes the joy that the righteous (i.e., the forgiven) can experience - **Psa 32:10-11**
 - b. The correlation between forgiveness and joy is also seen in **Psa 51:7-12**
 - c. Today, those in Christ can enjoy forgiveness of sins and the joy that follows - cf. **Ro 5:1-2,10-11**
- **If you have not yet received the forgiveness found only in Christ, there is no way to experience the abiding joy that comes only “in the Lord”**

D. JOY ALSO COMES FROM CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP...

1. It is a joy just to “see” such fellowship
 - a. Paul experienced joy by witnessing love and fellowship in Philemon - **Phile 7**
 - b. He also found great joy in learning of the restoration of brethren - **2 Co 7:7**
 2. How much more, the joy of “experiencing” such fellowship!
 - a. Paul rejoiced in the fellowship he had with the Philippians - **Ph 4:10**
 - b. John spoke of the joy that comes of Christian fellowship reunited - **2 Jn 12**
- **Are you developing and nurturing the kind of Christian fellowship that adds to our joy?**

E. JOY COMES FROM CHRISTIAN SERVICE...

1. There is the joy of spreading the gospel
 - a. Barnabas rejoiced in the conversions at Antioch - **Ac 11:20-23**
 - b. The Christian Jews delighted to hear of the conversion of the Gentiles - **Ac 15:3**
 2. There is great joy in seeing the spiritual progress of others
 - a. This was a frequent source of joy to Paul - **Ro 16:19; Co 2:5; 1 Th 3:6-9**
 - b. John wrote that this was the highest form of joy - **3 Jn 4**
 - c. One reason this is true is that those whom we have brought to Christ...
 - 1) Will not only be a source of joy for us now
 - 2) But especially in the day of Christ! - cf. **1 Th 2:19-20**
 3. Jesus also spoke of the “blessedness” (i.e., joy) of giving to others - **Ac 20:35**
- **All those who are willing to become involved in serving the Lord, whether it be through teaching or the giving of one’s time, energy or money, will experience joy from such service!**

CONCLUSION

1. The wonderful joy of the Lord is open to all who would receive it through such things as:
 - a. Faith in Christ
 - b. Obedience to His Will
 - c. Forgiveness through His blood

- d. Fellowship with His disciples
- e. Service in His Kingdom
- And it is the kind of joy that can sustain us through life, as Nehemiah told Israel:

“The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8:10)

- 2. Certainly those who are...
 - a. Born of the Spirit
 - b. Walking in the Spirit
 - c. Being led by the Spirit...will be involved in all these things, and as a consequence will bear the fruit of the Spirit which includes “joy”
- 3. Why not begin experiencing this joy today by...
 - a. Obeying the gospel of Christ
 - b. Receiving the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ
 - c. Participate in the fellowship of Christian love as you work toward bringing others to salvation in Christ - cf. **Ac 2:38-42**

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Peace

INTRODUCTION

1. Another grace experienced by those whose lives are in tune with the Spirit of God is that of **peace** - **Ga 5:22**
2. That the Spirit of God should induce peace in the children of God should be understandable in light of the fact that...
 - a. Their heavenly Father is **“the God of peace”** - **1 Th 5:23**
 - b. Their Lord Jesus Christ is called **“Prince of peace”** - **Isa 9:6**
3. But one might ask...
 - a. What is this **peace** enjoyed by those who walk in the Spirit?
 - b. How does one come to have this peace?
 - c. How we can be sure to preserve this peace, and enjoy it to its fullest extent?

[As we continue our study of **“The Flesh And The Spirit”**, and especially as we focus on **“the fruit of the Spirit”** (**Ga 5:22-23**), we now turn our attention to the subject of peace...]

I. DEFINING “PEACE”

A. PEACE IS SOMETIMES DEFINED IN NEGATIVE TERMS...

1. As though peace were simply the absence of conflict
2. For example...
 - a. **“The only condition of peace in this world is to have no ideas, or, at least, not to express them.”** - **Oliver Wendell Holmes**
 - b. **“He knows peace who has forgotten desire”** - **The Bhagavad Gita**

B. A BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF PEACE INCLUDES POSITIVE ELEMENTS...

1. The Greek word is **eirene**, which is defined as:
 - a. **“peace between individuals, i.e., harmony, concord”** - **Thayer**
 - b. **“acc. to a conception distinctly peculiar to the N.T., the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is”** - **Thayer**
2. So rather than simply an absence of conflict, the peace God provides is...
 - a. A condition positive in nature
 - a. In which there is active fellowship, harmony and concord between individuals

[Having defined peace as a blessing that ought to be desired and enjoyed by all, let’s consider what the Bible has to say about...]

II. THE SOURCE OF THIS PEACE

A. IT COMES FROM JESUS, WHO CAME TO BRING PEACE...

1. It was prophesied He would be the **“Prince of peace”** - **Isa 9:6-7**

2. When He came, He came preaching peace - **Ac 10:36**
3. Indeed, He offers peace...
 - a. That the world is not able to give - **Jn 14:27**
 - b. That one can possess even in the midst of tribulation - **Jn 16:33**

B. THE PEACE JESUS BRINGS INVOLVES...

1. **Peace with God - Ro 5:1-11**
 - a. Which comes when we are “justified by faith” - **Ro 5:1**
 - b. Which is accompanied with rejoicing and love, even in tribulation - **Ro 5:2-5**
 - c. Which is made possible by the loving sacrifice of Jesus’ blood - **Ro 5:6-9**
 - d. And continues by virtue of His resurrected life - **Ro 5:10-11**; e.g., **He 7:25**
2. **Peace with man - Ep 2:11-22**
 - a. Jew and Gentile, once alienated from one another, can be at peace in Jesus Christ
 - b. Made possible through the same act which makes peace with God: the death of Jesus Christ! - **Ep 2:15-16**
 - c. Thus Jesus has come preaching peace to all mankind - **Ep 2:17**
 - d. The wonders of this peace are described as Paul continues...
 - 1) A peace that allows access by one Spirit to the Father - **Ep 2:18**
 - 2) A peace where all can be fellow-citizens with the saints - **Ep 2:19a**
 - 3) A peace where all can be members of the family of God - **Ep 2:19b**
 - 4) A peace where all can be a temple in the Lord, a habitation of God in the Spirit - **Ep 2:20-22**
3. **Peace with self**
 - a. Peace within one’s own self is mostly a byproduct...
 - 1) Of being at peace with God
 - 2) Of being at peace with those around us
 - So when Jesus brings us peace with God and man (see above), peace within
 - b. But there is a peace, one that blesses the soul from within...
 - 1) It comes from God
 - 2) It surpasses all understanding
 - 3) It serves as a fortress to guard our hearts and minds
 - ...and it comes through Christ Jesus! - **Ph 4:7**

[When one is in Christ Jesus, enjoying the blessings of justification, along with reconciliation with both God and man, peace is a natural byproduct. But is there anything we can and should be doing to preserve the peace we have from God in Christ Jesus? Indeed there is...]

III. PRESERVING OUR PEACE

A. MAINTAINING PEACE WITH GOD AND SELF REQUIRES...

1. Keeping our minds set on God - cf. **Isa 26:3**
2. Loving God’s word, and heeding His commandments - **Psa 119:165; Isa 48:18**; cf. **Jn 14:23**
3. Being diligent in prayer - **Ph 4:6-7**
4. Filling our mind with spiritual thoughts - **Ph 4:8-9**; cf. **Ro 8:5-8**

B. MAINTAINING PEACE WITH ONE ANOTHER REQUIRES...

1. Being at peace with God first - cf. **Pro 16:7**
 - a. How can we hope to make peace with others when we are not at peace within?

- b. Making peace with God gives us the peace within whereby we are in a better position to make peace with others!
2. A concentrated effort to “pursue” peace - cf. **1 Pe 3:8-12**
 - a. Peace must be sought and pursued - **1 Pe 3:11**
 - b. Peter mentions some of the qualities necessary - **1 Pe 3:8-9**
 - 1) Being of one mind
 - 2) Having compassion for one another
 - 3) Love as brothers, tenderhearted, and courteous
 - 4) Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but responding with a blessing
-- Only then can we expect to **“love life and see good days”!** - **1 Pe 3:10**
3. Please note that the pursuit of peace does not require compromise of truth
 - a. For the wisdom that is from above is **“first pure, then peaceable...”** - **Ja 3:17**
 - b. But if we wish to bear the fruit of righteousness, it must be **“sown in peace by those who make peace”!** - **Ja 3:18**

CONCLUSION

1. Let us never forget that Jesus, as the Prince of peace...
 - a. Came preaching peace
 - b. Died on the cross to make peace possible with God, man, and self
 - c. Is the conduit through which God now grants peace to man, as pronounced the night He was born - cf. **Lk 2:11-14**
2. Indeed, the element of peace is a key feature of His kingdom - cf. **Ro 14:17-19**
 - a. We should therefore **“let the peace of God rule in our hearts”** - **Co 3:15**
 - b. And allow Jesus to give us His peace as expressed in this prayer:

“Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.” (2 Th 3:16)

Do you wish to ensure that the Lord is always with you, that you might experience that “peace which surpasses all understanding”? Then heed what Jesus Himself said to His disciples shortly before ascending into heaven... - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Longsuffering

INTRODUCTION

1. In discussing “the fruit of the Spirit”, the nine graces listed in **Ga 5:22-23** are often divided into three groups:
 - a. The first group contains those graces **which turns one’s thought toward God...**
 - 1) Love (for love is of God)
 - 2) Joy (for we rejoice in the Lord)
 - 3) Peace (for from God comes the peace that surpasses understanding)
 - b. The second group contains those graces **that directs our attention to our fellowman...**
 - 4) Longsuffering
 - 5) Kindness
 - 6) Goodness
 - c. The third group of graces **refer more directly to oneself...**
 - 7) Faithfulness
 - 8) Gentleness (meekness)
 - 9) Self-control

2. Having examined those graces in the first group (love, joy, peace), we now come to the first one in the second group...
 - a. The grace is **longsuffering** (“patience” in the NASV)
 - b. The Greek word is **makrothumia**
 - 1) Literally, it means being “long-tempered” (the opposite of short-tempered)
 - 2) It is defined as “patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs”
- **Thayer**
 - 3) “Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish. It is the opposite of anger and is associated with mercy, and is used of God.” - **Vine**
 - c. If God is longsuffering, we should not be surprised that those who “walk in the Spirit” are also longsuffering!

[As we seek to work in conjunction with the Spirit of God to develop His fruit in our lives, it might be helpful to nurture longsuffering by recalling some...]

I. EXAMPLES OF LONGSUFFERING

A. THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD...

1. God has been longsuffering toward man
 - a. He was in the days of Noah - **1 Pe 3:20**
 - b. He was in His dealings with the nation of Israel - **Neh 9:16-21**
 - c. And He is longsuffering today as well - **2 Pe 3:7-9**; e.g., **1 Ti 1:15-16**
2. The purpose of His longsuffering:
 - a. That we might have salvation! - **2 Pe 3:15**
 - b. That we might be led to repentance! - **Ro 2:4**
 - c. That those who fear Him and keep His commandments might delight in His

lovingkindness, even though they have sinned - cf. **Psa 103:8-18**

B. THE LONGSUFFERING OF DAVID...

1. Is best seen in his dealings with King Saul
 - a. Saul had made several attempts to kill David
 - b. David had several opportunities to kill Saul
 - 1) In the cave - **1 Sam 24:1-22**
 - 2) In the camp - **1 Sam 26:1-25**
2. Out of respect for the Lord's anointed king (Saul), David demonstrated the true meaning of longsuffering: "**slowness in avenging wrongs**"

[So from both God Himself, and one who was "a man after God's own heart" (**1 Sam 13:14**), we learn what the quality of longsuffering involves. Now let's consider its necessity in the life of the Christian...]

II. THE NECESSITY OF LONGSUFFERING

A. NECESSARY IF WE WISH GOD TO BE LONGSUFFERING TO US...

1. As Jesus illustrated in "The Parable Of The Unmerciful Servant" (note particularly **Mt 18:32-35**)
2. Compare also the following verses: **Co 3:12-13**
 - a. Christ has forgiven us
 - b. Therefore we must be longsuffering and willing to forgive one another!

B. NECESSARY TO MAINTAINING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT...

1. A task we face, in keeping with a walk that is worthy of our calling - **Ep 4:1-3**
2. Without longsuffering, the sins we commit against one another will quickly destroy the unity for which Christ died!

C. NECESSARY FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS OF THE GOSPEL...

1. As Paul charged Timothy - **2 Ti 4:2**
2. As Paul had demonstrated by example - **2 Ti 3:10**
3. No servant of the Lord can faithfully correct those in opposition, without the quality of longsuffering (patience in the NKJV) - **2 Ti 2:24-26**

[So to be "useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (cf. **2 Ti 2:21**), and even to ensure God's longsuffering toward us (cf. **Mt 18:35**), we need to develop the virtue of longsuffering. Here are a couple of thoughts on how...]

III. DEVELOPING LONGSUFFERING

A. THROUGH LOVE...

1. It is love that "suffers long" - cf. **1 Co 13:4-8a**
 - a. Unless we love those who have wronged us, there will not be sufficient motivation to bear with them
 - b. Therefore love (active good will) is fundamental to being slow to avenge wrong
2. By growing in love (to remember how, cf. **1 Th 4:9; 1 Jn 3:16**), we will grow in patience!

B. THROUGH PRAYER...

1. Paul evidently believed prayer would help the Colossians to have "all patience and

- longsuffering with joy” - cf. **Co 1:9-11**
2. Certainly the God who is longsuffering (cf. **Psa 145:8**) will strengthen those who desire to be like Him!

CONCLUSION

1. God has certainly revealed Himself to be longsuffering, as David wrote in his psalm:

***“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious,
Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.” - Psa 86:15***

2. For those who desire to be truly His children, and led by His Spirit, they will want to become like Him, as David wrote just a few verses before:

***“Teach me Your way, O Lord;
I will walk in Your truth;” - Psa 86:11a***

3. The way of the Lord is truly one involving longsuffering, and it will be a quality evident in the lives of those who bear the fruit of the Spirit!

May the Lord help us to be longsuffering with those around us! May we also be careful to respond to the Lord’s longsuffering toward us in the proper way... - cf. **Ro 2:4-6**

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Kindness

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue our look at those qualities to be present when one is producing the fruit of the Spirit in his or her life, we now come to **kindness** (gentleness, KJV)
2. The Greek word is **chrestotes** {khray-stot'-ace}...
 - a. This word describes “the sympathetic kindness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain” - **Plummer**
 - 1) It therefore describes a quality that makes other people feel at ease when with you
 - 2) They know you will be kind, or gentle
 - b. “It is a beautiful word for the expression of a beautiful grace” - **Trench**

[To help us better understand what it means to have “kindness”, let’s take a look at how it is used in the Bible, beginning with...]

I. KINDNESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. IN THE SEPTUAGINT, IT USED MORE OF GOD THAN ANYONE ELSE...

1. For example, consider these two verses, where the word is translated “good”:
 - a. *“Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”* - **Psa 106:1**
 - b. *“The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works”* - **Psa 145:9**
2. The reference in these verses is not to God’s moral goodness, but rather to His kindness, especially as expressed in His mercy
3. It is the kindness of God that moves the Psalmist’s heart, and which should also move us to worship the LORD - cf. **Psa 100**
 - a. In this psalm we find a call to come to the Lord with joy, thanksgiving and praise
 - b. Why? *“For the LORD is good...”* - **Psa 100:4-5**

B. WRITERS OF THE O.T. SAW GOD’S KINDNESS EXPRESSED...

1. In nature - **Psa 65:9-13**
2. In the events of history - **Psa 145:1-7**
3. In the instructions of His Word - **Psa 119:65-68; 25:8**
4. In special ways, to certain people...
 - a. To those afflicted, who trust in Him - **Nah 1:7**
 - b. To those poor, who follow Him - **Psa 68:10**
 - c. To all those who hope and trust in Him - **Psa 34:8**
 - d. To all those who fear Him - **Psa 31:19**

[From the kindness of God as revealed in the Old Testament, let’s move on to consider...]

II. KINDNESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. ONCE AGAIN WE READ OF THE KINDNESS OF GOD...

1. In nature, even to ungrateful and evil men - **Lk 6:35**; cf. **Mt 5:45**
2. In the giving of His Son, in whom we have salvation - **Ti 3:4-7**
3. Even in the ages to come - **Ep 2:7**

B. SINCE GOD IS KIND, SO HIS CHILDREN SHOULD BE KIND...

1. Kindness is part of the Christian “garment” we are to put on - cf. **Co 3:12**
2. Kindness is to characterize our treatment of one another - **Ep 4:31-32**

CONCLUSION

1. Do we act with kindness toward others?
 - a. So that others are “at ease” in our presence
 - b. So that others feel they can draw close to us?
 - Or do we with sharp words, cold shoulders, or arrogant condescension discourage others from feeling comfortable around us?
2. Remember that kindness is the “sympathetic kindliness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease...”
 - a. “This Christian kindness is a lovely thing, and its loveliness comes from the fact that Christian kindness means treating others in the way in which God has treated us.” - **Barclay**
 - b. If we truly desire to be “*sons of the Highest*”, then we must imitate the kindness of God - cf. **Lk 6:35-36**

Speaking of the kindness of God, what is in store for those who reject His kindness? - cf. **Ro 2:4-11**
What about those who do not continue in His kindness? - cf. **Ro 11:22** Have you responded to the kindness of God in accordance to His will...?

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Goodness

INTRODUCTION

1. At this point in our study on “the fruit of the Spirit”, we are examining those graces which relate especially to our dealings with our fellowman...
 - a. **Longsuffering**, defined as “that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish.” - **Vine**
 - b. **Kindness**, defined as “the sympathetic kindness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain” - **Plummer**
 - c. And now we come to **goodness**...
2. The Greek word is **agathosune** {ag-ath-o-soo'-nay}...
 - a. This word is perhaps the most difficult to define, for it is so general in nature
 - b. The difficulty is seen in that the word “goodness” takes its meaning from its context
 - 1) E.g., we might say “that is a good animal”, or “he is a good man”
 - 2) But good in what way? The context defines the sense...
 - c. The problem with its use in **Ga 5:22** is that there is little in the context to guide us
3. But there may be at least two ways we might be able to come to a proper understanding of this word...
 - a. Comparing it to the words “just” and “evil”
 - b. Considering two examples in the New Testament of “good” people

[Let's begin by...]

I. COMPARING “GOODNESS” TO THE WORDS “JUST” AND “EVIL”

A. THE GREEKS OFTEN COMPARED “GOODNESS” WITH “JUSTICE”...

1. **Barclay** writes of how the Greeks compared these words:
 - a. “Justice, they say, is the quality which gives a man what is due him;”
 - b. “...goodness is the quality which is out to do far more than that, and which desires to give a man all that is to his benefit and help.”
2. Again, **Barclay** writes: “The man who is *just* sticks to the letter of his bond; the man who is *good* goes far beyond it.”
- This suggests that the primary idea of goodness is “generosity”

B. IN THE NT, THE WORD FROM WHICH “GOODNESS” COMES IS OFTEN CONTRASTED WITH “EVIL”...

1. In a few places, the words “evil” and “good” have particular meanings
2. In the parable of The Laborers (**Mt 20:15**), “evil” means “envious”, while “good” is used for “generous”
3. In **Mt 6:19-23**...
 - a. The context speaks of an “evil” (or “bad”) eye which is begrudging and ungenerous - cf. **Pro 28:22**
 - b. In contrast to the eye that is “good” which lays up treasure in heaven (by being generous

to others, cf. **1 Ti 6:17-19**)

C. NOW WE CAN BEGIN TO DEFINE “GOODNESS”...

1. The person who displays goodness is not like the person who is simply just...
 - a. The person who is simply just gives only to another what he has earned
 - b. Whereas the person who is good is generous to give what was not deserved
2. The person who displays goodness is not like the person who is evil...
 - a. The person who is evil begrudges everything he has to give
 - b. The person who is good is openhearted and openhanded, i.e., generous

[It has been said that goodness “is easier to recognize than to define”. With that in mind, consider...]

II. TWO EXAMPLES OF “GOOD” PEOPLE

A. BARNABAS WAS A “GOOD” MAN - Ac 11:24

1. He was generous with his possessions
 - a. Cf. **Ac 4:32-37**
 - b. This is consistent with our definition above, that one who is good is generous to give to others what is not deserved
2. He was happy to see the progress of others; i.e., he was not envious
 - a. Cf. **Ac 11:23**
 - b. Again this is consistent with our definition; he was not begrudging another’s success
3. Barnabas was an encourager of others
 - a. Cf. **Ac 11:23**
 - b. He was liberal with his good words, which is how he got his name - cf. **Ac 4:36**

B. DORCAS WAS A “GOOD” WOMAN - Ac 9:36

1. She was “full of good works and charitable deeds”
2. Even in her death, her goodness was being felt
 - a. Cf. **Ac 9:39**, where the widows were showing tunics and garments she had made
 - b. I doubt they were praising her ability to sew, but rather her charity in making such clothes for others (such as the widows)

CONCLUSION

1. All those who are truly led by the Spirit of God will produce the quality of “goodness” - cf. **Ep 5:8-9**
2. That is, doing kind things beyond what is expected or required
 - a. Such was the case of Barnabas and Dorcas
 - b. Paul was confident such was true of the brethren in Rome - **Ro 15:14**
 - Would he have written the same of us?
3. That we should be “full of goodness” is only natural...
 - a. For God who is our Father demonstrated His own “goodness”
 - b. This He did by giving His Son to a sinful world undeserving of such grace - **Ti 3:3-7**
 - Have you submitted to His saving mercy, that “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”? - cf. **Jn 3:5; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38**

If not, then why not do so today, and then heed Paul's call to "goodness"...

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men." (Ti 3:8)

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Faithfulness

INTRODUCTION

1. The seventh quality which Paul lists as the fruit of the Spirit is **faithfulness**...
 - a. The Greek word is **pistis** {pis'-tis}
 - b. In the NT, it is often used of a conviction or belief in respect to God and Christ
 - c. But it also is used to describe the quality of "**fidelity, faithfulness**"
 - 1) "the character of one who can be relied on..." - **Thayer**
 - 2) "faithful, to be trusted, reliable..." - **Vine**
 - d. William Barclay calls it "**the virtue of reliability**"

2. This virtue, unfortunately, is not too common...
 - a. While many may claim it, the wise man declared it hard to find - **Pro 20:6**
 - b. The Psalmist decried the lack of "faithfulness" in his day, describing a condition that sounds much like our situation today - **Psa 12:1-2**
 - Yet, faithfulness is essential for those who would receive the crown of life - **Re 2:10**

3. To encourage the development of this virtue in our lives, in this study we shall...
 - a. Look to Jesus and God as examples of faithfulness
 - b. Suggest a few areas in which we need greater faithfulness

[Anyone who is led by the Spirit of God, will certainly be motivated to produce the virtue of faithfulness in their own lives as they contemplate...]

I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF JESUS AND GOD

A. THE FAITHFULNESS OF JESUS...

1. Jesus was faithful in fulfilling His role as the Son of God
 - a. Just as Moses was faithful as a servant - **He 3:1-2**
 - b. Jesus was faithful in carrying out the work given Him - **Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29**
2. He is also faithful in the role of being our high priest - **He 2:17-18**
 - a. Faithful, because He understands our weaknesses - cf. **He 4:14-15**
 - b. Faithful, because He richly supplies us with grace and mercy - cf. **He 4:16**
- Isn't it wonderful to have a Savior upon Whom we can rely?

B. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD...

1. God has always been known as a God of faithfulness - **Deu 7:9**
2. And toward those who are His children, He is faithful (reliable, trustworthy)...
 - a. Not to allow us to be tempted beyond that we are able to bear - **1 Co 10:13**
 - b. To protect us from the evil one - **2 Th 3:3**
 - c. To complete His work of salvation in us - **1 Th 5:23-24**
- Isn't it wonderful to know that God can be trusted in these and many other ways?

[But to fully benefit from the faithfulness of Jesus and God, we must be faithful as well! - cf. **Re 2:10-11,25-26; 3:11-12**. With that in mind, consider some...]

II. AREAS IN WHICH WE NEED GREATER FAITHFULNESS

A. WE NEED TO BE MORE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND CHRIST...

1. In the way we use our “talents” (abilities and opportunities) - cf. **Mt 25:21**
2. Too often, people are like the one talent man, burying their talent; this greatly displeases the Lord - cf. **Mt 25:24-26**
 - a. Like Moses at the burning bush, they make excuses
 - b. But for every excuse man can devise, God can provide a way for us to be faithful!
3. We begin by being faithful in small things...
 - a. As indicated in Jesus’ comments in **Lk 16:10**
 - b. If we can’t be counted upon for the small things, how can we be expected to be considered reliable when the going gets tough? - cf. **Jer 12:5**

B. WE NEED TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE CHURCH...

1. The family of God always has need of people who are truly faithful (i.e., reliable, trustworthy, loyal)
2. Lack of faithfulness to God’s people can be seen in several ways:
 - a. Forsaking the assembling of ourselves together - **He 10:24-25**
 - b. Lack of participation in the family life of the church
 - 1) Neglecting opportunities to learn and grow together in God’s Word
 - 2) Leaving it to others to carry out the work of the church
 - 3) Not concerned about the welfare of your brothers and sisters in Christ
 - c. We cannot take such unfaithfulness lightly!
 - 1) We will be of little value to those who need us - cf. **Pro 25:19**
 - 2) We actually undermine the work of the Lord! - cf. **Pro 18:9; Mt 12:30**
3. Do you need to have more faithfulness to the church?
 - a. Ask yourself: *“If everyone were as faithful as me, what kind of church would we be?”*
 - 1) Would anyone be here, except for Sunday morning worship?
 - 2) Would there be any teachers for our children’s classes?
 - 3) Would the church be growing, both numerically and spiritually?
 - 4) Would the church even exist?
 - b. Consider this example of “faithfulness” to the church...

Grandma Taw Bow, a resident of Thailand, does not impress strangers. She is small of stature, bent with age, her hands and fingers gnarled with arthritis. She often stands quietly to one side.

Her name translated into English means “Always.” Despite her unimpressive physical appearance, Grandma Always has inspired her missionary friends and Thai Christians by her faithfulness.

A widow and over ninety years of age, she lives as a servant in a Thai home. Every Sunday she walks two miles to church. Out of her income of five cents a day, she regularly gives one day’s wages to the Lord every week.

When her missionary friends drive her home from church services, she gets out, and bows her head in an audible prayer for the missionaries and the work of Christ in Thailand.

One missionary says, “The thought of Grandma Always’ faithfulness humbles and deepens us.” - **A Dictionary Of Christian Illustrations, p. 121**

-- **What the church needs are more “Grandma Always”, both young and old!**

C. WE NEED TO BE MORE FAITHFUL TO OUR FAMILIES...

1. Fathers need to be faithful in fulfilling their spiritual roles - cf. **Ep 6:4**
 2. Mothers need to be faithful in fulfilling their family responsibilities - **Ti 2:3-5**
 3. Of course, husbands and wives need to be faithful to one another in their respective duties - **Ep 5:22-33**
 4. Children, you also have a need to be faithful - cf. **Ep 6:1-3**
- **Do not our families deserve faithful parents and children?**

D. FINALLY, WE NEED TO BE MORE FAITHFUL TO OURSELVES...

1. Shakespeare once described a man: **“He wears his faith as the fashion of his hat.”**
 - a. Too often, some Christians are like that
 - b. If it is fashionable to be a faithful Christian, then they are; if not, then they are not
 2. Those who are this way are only committing spiritual suicide and manslaughter
 - a. That is, they are harming themselves
 - b. And they are harming those who cannot rely upon them
 3. But for those who are faithful to themselves as well as to God...
 - a. Will be preserved by the Lord: **“for the Lord preserves the faithful”** - **Psa 31:23**
 - b. And blessed by the Lord: **“A faithful man will abound with blessings...”** - **Pro 28:20**
- **Do we not owe it to ourselves to be faithful?**

CONCLUSION

1. **William Barclay** ended his examination of this word in this way:
 - a. **“Pistos** is indeed a great word. It describes the man on whose faithful service we may rely, on whose loyalty we may depend, whose word we can unreservedly accept.”
 - b. “It describes the man in whom there is the unswerving and inflexible fidelity of Jesus Christ, and the utter dependability of God.”
2. Yes, the one who is being led by the Spirit of God, to produce the fruit of the Spirit...
 - a. Will follow in the footsteps of the God and Savior he serves
 - b. Those footsteps include the virtue of faithfulness, the virtue of reliability!

Will you not strive to be faithful, in your service to God, the church, your family, even to yourself?

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Gentleness

INTRODUCTION

1. The eighth quality which serves to constitute the fruit of the Spirit is **gentleness** (“meekness” in the KJV)
 - a. The Greek word is **prautes** {prah-ot’-ace}
 - b. This is a difficult word to define, for there really is no English word that corresponds to the Greek
 - c. Also, while **meekness** is a good attempt to translate the word...
 - 1) There is a common misconception about the meaning of “meekness” itself
 - 2) It is often used to suggest a form of cowardice and weakness, but there is no such idea in the Greek word “prautes”
2. The purpose of this lesson will be...
 - a. To define the proper meaning of “gentleness” (“meekness”) as used in **Ga 5:23**
 - b. To consider the place this virtue is to have in lives of Christians

[We begin, then, with...]

I. DEFINING “PRAUTES” (GENTLENESS, MEEKNESS)

A. PRAUTES AS DEFINED BY THE ANCIENT GREEKS...

1. To describe persons or things which have in them a certain soothing quality...
 - E.g., having a humble and kind demeanor which calms another’s anger
2. To describe gentleness of conduct, especially on the part of people who had it in their power to act otherwise...
 - a. E.g., a king forgiving a servant who failed a particular task
 - 1) The king has the authority and power to render punishment
 - 2) But chooses instead to show kindness and forgiveness
 - b. Such a king would be praised for his gentle and meek behavior
3. To describe the ability to take unkind remarks with good nature...
 - a. E.g., as when embroiled in controversy
 - b. Being able to discuss things without losing one’s temper because of unkind and unfair personal remarks
4. Most often, to describe the character in which strength and gentleness are perfectly combined...
 - a. E.g., a horse obedient to the reins, a watchdog friendly to the family owning him
 - b. There is great strength present, but it is tempered by a gentle spirit
5. **Aristotle** had this to say about “prautes”...
 - a. “the ability to bear reproaches and slights with moderation, and not to embark on revenge quickly, and not to be easily provoked to anger, but to be free from bitterness and contentiousness, having tranquillity and stability in the spirit.” - **On Virtues And Vices**
 - b. This does not imply that there is never a place for anger in the gentle man

- c. Indeed, the man who displays “prautes” is angry “on the right grounds, and against the right persons, and in the right manner, and at the right moment, and for the right length of time.” - **Nicomachean Ethics**
- d. “he will err on the side of forgiveness rather than on the side of anger” - **Barclay**

B. PRAUTES AS EXEMPLIFIED BY MOSES AND JESUS...

1. The example of Moses - cf. **Num 12:3**
 - a. Though as God’s chosen servant he could have rebuked Aaron and Miriam, he humbly kept silent - e.g., **Num 12:1-8**
 - b. His silence was not from personal weakness, however, for consider...
 - 1) His reaction to the golden calf - **Ex 32:19-20, 25-28**
 - 2) His pleading with God - **Ex 32:30-32**
 - Indeed, Moses was no spineless coward
 - c. Rather, his meekness was the result of a humble opinion of himself!
2. The example of Jesus - cf. **Mt 11:28-30**
 - a. Notice His meekness at His trial - **Mt 27:12-14**; cf. **Isa 53:7**
 - b. But it was not due to lack of strength...
 - 1) His powerful strength had already been demonstrated:
 - a) In denouncing the Pharisees - **Mt 23:13ff**
 - b) In purging the temple - **Jn 2:14-17**
 - 2) His meekness at the trial was evidence of strength, not weakness!

[Gentleness (or meekness, KJV), then, is that virtuous quality by which...

“we treat all men with perfect courtesy, that we can rebuke without rancor, that we can argue without intolerance, that we can face the truth without resentment, that we can be angry and sin not, that we can be gentle and yet not weak.” - **Barclay**

Again, this quality comes from having a humble opinion of one’s self, along with the inner strength to control one’s emotions, tongue, and behavior. Now let’s consider...]

II. THE PLACE OF GENTLENESS IN THE LIVES OF CHRISTIANS

A. IN PARTICULAR...

1. We are to receive the Word of God with meekness (prautes) - **Ja 1:21**
2. We must approach brethren in error with a spirit of gentleness (prautes) - **Ga 6:1**
3. We must correct those in opposition with humility (prautes) - **2 Ti 2:24-25**
4. We are to answer inquiries concerning our hope with meekness (prautes) - **1 Pe 3:15**

B. IN GENERAL...

1. Meekness (prautes) is necessary for the Christian man who would be wise - cf. **Ja 3:13-18**
2. Meekness (prautes) is necessary for the Christian woman who would be precious in the sight of God - **1 Pe 3:1-6**

CONCLUSION

1. One who is walking by the Spirit is going to be a gentle person, even in the most trying circumstances...
 - a. Not because of weakness or cowardice

- b. But because of humility, coupled with the inner strength to control one's behavior
2. Such was the case with our Lord, who at all times demonstrated what it means to be "gentle and lowly at heart" - cf. **Mt 11:29**
 - a. Let those who claim to be Jesus' disciples seek to emulate His example
 - b. Let there be found in us that "fruit of the Spirit" which was found in our Lord as well!
3. And for any who may not yet be a disciple of Jesus, I encourage you to reflect on the words of Him who was "gentle and lowly in heart"...

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." - Mt 11:28-30

In the expressions of His day, the metaphor of the "yoke" refers to becoming His disciple. To learn what is involved in becoming a disciple, consider the words of Jesus in **Mt 28:18-20**...

The Flesh And The Spirit

The Fruit Of The Spirit - Self-control

INTRODUCTION

1. Finally we come to the last virtue listed by Paul that is found in a person one who is walking in the Spirit, thereby producing the fruit of the Spirit: **self-control** (“temperance”, KJV)
2. In some ways, one might consider this virtue the most important...
 - a. For without self-control, the “works of the flesh” cannot be overcome
 - b. For without self-control, the other elements of the “fruit of the Spirit” will not be evident
3. But what exactly is **self-control**? And how can one develop this virtue?

[These are questions I will attempt to answer in this final study in this series on “**The Flesh And The Spirit**”...]

I. DEFINING SELF-CONTROL

A. THE GREEK WORD IS “EGKRATEIA” {eng-krat’-i-ah}...

1. It comes from the word “**kratos**” (**strength**), and means “one holding himself in”
- **Robertson**
 2. **Thayer** defines it as: “the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites”
 3. **MacKnight** adds the thought: “Where this virtue subsists, temptation can have little influence.”
- Immediately, then, we can see why this virtue is so necessary in overcoming the “works of the flesh” (such as fornication and outbursts of wrath, **Ga 5:19,20**)

B. IT IS FOUND ONLY THREE TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. Once in **Ac 24:25**
 - a. Where it is included along with “righteousness” and “judgment”
 - b. “the word follows ‘righteousness’, which represents God’s claims; therefore, self-control is to be man’s response to such claims” - **Vine**
2. Once in **Ga 5:23**, where we see it is evidence of one walking in the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit
3. And in **2 Pe 1:6**
 - a. Here we learn that it is to be added to “knowledge”
 - b. “it follows ‘knowledge’, suggesting that what is learned requires to be put into practice”
- **Vine**

[Self-control, then, is being in control of one’s self; in the context of the Scriptures, the control of self so as to be in harmony with the will of God. But it is a whole lot easier to define than it is to develop...]

II. DEVELOPING SELF-CONTROL

A. THE SCRIPTURES DESCRIBE THE DIFFICULTY OF SELF-CONTROL...

1. The wisdom of Solomon declared it is easier to capture a city than to be in control of our spirit - **Pro 16:32**; cf. **25:28**
2. Just controlling the tongue, is a difficult challenge...
 - a. Failure to bridle the tongue renders our religion useless - **Ja 1:26**
 - b. It is easier to tame wild animals! - **Ja 3:7-10**

B. HOWEVER, IN CHRIST THERE IS STRENGTH TO CONTROL SELF...

1. Consider the dilemma described by Paul in **Ro 7:14-24**
 - a. A dilemma experienced by one trying to do the will of God outside of Christ, having only the Law
 - b. A dilemma that leads to...
 - 1) The inability to perform as one wishes, despite the will to do - **Ro 7:18**
 - 2) The state of captivity to the law of sin - **Ro 7:23**
 - 3) The condition of despair - **Ro 7:24**
 - c. However, in **Ro 7:25** we see a glimpse of hope, a hint of the answer to this dilemma (i.e., Jesus Christ!)
2. The answer is stated very clearly in our text - cf. **Ga 5:24**
 - a. "...those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"
 - 1) This does not deny the fact there is still a battle going on - cf. **Ga 5:17**
 - 2) But those in Christ have undergone a fundamental change
 - 3) In a way difficult to comprehend, they have "crucified the flesh" - **Ga 5:24**
 - b. This took place when they were united with Christ in His death, in baptism...
 - 1) In baptism, our body of sin is put to death, crucified with Christ - **Ro 6:3-6**
 - 2) When we are raised from that watery grave, we rise to walk in newness of life, free to live for God! - **Ro 6:7, 12-13**
 - c. This does not mean we are no longer tempted to sin, but in some significant way we are free from the "*dominion*" (absolute rule) of sin! - cf. **Ro 6:14**
3. For those **in Christ**, there is added strength as they "walk according to the Spirit"
 - a. Yes, we enjoy freedom from the "**condemnation**" of sin - cf. **Ro 8:1**
 - b. But there is more, freedom also from the "**power**" of sin, freedom from "the law (principle) of sin and death" - **Ro 8:2**
 - 1) The "*law (principle) of the Spirit of life in Christ*" provides this freedom!
 - 2) The context suggests that this refers to the aid of the Spirit to help us overcome the "*deeds of the body*" - cf. **Ro 8:11-14; Ep 3:16,20**
 - c. Isn't this what Paul was talking about in **Ga 5:16-18,25**?
 - 1) If you walk in the Spirit, putting to death the deeds of the body by the help of the Spirit, will you not defeat the lust of the flesh?
 - 2) Since you have been made alive in the Spirit (cf. **Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5**), should you not also walk in the Spirit (that is, utilize the help that is there)?

C. WHAT THEN IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY...?

1. First, trust in God's Word, that by His grace...
 - a. Our old man of sin was indeed crucified with Christ in our baptism - **Ro 6:6**
 - b. We did indeed crucify the flesh with its passions and desires - **Ga 5:24**
 - c. That God can indeed strengthen us by His Spirit in the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
 - d. That with God's help we can do all things according to His will - **Ph 4:13**
2. And then, with such faith, continue the process begun in our baptism...
 - a. Put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:13**
 - b. Put to death our members here on the earth - **Co 3:5,8-9**

- c. Put ON the new man...
 - 1) A process which also began in baptism, when we put on Christ - **Ga 3:27**
 - 2) A process which continues as we grow daily - cf. **Co 3:10-14**
- d. Work as though it all depended upon you - **Ph 2:12**
- e. But remember that you are not alone, that God is at work in you too!- **Ph 2:13**

CONCLUSION

1. As one cooperates with God in the doing of His Will, **self-control** will be a natural byproduct (i.e., evidence that one is walking in the Spirit)
2. We cannot overestimate the importance of developing **self-control** in our lives...
 - a. Without it, we cannot defeat the temptations that come our way
 - b. Without it, we cannot overcome the works of the flesh
 - c. Without it, we cannot grow as we should in Christ
 - d. Without it, we cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit!
3. Yet in Christ we have every reason, every motivation, to develop the virtue of **self-control**...
 - a. We have been set free from the dominion of sin
 - b. We have the aid of God through His indwelling Spirit
 - c. We even have the assurance of forgiveness when we fall (**1 Jn 1:9**), knowing that as long as we are willing to repent and try again, there is help from God!
 - **The key question is, “Do we trust the Lord to help us, enough so to walk by faith and do His Will?”**

This brings to an end our study on “**The Flesh And The Spirit**”. I hope that in some small way I have encouraged you to “**walk in the Spirit**”, and NOT to “**fulfill the lust of the flesh**”. The overriding reason for doing so is found in Paul’s own words:

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Ga 5:25)

In truth, by the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Spirit” (**Ti 3:5**) God saved us and caused us to be “born again of the water and the Spirit” (**Jn 3:5**).

Since in our baptism God has made us spiritually alive by the Spirit of God, shouldn’t we seek to walk in such a way so as to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives?