

Thirty-Five Days in Galatians

Study Four: Days Twenty-Nine to Thirty-Five Galatians 5:22-6:18

Day Twenty-Nine

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

v. 22 – The acts of the sinful nature, mentioned in the preceding verses (see study four) are contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit. Notice that all of these fruit have their effect in our relationships with others. And Paul did write earlier in the letter that we were to serve one another in love.

Matthew Henry's commentary speaks concisely to each one of the fruit of the Spirit:

He particularly recommends to us, *love*, to God especially, and to one another for his sake, - *joy*, by which may be understood cheerfulness in conversation with our friends, or rather a constant delight in God, - *peace*, with God and conscience, or a peaceableness of temper and behavior towards others, - *long-suffering*, patience to defer anger, and a contentedness to bear injuries, - *gentleness*, such a sweetness of temper, and especially towards our inferiors, as disposes us to be affable and courteous, and easy to be entreated when any have wronged us, - *goodness* (kindness, beneficence), which shows itself in a readiness to do good to all as we have opportunity, - *faith*, fidelity, justice, and honesty, in what we profess and promise to others, - *meekness*, wherewith to govern our passions and resentments, so as not to be easily provoked, and, when we are so, to be soon pacified, - and *temperance*, in meat and drink, and other enjoyments of life, so as not to be excessive and immoderate in the use of them (from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.).

These are fruit *of* the Spirit: they are the very characteristics of God Himself. All of these fruit were seen in the life of Jesus and are produced in our lives, not by human effort, but by the work of the Spirit. My goal is to surrender my will and personality to the control of the Spirit and as I do, fruit from the root of God in my life will automatically produce these fruit.

It would be good as you begin this last study installment to evaluate yourself in regards to all eight fruit of the Spirit. If nothing else, you may want to do further Bible study for

one or all of the mentioned fruit. To help with that study, I am including the summary of these fruit found in Adam Clarke's commentary at the end of this study.

v. 23 – This discussion of fruit was still in the context of the entire letter. There was no law against the Spirit's fruit. Paul was stating that these fruit were the objectives in the life of the believer and not the following of the Mosaic Law. How could any moral law condemn such righteous behavior that would be commended by any and all men?

v. 24 – Paul wrote that we have crucified the sinful, corrupt nature. Yet why do I still sin? Someone once likened this truth to the end of World War II. There were still pockets of resistance, especially in the Pacific, after the Japanese surrendered because some of the soldiers in remote areas didn't get the message. Those soldiers still had to be found and subdued.

That is the same with my sinful nature. I am still finding pockets of resistance in my being and those areas must be informed and brought to surrender to the law of the Spirit.

v. 25 – The NAS translation words this verse: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” The Spirit of God gives us life, but we aren't to walk in the unreality of our sinful nature. Rather we are to walk in the reality of the Spirit's work and leading in our lives.

v. 26 – The lack of the Spirit in our lives is manifest in our relationships with other people. I guess we could say that other people are the true test of the Spirit's work in our lives. I wonder if Paul had the circumcision party in mind. They perhaps were conceited, thinking that they were something when they were nothing. Out of that conceit, they challenged and provoked the Galatians in regards to the Law. They were also jealous of Paul's success, a success that the Jews never had in the Gentile world.

Day Thirty

6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

v. 1 – Notice what this verse does *not* say we should do with one who is caught in a sin: We should *not* condemn, judge or cut off. First of all, the word “caught” was a word used to describe a bird caught in a trap. Sin is powerful. Yes, free will is involved and that is why we must be held accountable for our sin. But spiritual people can and do get entangled in sin and this should not shock us. It may sadden us, but not shock us.

Then we should go about the process of restoration with gentleness. (Remember, gentleness is one of the fruits of the Spirit). And those involved in the restoration process should not be condescending or rude, for they must also watch for themselves lest they also be tempted. There are two gospel accounts I am thinking of here as examples:

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:3-11).

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew 7:3-5).

If everyone involved in the restoration of a sinner would keep the spirit of these two passages uppermost in their heart and mind, many more sinners would be restored.

v. 2 – Paul then urged the Galatians to carry each other's burdens. This must be in the context of the preceding verse, which handled restoring the sinning believer. We are to love one another as we do ourselves, and we should be aware of our own weaknesses and God's kindness and grace to us in spite of them. We should therefore extend the same grace to one another that God has extended to us.

There is a law of Christ that was Paul's guideline for behavior, rather than the Law of Moses. It is to be our law as well. The law of Christ is:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).

This would seem to assume that believers are in close fellowship and know one another well enough to bear with one another so that the love of Christ may shine forth. This would necessitate membership or regular attendance in a local church. Are you a part of a church? I don't mean you have to serve there seven days a week, but do you know people and are you known there? Are you close enough to some people there that you can say you love them? The writer of Hebrews instructed his readers on this topic:

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

Are you part of a local church? If not, why not? If you are looking for the perfect church, you will never find one. If you do, don't join it, for you'll ruin it with your own imperfections! If you are, do you know people? Do you know them well enough to see some of their faults and walk with them anyway?

v. 3 – Perhaps Paul is referring back to the circumcision party, who are so proud of their special insight into the Word. They thought they were something, for they were actually traveling and “evangelizing” people to their point of view. But you must be cautious not to think you are something when you're not.

Paul addressed this issue in two other letters:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Philippians 2:3-7).

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you (Romans 12:3-4).

There is one sin that seems to move God to action more than others and that is pride. God hates and resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. If you think you are something when you are nothing, you are proud. And if you are proud, you open yourself to self-deception. It is one thing to be deceived by others; it is even worse to be deceived by yourself.

Day Thirty-One

4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,
5 for each one should carry his own load.

v. 4 – There is one and only standard by which we evaluate our actions, and that standard is Christ. We should not derive self-satisfaction by determining that we are better than this person or our church is better than that church. That may be true, but that is an inadequate comparison. If you have made progress in your spiritual walk, don't measure it according to where someone else is. Evaluate where you are by where Jesus wants you to be. When you do that, you will realize that any “pride” or satisfaction you feel is measured in terms of where you once were and how far Christ has brought you.

This lesson was emphasized in one of Jesus' parables:

Jesus told this parable: "two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-robbers, evildoers, adulterers-or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

v. 5 – While we are to help carry other’s burdens, we must still bear our own. Don’t think that your sins don’t “count” because someone else’s sins are worse than yours. You cannot excuse your shortcomings in terms of someone else’s failures.

Day Thirty-Two

6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

v. 6 – The word “anyone” in this verse means anyone. Are you an “anyone?” If you are, and if you receive instruction in the word, you must share good things with the teacher. What kind of good things? Well, money comes to mind.

Notice that this is not an option. You “must” share with your teacher. I think Paul wanted the believers to place a value on what they were receiving, so they would appreciate it more. Proverbs states: “Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23). What price are you paying to get the truth?

v. 7 – There are some who want good results but who also want to ignore the process that will produce those good results. The ways of God cannot be ignored; there are consequences to such foolishness. God Himself established the principle of sowing and reaping. Ignore that principle at your own peril.

What are you harvesting today? What harvest are you expecting? There can be no harvest, present or future, without adequate sowing. Perhaps you don’t have a harvest because you haven’t prepared for one.

v. 8 – There are two fields for sowing in this verse—the sinful nature and the Spirit. Sowing to the former produces destruction; sowing to the latter produces eternal life. Those are two distinct options. Which field are you sowing in? The sinful nature sounds like a place of evil and perversity, and it is. But it can also include things like selfishness

and pride. Those sins are less “heinous,” but still serious in the sight of God. Don’t overlook the “little” sins; they lead to destruction as well.

Day Thirty-Three

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

11 See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

12 Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

v. 9 – Paul warned not to grow weary in doing good. Why would he warn us not to get weary unless the reward for doing good comes much later than we expect? It would seem that the tendency would be to give up any hope of reward, because the reward lingers somewhere in the unknown future. Would you agree? Have you given up expecting a harvest from good that you were doing? Then Paul’s admonition is for you: Don’t give up! There is a “proper” time for your reward and God knows how to reward His people.

v. 10 – There seems to be priorities for how to do good: first to the household of faith, then to all people. Paul urged that each person do good as they have opportunity. Sometimes you have to make an opportunity. By that I mean that you must pay attention and be aware of others around you and then not over-spiritualize the process. Don’t wait for God to “lead” you to do good; get in the habit of finding needs and then meet them.

Why not set out today to find a need in someone’s life and meet it? Don’t be selfish and “into” yourself. Step out and see others and where they are. Then do good. It’s really that simple.

v. 11 – Obviously Paul had been dictating the letter up to this point and now signed it with his own hand. This was his personal endorsement. That meant the people receiving the letter would recognize Paul’s writing; they were familiar with Paul. Perhaps he had written before.

v. 12 – Paul returned to the theme of the letter, this time addressing it in his own handwriting. The point he wrote had been made before, but he just couldn’t resist one more jab at the circumcision party. His summary was simple: they were trying to avoid the stigma of the cross and its role in the life of the believer. The Law could not take the place of the cross then, nor can it now. And there seemed to be persecution related to faith in the cross of Christ.

Have you compromised any stand for fear of or to avoid persecution? Persecution is painful, but it is part of the life of every believer.

Day Thirty-Four

13 Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.

14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

Vs. 13-15 – I have seen this to be true: those who would put you under bondage don't walk in that bondage themselves. I have watched men put people today under the bondage of "covering," yet they themselves do not walk in the truth they preach and teach. Most of these "apostles" could not walk for one day in the system that they expect others to walk in.

I have been guilty of "boasting" in other doctrines than the cross. At times, I felt my commitment, loyalty, giving, relationships, pastor, and church membership made me special and put me in an elite group of believers. I was deceived. There is one thing that makes me "special" if that is the correct word to use. That one thing is the cross of Jesus Christ! I want to exalt in that for the remainder of my days.

I am a new creature not because of what I believe, but in whom I believe. And I put my faith in Christ as my only source of salvation.

Day Thirty-Five

16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

17 Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

v. 16 – Whenever I have put my trust in something other than Jesus, I have not had peace and mercy. I have earned what I got and the wages of my sin have not been good.

v. 17 – Paul did indeed suffer for Jesus. Read his account in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28:

Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without

sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

I think Paul had the marks of Jesus on his body, don't you? That should sober anyone who talks about or treats the apostolic lightly. The apostolic is about more than a reserved parking space and the respect of people. It is about pain and suffering for the sake of Christ.

As we close the study of this letter, I urge you to examine your life and see if there is any legalism there. Are you putting your faith in any doctrine, church or movement instead of Jesus? Are you avoiding persecution for the cross of Christ? Have you given up doing good, despairing of any ultimate reward? If so, then it is time to set things straight. Confess, repent and move on. Use this letter as an incentive to get back on track and don't receive any doctrine or teaching that conflicts with the One who bought you with His blood.

May His grace, mercy and peace be yours.

Further Study on the Fruit of the Spirit

[But the fruit of the Spirit] Both flesh-the sinful dispositions of the human heart and spirit-the changed or purified state of the soul, by the grace and Spirit of God, are represented by the apostle as trees, one yielding good the other bad fruit; the productions of each being according to the nature of the tree, as the tree is according to the nature of the seed from which it sprung. The bad seed produced a bad tree, yielding all manner of bad fruit; the good seed produced a good tree, bringing forth fruits of the most excellent kind. The tree of the flesh, with all its bad fruits, we have already seen; the tree of the Spirit, with its good fruits, we shall now see.

[Love] Agapee (NT:26). An intense desire to please God and to do good to mankind; the very soul and spirit of all true religion; the fulfilling of the law, and what gives energy to faith itself. See Gal 5:6.

[Joy] Chara (NT:5479). The exultation that arises from a sense of God's mercy communicated to the soul in the pardon of its iniquities, and the prospect of that eternal glory of which it has the foretaste in the pardon of sin. See Rom 5:2.

[Peace] Eireenee (NT:1515). The calm, quiet, and order, which take place in the justified soul, instead of the doubts fears, alarms, and dreadful forebodings, which every true penitent less or more feels, and must feel until the assurance of pardon brings peace and satisfaction to the mind. Peace is the first sensible fruit of the pardon of sin. See Rom 5:1, and the notes there.

[Long-suffering] Makrothumia (NT:3115). Long-mindedness, bearing with the frailties and provocations of others, from the consideration that God has borne long with ours;

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and that, if he had not, we should have been speedily consumed: bearing up also through all the troubles and difficulties of life without murmuring or repining; submitting cheerfully to every dispensation of God's providence, and thus deriving benefit from every occurrence.

[Gentleness] Chrestotees (NT:5544). Benignity, affability; a very rare grace, often wanting in many who have a considerable share of Christian excellence. A good education and polished manners, when brought under the influence of the grace of God, will bring out this grace with great effect.

[Goodness] Agathoosunee (NT:19). The perpetual desire and sincere study, not only to abstain from every appearance of evil, but to do good to the bodies and souls of men to the utmost of our ability. But all this must spring from a good heart—a heart purified by the Spirit of God; and then, the tree being made good, the fruit must be good also.

[Faith] Pistis (NT:4102), here used for fidelity-punctuality in performing promises, conscientious carefulness in preserving what is committed to our trust, in restoring it to its proper owner, in transacting the business confided to us, neither betraying the secret of our friend, nor disappointing the confidence of our employer.

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