

✿ Walking in God's Grace—Week Eight, Day One ✿

Read Galatians 5:22-23

¹⁹The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

This week, we are jumping right into the middle of another set of contrasts. The book of Galatians has provided us with many, many contrasts—most recently: the Old and New Covenant represented by the two sons of Abraham, and the contrast of the Flesh and the Spirit. Now, the acts of the flesh (repeated for you this week) contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit.

Maybe you have memorized the ***Fruit of the Spirit***, maybe you taught it in Sunday School, maybe it is new territory for you. No matter which category you fall into, let's take time today to look at each of these virtues.

First go through the list and write a phrase that *you think* describes the virtue. Then using a regular (or Bible) dictionary, add something more from your research.

“love”

“joy”

“peace”

“patience”

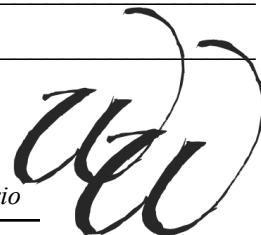
“kindness”

“goodness”

“faithfulness”

“gentleness”

“self-control”



Walking in God's Grace—Week Eight, Day Two

Read Galatians 5:24-26

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Yesterday we simply defined all of these virtues listed as “fruits” of the Holy Spirit. To continue our thread of ‘contrasts’, we will refer back to yesterday’s passage once again.

1. From v. 19 and v. 22 take a look at what at the wording of these two lists of character traits.

V. 19 “The _____ of the flesh” (check other translations for other word choices)

V. 22 “The _____ of the Spirit”

Just thinking of those underlined nouns alone: ‘acts, works, deeds’ as contrasted with ‘fruit’; How would you describe the difference between those two methods of producing something?

I have to confess that when I purchased the first **Fruit of the Spirit** Children’s Curriculum for our church back in the early ‘90s and taught it multiple times in our Children’s Ministry; I was probably guilty of teaching the lessons in a ‘so this is how we should act’ way. In other words ‘let’s all make sure we are kind, children, because the fruit of the Spirit is kindness’!

I suppose there is nothing wrong with encouraging kindness—probably every school classroom teacher would agree! But THIS passage is showing us the *results* that can be expected depending on WHO is ‘in the lead’ inside a person’s heart—their sinful flesh, or the Spirit of Jesus.

Here are some questions for thought and discussion:

1. Is it possible for the sinful nature to counterfeit the Fruit of the Spirit? Do you know non-Christians who are loving?
2. If “*those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified the sinful nature*”, (v.24) then why do I sometimes recognize ‘acts of the flesh’ in my heart like: envy, selfishness, idolatry (materialism)?
3. How do I ‘*keep in step with the Spirit*’ (v.25)?



Walking in God's Grace—Week Eight, Day Three

Read Galatians 6:1-2

²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control ... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit...*

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.*

Our last two days of study this week will begin to shift our attention from 'who is in charge in my heart' to 'how do I relate to others around me' as I 'keep in step with the Spirit'.

1. Assuming we are '**standing firm**' in the gospel of grace; that we have not '**fallen from grace**' toward a legalistic or flesh-centered mindset; we are now instructed toward two things in our relationships with others. What are those two things:

A. _____

B. _____

2. And we have one warning: _____
3. As we are rubbing shoulders with '*believers*' who are '*caught in a sin*' or '*overtaken in any trespass*' (NKJ); our instruction is not to ignore or minimize their sin; but to restore them how? _____ (Circle the companion word in v. 1 and in the Fruit of the Spirit list)
4. What does that look like? Has anyone ever *restored you gently*? Have you ever *restored someone else gently*? Jot down some thoughts to share in your discussion group.

Paul knew it would be important to have had this lengthy conversation about legalism and grace before we talk about relating to each other. It is only through the spirit of grace that we can be helpful.

3. Read Luke 11:37-46. Now from v.46 describe how a 'legal-minded' person relates to others around them:
4. What is the contrast between the Pharisees and our instruction in v.2?

Interesting, isn't it that they were trying so hard to *fulfill the law*, by their actions, but v. 2 tells us that by helping others through the power of the Spirit we '*will fulfill the law of Christ*.'



Walking in God's Grace—Week Eight, Day Four

Read Galatians 6:2-5

²Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, ⁵for each one should carry his own load.

Yesterday we looked into the contrast between a Spirit-led Christian 'carrying other's burdens', and a legal-minded Christian 'adding to other's burdens'. There is no hidden meaning, nothing deep to unravel.

"This is a simple command to obey. Look for a brother or a sister with a burden, and help them with it. It isn't complicated, and it doesn't take a huge program or infrastructure to do it. Just look for a burden to bear and bear it!"
—David Guzik

1. Write out John 13:34-35:
2. How do these words of Jesus dovetail with the command to carry each other's burdens? And how does this fulfill the law of Christ?
3. Has the Holy Spirit been speaking to you about a certain person that you can bless in this way? If so, act on it and share in your group. If not, ask Him today—he will give you an opportunity.

Verses 3-5 are more introspective and help us to uncover our motives. Today's set of verses could make us a little crazy if we don't take time to understand the heart of the passage: "carry each other's burdens" (v.2) AND "each one should carry his own load" (v.5)? So which is it?

4. What is a word you would use to describe some who '**thinks he is something**' (v.3)?
5. Read Philippians 2:3-4. What Christian virtue would consider others better than ourselves?
6. Do you think it is possible to be prideful about the way we help other people? Explain. Have you ever been?
7. Do you think it is possible to simply '*ride on the shirt-tails*' of others around us who are helping to carry one another's burdens and somehow deceptively think we will be rewarded by virtue of our association?

Read v.4 from the NKJ version—I personally think it is a better rendering: "***But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.***"

