

Galatians – Christians and the Mosaic Law

Section 2 – 10 weeks

14 – Self-Control 5:22-23

15 – Gentleness 5:22-23

16 – Faithfulness 5:22-23

17 – Goodness And Kindness 5:22-23

18 – Patience 5:22-23

19 – Peace 5:22-23

20 – Joy 5:22-23

21 – Love 5:22-23

22 – Led Of The Spirit 5:24-25

23 – Signs Of Spiritual Maturity 6:1-15



Galatians – Christians and the Mosaic Law

This was originally an expository series of sermons given in the church where I was serving as Pastor. A few years later, they were edited to be used as a Bible Study. There are a few things I feel I should share with you before using this material:

First: I had no intent of sharing or publishing this material until encouraged to do so by some friends. While I did consult several commentaries as I was preparing the original sermon series, I did not make notes of the references used in the messages. There was not in the beginning, nor is there now, any intent to plagiarize. Should you see anything you feel is the original thought of another, I ask for your grace and mercy.

Second: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I tend to spell certain words phonetically for the purpose of emphasis. When transforming these notes from sermon notes to teaching notes, I felt inclined to leave a number of these phonetic spellings. They help me to make emphasis in the lesson at particular points.

Third: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I make little effort to conform to rules of grammar. One example is that I often use a hyphen (-) to indicate a point where I may want to pause slightly and to keep certain thoughts connected as I speak. Another example is that I will use local colloquialisms to make points in the message.

Please accept that these notes are not an academic work. But I do hope they will help the preacher or teacher to be able to more quickly prepare their own sermon or teaching.

We earlier looked at this letter in regards to "Sins of the Flesh". With this week's study we begin a look at what this letter has to say about the "Fruits of the Spirit." We will look at the Fruits of the Spirit in the reverse order that they are listed in this text. It may not be readily evident, but hopefully by the time we get to the end of the study, it will make sense as to why.

Today, we hear a lot about people trying to "get in control" of their own life. We will frequently hear of someone who is "out of control" in one or more areas of their life.

I once heard a man say the reason he was "gambling" in the Lottery was that if he could win the "big one", then he would have enough money to be in control of his own life for a change. While the Bible does say the borrower is the servant to the lender - The Bible no where says that having money or having a lot of money puts one in control of their life. In fact, for many people, to have a lot of money would put that money in control of their life.

This is true of many things in life. The very thing that a person strives to achieve or possess, believing it will allow them to gain control over their life, usually becomes the very thing that controls their life.

A sad note is this; most of the people who have told me that they are "in control of their own life, are in fact being controlled by job, drugs, alcohol, money, image, position, reputation, and so on. I have met a few people who were truly "self controlled" - totally and honestly.

It is true that most people don't understand what "being in control" of their life means, and most Christians are not "in control" of all their life. And it is also true that God desires for us to be "self controlled" in several specific areas of our life. We are to be in control of our life, not some emotion or chemical or inanimate object, but we are!

Galatians – 14 – Self-Control

Read Galatians 5:22 – 5:23 and make notes:

God desires for us to experience and share in all of the fruits of the Spirit. It is God's plan for us to be "self controlled". It IS NOT God's plan for us to be a "puppet" or "slave" of anyone or anything.

A few things need to be set forth before we go any further in this study:

First, "Self-Control" IS NOT a gift of the Spirit.

Secondly, "Self Control" IS a fruit of the Spirit.

Thirdly, the opposite of "self control" is the fruit of the flesh – "licentiousness".

We will either have "self control" or we will be "out of control".

We need to allow this idea to take root in our understanding before we read any further scriptures? Let's ask ourselves and answer honestly - Do I understand:

Self-motivated ?

Self-starter ?

Self-propelled ?

Self-explanatory ?

Self-Controlled is the same concept! It is not supposed to be something outside that is controlling us!

Read 2 Timothy 3:1 – 3:5 and make notes:

Galatians – 14 – Self-Control

God has those who are "without self control" listed right along with all manner of evil actions and attitudes. Have you ever equated a lack of self control with being "unholy" or "disobedient"; not to mention some of the others listed here? Those without self control are listed with those who are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:5 and make notes:

Read 1 Corinthians 7:9 and makes notes:

Married couples are instructed not to place one another in a position of losing their self control. Single persons are instructed to marry if they cannot control themselves. "Self-Control" seems to be important from God's perspective!

Read 1 Corinthians 9:25 – 9:27 and make notes:

Many of us are aware of the "self control" exhibited and practiced by serious athletes. The serious athlete will not indulge themselves in things they would really like to. They do this just so that they will maintain the physical training and stamina they need in order to win in their area of competition.

Galatians – 14 – Self-Control

The Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul, is desiring the readers of this text to make a comparison of the "self control" that an athlete has to the self control a Believer should have.

Read 2 Timothy 1:7 and make notes:

As a Believer, we are given a Spirit of "Self Discipline". This is for the purpose of helping us "discipline" ourselves to have "self-control."

Read Titus 1:7-9 and makes notes:

In earlier Scriptures we have seen, being without "self-control" was listed with the "unholy" and having "self-control" is listed with those who are "holy." We see in this text, it is a Requirement of God for those who are to be overseers - that they have "self-control"! We should also notice here that the "overseer" is to "encourage" others with sound doctrine - and to refute those who oppose it? In order for an overseer to do, that they must have "self-control."

Read Titus 2:2 – 2:6 and make notes:

Galatians – 14 – Self-Control

The overseer of the Body of Christ is equired by God to be - "self controlled." The "older men", the "older women", the "young men", the "young women" are to be taught "self control."

Read Acts 24:25 and make notes:

Paul taught "self control" in conjunction with "righteousness" and with "the judgement to come." Why do you suppose Paul taught "self-control" with righteousness?

Read Proverbs 25:28 and make notes:

What is a city like - whose walls are torn down? It is open to whatever, - it is vulnerable – it is not protected – it is weak. Have you ever read where God has instructed us to be "weak" and "unprotected" ?

Read Titus 2:11 – 2:12 and make notes:

Galatians – 14 – Self-Control

The same "Grace" that brings salvation - teaches us to live "self-controlled" lives in "this present age." Why? What did Proverbs 25:28 say? (like a city whose walls are down). What does God desire for us ?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:5 – 5:8 and make notes:

Those who are "without" self control, are like those who are "asleep" with no walls about their city. We are called to be "alert" and to be "self controlled", because God does not wish to see us caught off guard by the enemy and certainly not to be "beaten" by the enemy!

There are three specific aspects of • our lives over which God desires us to exercise "self control." The first is found in Romans 6:12-14; we are expected to have control over our "fleshly body". It appears today that a great number of people are experiencing their fleshly body having control over their life. The desire "to have" controls the lives of a large number of church people. Christians who are allowing sexual sins to control their life Are Not In Control! And the same is true concerning other fleshly sins.

The second is found in 1 Peter 1:13; we are expected to have control over our "minds" or our thoughts. Far too many church people allow their minds and thoughts to be controlled by another person or by something. Psalm 1:1-3 tells us the person is blessed who meditates on the Law of the Lord day and night. We need to make a sincere effort to keep our mind on the Word of God. We need to refuse to dwell day and night on negative thoughts.

The Christian who does not have "self-control" is going to have a very difficult time submitting to the Lord. But we need to remember that having "self-control" does not mean we never get excited.

Galatians – 14 – Self-Control

The third is found in Proverbs 16:32; we are expected to have control over our spirit. The one thing that is better than having the ability to take a city, is having the ability to keep the city. When we have control of our spirit, we are more like the fortified city. When we do not have control of our spirit, we are more like the city without walls.

Read 2 Peter 1:3 – 1:9 and make notes:

Do you see a cycle in this text? Do we really want to be "in-effective" & "unproductive"? If we can have the qualities listed in these verses – and have them in an ever increasing measure, then we will be kept from being either ineffective and/or unproductive.

Read James 5:16 and make notes:

Do you remember the connection between self-control and righteousness we saw in the Scriptures earlier? How about a connection between self control and being effective?

Read 1 Peter 4:7 and make notes:

Galatians – 14 – Self-Control

When we are not "self-controlled", it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to pray. Prayer is our "lifeline" to God! If our "lifeline" is cut off, then our source of existence is gone. The enemy desires to "control you and me." God desires for us to "be in control of ourselves" - so that we can pray! - so that we will be protected! - so that our needs will be met!

What areas do you need to develop "self-control"? Place an asterisk next the the area that needs to be developed first.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Great ministry works without this Fruit of the Spirit, Is Not Beautiful To God! This Fruit of the Spirit is greatly needed in the Church and in the daily lives of Christians today! Read again the text from Galatians 5:22-23.

The "Fruit of the Spirit is these – "Gentleness". This is not a a work, nor is it a gift, and it is not a fruit! Some translations have the word, "meekness". This was a good translation in it's day; but in today's society, the word "meek" has a different connotation. In our culture, we tend to think of someone who is meek as someone who will not stand up for themselves, and will let others run all over them.

"Meek" for most people means a person who is "too submissive" - or one who is easily imposed upon. For our society, "Gentle" is a better translation. But in today's society many people mistake gentleness with weakness. There are those that will tell you that if you show any signs of being gentle - then you are weak - you must be tough and rough. If that is so, then the fruit of the Spirit would make us weak. But this IS NOT SO !

Read Luke 24:49 and make notes:

Being "clothed with power" would not make us weak. In fact - when someone becomes "clothed in power" and authority - it usually gives them more confidence and strength.

I have seen leaders, parents, managers, and the like who yelled or talked harshly to those whom they were directing. I have also seen those who spoke gently to those whom they were directing.

Do you think those who spoke "gently" were weak? Well, sometimes they were. Do you think those who yelled and spoke harshly were strong? Actually this is seldom the case. Usually the one who does the most yelling (or the loudest) and makes the greatest threats - is the one with the least amount of confidence. They are unsure themselves and figure we are also. So they yell and threaten in the hopes that they can convince us that they are in charge.

I observed this when I was in the military. Some years later I observed this in private industry. I even had an opportunity to put it to the test for myself.

Consider one of the prophecies concerning Jesus, - Zechariah 9:9. Jesus was predicted or prophesied to come not only with the salvation they had looked for - but also to come in gentleness - "gentle and riding on a donkey." Most of the people were looking for some strong and mighty leader to rescue them and to conquer their enemies. "When the Messiah comes, he is going to be strong and mighty! He is going to defeat our enemies."

The strength of Jesus and His power was of a nature they did not comprehend before His coming. Even after His time on earth among men - few still fully understood the power and might of Jesus Christ. He did defeat "their enemies" - but it was their "real enemies" and not just some earthly king or army. For certain - He was "Gentle"! That's how Jesus described Himself in Matthew 11:29.

Jesus did not hesitate to call Himself "Gentle." Jesus was not weak! Jesus was confident of the authority He possessed! We could stop here and simply say "to be like Jesus" we need to be "gentle." But the Word has more to say about being "Gentle." In 1 Thessalonians 2:7, Paul did not hesitate to call himself "gentle." After reading about the things Paul went through and how he handled them - I certainly would not say Paul was weak - I would say Paul was a strong man.

Paul was the one through whom God said, "Fight a good fight" - and "run a good race" - and "participate to win". These are characteristics of strength and not those of weakness! Do we ever hear of a "weakling" winning a good fight? Do we ever hear of a "weakling" winning a good race? No! The strong are the winners.

Galatians – 15 – Gentleness

Also consider the advice Paul gave to young ministers in 1 Timothy 6:11. This teacher of "being strong" told this young minister to pursue - to chase after, to seek to obtain - "Gentleness" !

Let's also consider the instructions given to those who are to be in a place of leadership in 1 Timothy 3:3. Isn't it interesting, and noteworthy, that God's requirement for "overseers" - in the Church is that they should bear the "fruit of the Spirit"? There are a large number of ministers who are in trouble these days. Do you think that many of them would not be in trouble if they had sought to bear the Fruits of the Spirit?

Gentleness Is One Of The Fruits Of The Spirit!

Read 1 Peter 3:3 – 3:4 and make notes:

If you had the choice of earning "something of great value to me" - or "something of great value to you"- which would you select? Which would you choose - "something of great value to a satan worshiper" - or "great value to you"? What about "great value to the world" or "great value to God"? If we simply watch the way most people live their lives - it would appear that most people work to earn those things that are considered of great value to this world - and very few appear to be working to attain this "thing of great value to God - called "GENTLENESS" !

We are all working, cultivating, pruning, encouraging some kind of fruit in our lives. How many are actually working (putting forth an effort) to produce "Gentleness" in our life?

Galatians – 15 – Gentleness

This fruit is of "Great worth to God" or "in His sight". Are we working to produce "some fruit" that will be "rubbish" in "God's sight"? Are we working to produce a fruit in our life that will one day simply be burned in the fire? Or - are we working to produce - A "Fruit of the Spirit" that can be produced in our lives - a fruit that is of "Great Worth" in God's sight?

"But pastor, I must present myself as strong or the people out there will devour me." If we are thinking something like this, then go don't yet understand "real strength". Proverbs 15:1, tells us that a gentle answer turns away wrath. When someone comes to attack us - we tell ourselves that we have to fight like they do – "after all you have to fight fire with fire" - this is so very wrong!

They accuse us - then we accuse them. They try to improve on our accusation - then we try to improve on their accusation - and so on it goes. When someone (the enemy) comes to vent their wrath on us – Let's give them a "gentle" answer - they will turn away.

Do we want the power and strength to "turn away" wrath when it is sent at us? A gentle answer is the weapon of effectiveness.

Some may be thinking, "This still seems kind of wimpy and weak to me." Proverbs 25:15 tells us that a gentle tongue can break a bone. Have you ever tried to break a bone (literally)? A gentle tongue is that strong and powerful. Colossians 3:12 tells us to clothe ourselves in gentleness. We are not "born with clothes on". Someone puts clothes on us until we are able to put them on for ourselves.

Gentleness doesn't just happen - it is something - "a Fruit" - that we can be clothed with. We can put it on if we don't have it on already. Because "Gentleness" is of "Great Worth in God's sight" - and we are "God's chosen people" - it is only fitting that we "wear the very best" - that which is of "Great Value" – so we clothe ourselves with "Gentleness."

Galatians – 15 – Gentleness

Read Ephesians 4:1 – 4:2 and make notes:

Our Calling is to be priest and kings! Let us live a life worthy of a priest and king. Let us clothe yourself like a priest and king. Being completely clothed in gentleness.

Read 1 Peter 3:15 – 3:16 and make notes:

We have learned that all of our physical battles are "won or lost" in the spiritual realm first. God is reasonable – and wise – to tell us to set apart "Christ as Lord" in our hearts. Once we get Christ established as Lord in our hearts - then it will be easier to let Him be the Lord in our flesh. Also, while we are instructed to always be prepared to give a reason for our hope - we are told "to do so in gentleness".

Unfortunately many have been taught and trained and are still teaching today - to be "offensive" with the "Word of God." They attack people with God's Word. They use righteousness as a club and beat sinners and backsliders over the head with it. If I know that you are about to hit me - I will brace myself and the damage will be minimal.

The whole world has been taught to brace themselves against rudeness, - harsh words, aggression, and being accused of doing wrong. Beating them over the head will do minimal damage. Do we remember Proverbs 25:15? A gentle tongue can break a bone. So - if they are a "bone head" - then use a gentle tongue.

Do You want to be God's servant?

Read 2 Timothy 2:24 – 2:26 and make notes:

We need to be kind to everyone - everybody - those who are nice to us and those who are not nice to us. Those who oppose us - our enemy – we must instruct them gently.

"Gentleness" is rooted and grounded in Christian Love - "Gentleness" cannot think in terms of being harsh - even with the disobedient. This does not mean that "Gentleness" does not require the disobedient be punished. This gift of the Spirit enables the Believer to correct an erring brother and to instruct an opponent - without arrogance, anger, impatience, or vengeance.

Read Philippians 4:4 – 4:5 and make notes:

"Wait a minute - I've always been taught not to do my good deeds before men." What God's Word says is, "Don't do your works before men to be seen of them!" But your fruit must be evident to all or it's not worth anything.

People will see the fruit of your lifestyle! What do they see? If they see "Gentleness" – then they will be seeing "God in us - something of great value in God's sight.

Galatians – 15 – Gentleness

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Faithfulness is lacking in every area of our society: political, business, and even in the church. In Galatians 5:22 we see FAITHFULNESS is one of the Fruits of the Spirit. It would be good to read again Galatians 5:22-23.

As we have seen, the Fruits of the Spirit are not automatic. We must "put on" the Fruits of the Spirit - or we must "clothe" ourselves with them. We are going to look at the importance of or the significance of FAITHFULNESS. We are going to see 3 specific areas in which we are to be FAITHFUL.

Read Exodus 34:6 and make notes:

God appeared to Moses or "passed before him" in a cloud when Moses had chiseled out the two stone tablets. God said something about Himself to Moses. God described Himself as "abounding in FAITHFULNESS." Is it any surprise - the Fruits of the Spirit are also characteristics of God?

The Spirit of God is helping us to become more like God, if We Will Allow Him To Do So! We are told in Psalms 36:5 that God's "faithfulness" reaches to the skies. David, a man after God's own heart, had found out that God indeed "abounded in FAITHFULNESS"

To say that God's Faithfulness "reached to the skies" is saying there is no limit to God's Faithfulness. Just like the contemporary saying, "The sky's the limit."

Galatians – 16 – Faithfulness

There are many Scriptures throughout the Bible which speak of or declare God's Faithfulness. A number of these Scriptures link God's Faithfulness to His Steadfast Love. We even like to sing of His Faithfulness - one of our choruses - "Your steadfast love never ceases" - "Your mercies never come to an end" - "They are new every morning - new every morning" - "Great is Your Faithfulness O Lord" - "Great is Your Faithfulness."

God's Faithfulness was proven and demonstrated many times through His covenant relationship with His people. God never once failed to keep any covenant promise. And in every covenant relationship, God always obligated Himself to provide more to man than He asked of man in return.

In the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah - there is an interesting word about Faithfulness. Isaiah 11:5 says that "faithfulness will be a sash around his waist."

Do you remember, God told us to make sure that our Fruit is evident before all men? In those days, it was customary to use a leather strap or grass rope to tie around the waist - much like we use a belt.

But then to be "well dressed", they would take a nice looking cloth or a fabric and tie it around and "on top of the strap or rope." You could see the nice looking "sash", but not the practical belt that was "at work" underneath. Jesus did come and His Fruit, His Faithfulness was evident to all.

Read Psalm 85:11 and make notes:

Galatians – 16 – Faithfulness

There is a kind of a relationship "Faithfulness" has with "righteousness." Our Faithfulness is not a "heavenly gift" that we should expect God to drop upon us. Faithfulness is "our part", - it is our offering up to God. Righteousness is not a Fruit of the 'Spirit! Righteousness is a Gift from above! However, our Faithfulness makes God's Righteousness available to us.

Our Faithfulness is that part of us that reaches upwards toward Heaven. God's Righteousness reaches downwards toward man. Our Faithfulness and God's Righteousness kiss between Heaven and Man. Only when our Faithfulness meets God's Righteousness, is God's Righteousness able to work in us!

Read Proverbs 16:6 and make notes:

The Faithfulness of Jesus brought about the atonement for our sins, so that we can be saved. Our Faithfulness - the Fruit of the Spirit - in our life can be an encouragement to others to accept God's atoning through Jesus.

Read Lamentations 3:22 – 3:23 and make notes:

Because God's Faithfulness is "so great", we do not get what we deserve – instead we get "blessed" - we are not consumed! This is one of God's Great Characteristics - and He desires for us to develop this Fruit in our life.

Galatians – 16 – Faithfulness

We saw a in a previous lesson from this study, by having the Fruit of "self-control" in our life - that our life would be productive and efficient. Then in another study, we saw - by having the Fruit of "gentleness" in our life, that we would have "strength": to withstand the attack of the enemy.

What is the benefit of the Fruit of "Faithfulness"?

Read Psalms 61:7 and 91:4 and make notes:

Faithfulness is our shield and our protection. Faithfulness in my life is a "Fruit of the Spirit". Who's Fruit is it? (the Spirit's). Then Who's Faithfulness is it? (God's). The Spirit, if I allow Him to, will develop "God's Faithfulness" as a Fruit in my life.

I will gain "protection" by having the Fruit of "Faithfulness" in my life. Can you remember a time when you experienced harm or calamity? A time when God did not seem to protect you? Think about that time for a moment. Didn't it come after a time in your life when you had not been Faithful? It did with me! And I have seen it with others -happen just like clock work.

How important then, do you suppose it is in God's sight for us to have this Fruit of "Faithfulness" in our life?

Read Matthew 23:23 and make notes:

Galatians – 16 – Faithfulness

In Malachi, God promised to "pour out upon us a blessing" if we tithed -and to withhold blessings if we did not tithe. And yet Jesus says clearly, "**Faithfulness**" is **more important than tithing**.

What good would it do us to receive "great blessings" from God - if we have "no protection" with which to keep them? Think about it! It is true that God desires to bless us on every hand. It is also true that God desires for us to be protected from the enemy - the enemy that desires to "steal, kill, and destroy" everything we get from God.

Let's look at three specific areas in which God instructs us to be Faithful.

Read Romans 12:12 and make notes:

The **first** area in which we need to develop the Fruit "Faithfulness" is **in our "Praying"**. Prayer is our lifeline to God. Prayer is the channel of our instructions, our sustenance, our encouragement. If we do not have Faithfulness in prayer - we will have difficulty in almost every other area.

Read 1 Peter 4:10 and make notes:

The **second** area in which we need to develop the Fruit "Faithfulness" is **in "Administering God's Grace."** Most of us "church people" are not too quick or generous in the area of Grace.

Galatians – 16 – Faithfulness

We are "very quick" to condemn - to chastise - to rebuke - to point out their faults - to point out their weakness. We "remember" the shortcomings of our neighbors and hold it against them.

Grace would have us to deal with them "not according to their sins", but "according to God's love." Because of Jesus' Faithfulness - we do not receive what we deserve. Because of Faithfulness in our life - then others "will not" receive from us what they deserve.

Read Matthew 25:21 and Luke 12:42-44 and make notes:

The **third** area in which we are to develop "Faithfulness" is **in our service to others on God's behalf**. We are not all asked to do the same thing. In fact some of us are asked to do more difficult things than others. Some of us are asked to do more than others. Whatever God lays out for us to do - small or great - little or much - we need to be faithful in our service to others.

If our Faithfulness in prayer is lacking - or if our Faithfulness in Administering Grace is lacking - then being faithful in service others simply will not happen.

Read Proverbs 3:3 and make notes:

Galatians – 16 – Faithfulness

We are encouraged to never let our "faithfulness leave" and to bind it around our neck. For centuries, people have worn objects and images - or even mixtures of herbs - around their necks for protection and for "good luck."

There is nothing more effective - or even close to it - than "Faithfulness"! As with other Fruits, we are instructed to clothe ourselves. We are instructed to wear "Faithfulness" around our neck - the jewelry of our outfit if you will. Our "Faithfulness", the Fruit of the Spirit", is to be apparent to all.

Some might already be saying, "This is going to be tough." Proverbs 14:22 tells us those who plan what is good "find faithfulness." No, Faithfulness doesn't happen "all of a sudden." But we can plant, cultivate, encourage, - and it will come to fruition.

As we submit to the Holy Spirit - and make sure our plans are "what is good" - then we will find "Faithfulness" in our life.

How much better off would families in our country be today, if the members of the family were faithful? How about the nation, if our politicians would be faithful? How effective and powerful our churches would be if the congregations would be faithful?

Do we need to make a commitment to begin developing Faithfulness in our life in the area of Prayer? If not, what is the evidence that indicates we are okay in this area?

Do we need to make a commitment to begin developing Faithfulness in our life in the area of Administering Grace? If not, what is the evidence that indicates we are okay in this area?

Galatians – 16 – Faithfulness

Do we need to make a commitment to begin developing Faithfulness in our life in the area of Serving Others? If not, what is the evidence that indicates we are okay in this area?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Read again Galatians 5:22-23.

Continuing our look at the "Fruits of the Spirit" in our way through the book of Galatians - we are going to look at the fruits of "goodness" and "kindness." Please note the close similarity of these two "Fruits of the Spirit": kindness is a Greek word meaning "integrity" or "kindness"; while goodness is a Greek word meaning "uprightness of heart and life" or "goodness."

The first definition of each word is so close - one is "integrity" and the other is "uprightness of heart and life." The second definition of each is hard to distinguish for some - one is "kindness" and the other is "goodness."

While the difference between these two words may appear subtle - it is significant. And I am convinced that too few Christians today - are making any effort to develop either of these "Fruits of the Spirit" in their life.

[Goodness]

In the Old Testament, God is always the source of goodness. This can be seen in the physical, earthly aspects of life as well as the spiritual and eternal. The Old Testament lays out the concept that apart from God there is no goodness. The Goodness of God provided His people with land, - food, political deliverance, - personal deliverance, protection, - a temple, and forgiveness.

According to Exodus 33:19, Goodness is one of the characteristics of God. God's "goodness" is not a nebulous thing, - for His "goodness" can pass before us according to Exodus 33:19 - His "goodness" can follow Us according to Psalms 23:6 - His "goodness" is something we can see according to Psalms 27:13 - Psalms 31:19 declares God's "goodness" can be stored up for us .

Since God is good, then everything He does is good. He declared His own creation to be good in Genesis chapter 1.

God's revelation of Himself in Old Testament history was an increasing revelation of His goodness. He made man in His own image. When man fell, God immediately showed His goodness by taking steps to counteract the disastrous effects the Fall would bring. Then there was the election of Israel as His chosen people, the Exodus, the giving of the Law, - His many deliverances of His people, and there were the promises of a coming Messiah.

In the New Testament, God is still the source of goodness. Mark 10:18 declares, "No one is good but God." The New Testament tells us the Goodness of God is evidenced or revealed in Jesus Christ. God continued His increasing revelation of His goodness. First it is in the incarnation, - then the atoning death of Jesus, - then the resurrection, - and let's not forget Pentecost.

One day God's Goodness will be acknowledged by all of His creation. The New Testament contrast the Goodness of God against the evil of human life without God. Without God, we are incapable of good. All of our best efforts are as "filthy rags". The "goodness" that is the Fruit of the Spirit is living a life that is of an "upright heart"

Read Ephesians 5:8 – 5:10 and make notes:

We should be praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ - That they will live as "children of light" - because the fruit of God exist and remains in "goodness". We should be praying that they will find out what "pleases God."

Through God's provision in Jesus Christ - and by His leadership through the Holy Spirit, - we can live a life of "goodness".

Read Romans 15:14 and make notes:

Wouldn't it be wonderful if this could be the confession of others concerning us?

[Kindness]

The Old Testament word that is translated "kindness" - is a very rich Hebrew word that really has no direct English translation. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word has an attitude and behavior - that displays faithfulness to an obligation to a relative, or friend. Ancient Israel had a tradition in which family or tribal bonds had primary importance over all others. The Hebrew word we translate "kindness", designated the behavior that fulfilled this obligation.

If you want a clear picture of this type of behavior, - just look at God's actions concerning the covenant relationships between Himself and His people. Not true regarding "Israel's actions" but true regarding "God's actions."

In the New Testament, the Greek word we translate "kindness" - conveys the thought of knowing mother's need and helping to fulfill it. Titus 3:4 tells us that "kindness" is a characteristic of God.

Colossians 3:12 exhorts believers to "put on" this attribute or characteristic in their life.

Galatians – 17 – Goodness And Kindness

Read Romans 3:12 and make notes:

This is a text we use many times in witnessing to a lost person - when we are trying to share with them the need to accept Jesus. This is the same Greek word that is translated kindness in Galatians 5:22 as a "fruit of the Spirit." It is interesting to see the relation of a person being "worthless" if they are not "doing kindness".

It should help us to desire this quality or characteristic in our life to note that God views those without this characteristic as "worthless."

Read Romans 2:4 and make notes:

God's kindness has a purpose - it is to lead us to repentance. Isn't it also interesting that God positions "kindness" right in there with "tolerance and patience?" If God were not "tolerant and patient" - I am sure we would all be "wiped out" when continue to show contempt toward His Kindness.

Read Titus 3:4 – 3:5 and make notes:

Galatians – 17 – Goodness And Kindness

The "kindness" of God "appeared" when Jesus came on the scene.

Read Ephesians 2:6 – 2:7 and make notes:

We have truly only seen a small portion of God's kindness. One day, when we go to live with Him for all eternity, we will see the fullness of the "kindness" He has shown us in Jesus.

I don't know about you, but I find the kindness He has shown to us through the coming of Jesus as our Savior - as more kindness than I can imagine. It is beyond my comprehension why He would even bother with us when I look at how we continually fail Him - and how we continually accuse Him and blatantly disobey Him.

When we consider the 6,000 years of man's history of disobedience and wickedness - the Kindness shown through Jesus Christ is "too much." And yet, He says that one day He will show us the fullness of His Kindness – WOW!

Read Colossians 3:12 and make notes:

As with the other Fruits of the Spirit - it is God's desire to see us "clothed in Kindness." God wants to see us (His children) -dressed in those things He sees as having "great worth." He didn't use the phrase "of great worth" regarding "kindness", but He did say those who do not have "kindness" are "worthless."

This is a good place to remind ourselves of the context of the Hebrew word for kindness - "fulfilling an obligation of primary importance" to family and friend; and the context of the Greek word for kindness - "recognizing another's need and making an effort to meet that need."

God dictated the Bible with the words and phrases He wished to use to convey His meaning. God has overseen the translating of His Word as well. God used the Hebrew word and the Greek word that He did - so that we could and would get the full picture of what He desires in our life.

God would have us as believers to "recognize the needs in another believer's life" - and then to "make every effort to fill that need as an obligation of primary importance."

Are we making too much of the issue of integrity? If you think we might be doing so, take a moment and consider it applies to our employee, to our employer, to our car brakes, to our bank, or the airplane we are about to board.

Every Believer needs to be living a life of "goodness" – that is a life that is "upright in heart."

We need to be living every aspect of our private life in such a way - that if someone just happened up on us at any time - then we would never have to be ashamed of what we are wearing, - what we are saying, or what we are doing! We need to be living our life in such a way that if someone accuses us of any wrong doing - that our upright heart can lead us along in the peace of innocence!

Believers need to be living a life that is looking out for one another - this means that we are watching over one another - we are being sensitive to one another. When we sense one of our brothers or sisters is having difficulty - that we accept as our "primary " obligation to go to them and offer whatever we can to help them - to protect them - to encourage them and lift them up!

This "obligation" to protect, and help our "kingdom family" - should take precedence over all other obligations!

Galatians – 17 – Goodness And Kindness

There are a lot of people who can be generous as soon as someone else points out a need to them. It is a "Fruit of the Spirit" called "kindness" - when we can sense the "need" in our family - and begin to fulfill that need.

If we are not living a life of "goodness" - then we will have great difficulty living a life of "kindness" with any regularity or efficiency.

Christians! It is time we begin living a "good life". A life that is characterized to those around us as a life of "goodness" on a consistent and continual basis. It is time we stop spending so much time looking at our pitiful situation and begin looking out for our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. The pagans do not yet understand why, but even the pagans have found it is very beneficial to try to help others.

The current emphasis among psychologist and psychiatrist - when a person is so depressed and discouraged over their problems - is to get them involved in helping others who are in need.

They don't understand why it works, but they have found that a person who is helping others with needs - will work their way out of their own depression and discouragement - and when they don't help others - they sometimes never recover from their depression.

There is life and victory and success in God's Spiritual Fruits. What a pity that so few Christians today make any effort to develop these fruits in their life.

What changes do we need to make, if any, to ensure our life has evidence of Goodness and Kindness?

Galatians – 17 – Goodness And Kindness

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

Patience - a Fruit of the Spirit! A quick review: fruit = benefits: Self-control = overall strength-productive & effective life; Gentleness = has great value in God's sight; Faithfulness = protection; Goodness & Kindness = without these we are worthless. What is the benefit of "Patience"? There are 3 specific benefits of having Patience.

Most of us understand "something" of patience. Have you ever told anyone, "I'm losing my patience with you?" or perhaps someone has told you that! This is a reversed phrase, for when we "fly off the handle" - we haven't "lost your temper"! If anything, we have "found it" and we are using it!

We do lose our Patience - for some of us it really isn't a big loss - we didn't have all that much Patience to start with! As we have seen regarding the other "Fruits of the Spirit" - this Fruit is also a characteristic of God.

Read 2 Peter 3:9 and make notes:

Lord Help us! We want people to come to repentance; But look how fast we write them off when they don't "do right" the first time! Some of us are merciful though - we don't write them off until they have "missed it" at least twice! I've seen people work and work and work - at some tedious task without losing their Patience - and then that same person tries to get someone to "live right" - and about the second time they "miss it" - off of the list they go! Praise God for my sake - and for yours too - that God is Patient !

Some say, "sure God is patient with us as Believers because He is our Father and we are His children" - "But even God is not Patient with the Lost" - WRONG !

Galatians – 18 – Patience

Read Romans 9:22 – 9:24 and make notes:

Read 1 Timothy 1:15 – 1:16 and make notes:

God bore with great Patience, those who are lost. God bore with great Patience, the objects of His wrath - so that it might be "that none would perish" ! Jesus is "God come in the flesh." Jesus bore with unlimited Patience the worst of sinners - so that as an example unbelievers would come to repentance and receive eternal life. God is the same "yesterday, today, and forever"!

God is here, among us, in the person of the Holy Spirit - our Comforter, to guide us, direct us, and teach us. And today, the Holy Spirit bears with Great Patience the people of this generation.

Sometimes, it looks as though it will take more Patience to deal with the "Christians" than with the sinners!

Look at Paul's attitude after realizing what Patience the Lord afforded him:

Read Colossians 1:9 – 1:12 and make notes:

Galatians – 18 – Patience

Paul was a good spokesman for God's Patience. God showed His Patience toward Paul when he was still known as Saul and was busy persecuting the Church - instead of "blasting" Saul off the face of the earth for being among the "greatest of sinners"

God dealt Patiently with him until he could bring him to repentance - and mold him into one of the Church's greatest missionaries. Paul "never stopped" praying that the Christians would have "Great Patience." Look at his instructions to Timothy:

Read 2 Timothy 4:2 and make notes:

Paul was saying "take on" the character of God - deal with people the way God would deal with them.

Read Colossians 3:12 – 3:13 and make notes:

Do you know why we "give up on people"? Why we don't bear with them? Most of the time - it is because we don't forgive them! We are holding their sin or sins against them !

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14 and make notes:

Galatians – 18 – Patience

We are instructed to "Live in Peace" with each other ! Husbands & wives - children -relatives - at work - boss - employees - church family - lost people - neighbors - strangers - just anybody you can think of - live in peace with them! Christians, Be Patient!

"Warn the idle" - Be Patient! "Encourage the timid" - Be Patient! "Help the weak" - Be Patient!

It might surprise some Christians to find out that God has had to exercise more Patience with us since we were saved than He did waiting for us to get saved!

Sometimes we become "born again" and we are not instructed as "how to grow." But sometimes - in fact most of the time it seems - "we just refuse to grow and mature." God waits a long time for some of us to "grow up" in the Spirit! He watches Patiently while we continue to "mess around" where Christians shouldn't ought to be "a mess." Always be mindful of God's Patience - especially when it seems those we are trying to help and encourage- just don't seem to be moving.

All of the verses that we have read so far used the Greek word "*makrothumia*" - for patience; which means "fortitude, long suffering, patience."

Read Psalm 37:7 and make notes:

This verse uses the Hebrew word "*chuw*" (khood); which means "make to bring forth, make to calve, travail, tarry, trust, wait." How many of us "wait patiently for God" in any matter? We want "what we want when we want it." If we never learn to "wait Patiently before the Lord" - we are not likely to be Patient with our fellow man.

"Oh, Preacher, that is just an Old Covenant idea". Really?:

Read Romans 12:12 and make notes:

The word "patient" here is the Greek word "*hupomeno*" - which means "to undergo, to bear, to endure. The word affliction here IS NOT "sickness" - it is the Greek word "*thlipsis*" which means "anguish, burdened, persecution, trouble, tribulation." We are instructed to "be patient in hard times."

How many of us pray and ask God for something - maybe relief from something - and when it does not come in a minute or two - or even a day or two - we give up and are usually mad at God?

The key to making our "Patience" work as in Romans 12:12 - "to bear or to endure our trouble" - is the next part of the verse -which usually goes unnoticed - "Be faithful in Prayer." If we will just be faithful in prayer, then we would see how easy it becomes to "endure trouble" and wait Patiently for God to handle the trouble us!

Why does God instruct us to take on Patience and to clothe ourselves with it? Just because it is a characteristic of God - would be reason enough. But it is more than just that! It brings good benefits into our lives and God wants us to have these benefits!

Why did Jesus have Patience?

Galatians – 18 – Patience

Read 2 Peter 3:15 and Hebrews 6:12 and make notes:

Without Patience - we often stop before we receive the promise - or we turn to another way just before we get there - a less desirable way most always!

Several years ago we set out to go camping up on top of, or near the top of, one the highest mountains in North Carolina. We arrived at the camp-ground just as it was getting dark. The camp-ground was full and we were turned away. Since we were camping in a tent, I told the Park Ranger we wouldn't need much space and begged for permission to set up camp along the edge somewhere.

He said he couldn't do that, but he gave us directions to a "better campground" - one with more scenery, wildlife, and the works - it sounded great and we set out following his directions with excitement.

Patience I did not have - when we had traveled as far as I thought we should - I decided that we must have missed it somewhere along the way because it is dark. So we pulled off the gravel road into the edge of the woods - and I was so disgusted and aggravated that we just slept in the car that night.

The next morning, after breakfast, we took a walk down the road. Literally, "just around the curve" - maybe 100 yards - was the entrance to the campground. It was beautiful - it had water, bathrooms, and it was great. But because I did not have Patience - we stopped just short of "wonderful"! We do this in almost all areas of our life - Don't We? So what is the benefit of having Patience?

Galatians – 18 – Patience

Read Hebrews 6:12 and make notes:

The **first** benefit of having Patience is that of **receiving what has been promised**.

Read Proverbs 15:18 and make notes:

The **second** benefit of having Patience is that it **brings Calm** into our life. Who doesn't desire to have more calm in their life? If you have had a time in your life - now or at some earlier time when you did not have Patience - Did you have calm in your life? What about the time when the traffic wasn't moving fast enough and you were in a hurry? What about the time the line at the check out counter of the store wasn't moving fast enough? What about the time when someone in your family wasn't getting ready to go quite fast enough? What about the last time you asked God for something and it didn't come at the time you thought best? Were you experiencing calm in your life? ?

Read Proverbs 14:29 and make notes:

Do you ever have things you don't understand? I do and fairly often it seems. When we learn to clothe ourselves completely with Patience - we will receive great understanding!

The **third** benefit of having Patience is that it **brings understanding** into our life.

Stop and think about it – when we need understanding in some area - it is those who are patient that obtain the understanding.

To see Patience as a virtue to be cultivated in our life will fall sorely short of the mark. Patience is a Divine Disposition. Patience, as spoken of in our Bible, is something that we receive from God. The seed for this fruit can only come from Him!

God's Patience does not dismiss His wrath. His slowness to anger and His Patience in bringing about judgment should not be abused. His Patience allows more than ample time for us to come to repentance. God is certainly dealing Patiently with America today.

When we consider the outright disregard for His Word and His ways that our nation has taken. When we consider that not only have our nation's leaders begun to endorse sinful lifestyles as being okay - but have now begun to appoint openly confessing sinful lifestyles to places of leadership over this country. And this is a country that was formed to be "one nation under God".

When we further consider that one of these people living an “abominatious” lifestyle - even had her "homosexual lover" stand with her during her confirmation to a high office in this nation - and God has not purged the earth of our sinful presence! Yes, God is showing great Patience toward our nation. He does not wish that any should perish. But this "great Patience" does not dismiss the fact that Judgment will come !

God's Patience stands as an impeccable standard and as a pattern for man's patience. A great number of "Church People" are receiving "Great Patience" from God - and yet they are unable to give Patience to anyone or any situation.

Take a moment and think of some of the ways in which God has shown His Divine Patience toward you.

Galatians – 18 – Patience

Have you abused and misused God's Divine Patience?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Read Galatians 5:22-23 again.

One of the "very important" fruits of the Spirit is PEACE. Many people believe history shows us that peace is something man has always sought after. Some even believe "real peace" is not a reality in "this world." Many people think PEACE is simply the opposite of or the absence of war.

This aspect of peace can come about via military action and victory. To say, "The King is coming in Peace" could mean that He is coming in victory - with His enemy already destroyed! This aspect of Peace can come about by surrender - the Peace is accomplished with the enemy being defeated but before he destroyed! This aspect of Peace can also come about via Diplomacy! The enemy nor his goods are destroyed everything is left in tact.

The Old Testament teaches, God is the "giver of Peace" such as Leviticus 26:6. Several of the Old Testament Prophets declared emphatically that God is the source of real Peace - such as Isaiah and Nahum. Isaiah also stated that no one is able to find Peace unless they live a righteous life which is made possible by God.

The New Testament concept of Peace is not so different among the secular aspects; but in the Believer's life, peace goes deeper and becomes fuller in it's aspects of value. The Good News of Salvation is a "gospel of Peace" according to Ephesians 6:15. Peace with God is the result of being justified by the Mediator Jesus Christ according to Romans 5:1.

PEACE has an interesting history!

Read Luke 24:36 and make notes:

Galatians – 19 – Peace

The first words out of resurrected Jesus' mouth was "Peace be with you." This "wish" or "desire" or "command" from Jesus to the disciples was not for this moment only.

Read John 20:19, 20:21, & 20:26 and make notes:

When the disciples were together behind locked doors - look at the last half of verse 19; "Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'" Verse 21 "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you!'" Then later, when Thomas was with the others, Jesus said the same thing.

Think about all of the places in the Bible - Old and New Testaments - where God or one of His angels came with a message, or word, - or direction, or just help. Every time the first words or word was "Peace" or perhaps it was "Fear not." God has never desired to "spook" His people - or to even see them "spooked" by something or someone else.

Read Leviticus 26:3 & 26:6 and make notes:

It's great that God is able to deliver us from the attacks of the enemy - and Praise God, He is stronger and greater than the enemy. But you see - early on - in the beginning - God desired for His People to have PEACE ! It is one of His promises !

Galatians – 19 – Peace

Read Psalm 29:11 and make notes:

"Peace" is a blessing! We all already recognize that if something is a "blessing from God", that it is something wonderful to have. The man after "God's own heart" recognized the value of Peace - look at what he said in Psalms 34:14; "seek peace and pursue it."

David instructed the people to "pursue Peace" - "chase it" - "at top speed" - not just sort of wander around hoping to stumble over it someday - **SEEK PEACE AS IN PURSUING PEACE !** Out to catch it and over take it!

If someone came up and grabbed all of your money and began to run off with it - would you just "kind of" walk faster or would you "get a fix on them with your eyes and then go at top speed?"

Most of us would be running faster than we knew we could - and would be "yelling for help"

"Help me catch him" - "Somebody grab him" - "Stop him until I get there."

Why don't we pursue PEACE that way? Because we don't understand the value of it! This is not just of value in the Old Testament or under the Old Covenant!

Read Romans 12:18 and make notes:

Galatians – 19 – Peace

"As far as it depends on you!" As with the other fruits of the Spirit - we must "personally choose" to take in the fruit "PEACE." Peace under the New Covenant is so important - that we should "pursue" and strive toward living at "Peace with everyone."

If "PEACE" with someone else just isn't possible - we need to make sure and to know that it is only because of them. Most often we Christians have purposefully decided to "war" with that person because "we are mad at them." We are wrong! No matter how bad they have cheated us or how bad they are.

Read Romans 14:19 and make notes:

Mostly, we do every "easy" or "convenient effort to have PEACE. If it will "cost me something" - or if it "will be embarrassing" - I'm not going to do it - "if they want peace, let them do something." NO!

We must "make every effort" - hard efforts sometimes - embarrassing efforts sometime - swallow my pride efforts sometimes.

Read Ephesians 4:3 and make notes:

PEACE is the Bond of our unity in the Spirit. In Ephesians chapter 2 it tells us that Jesus PREACHED PEACE. When Jesus had been teaching the disciples just before the end of His earthly ministry - look at what He said in John 16:33; "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace..."

Galatians – 19 – Peace

Why did Jesus "so much" desire for the disciples to have this "fruit" PEACE?

Read Romans 14:17 and make notes:

Jesus desired for the disciples to have a part in "The Kingdom." Jesus desires for US to have a part in "The Kingdom"!

Read Psalm 37:37 and make notes:

You see - God doesn't desire to "Glory in us for just a day." God desires to Glory in us for a very long time - God desires for us to have a future with Him !

Read Proverbs 14:30 and make notes:

This is not Just a Spiritual Principle! If we are not "at peace" – if we are upset - troubled - worried - uptight - continually - Guess what ? It will literally kill us! Our bodies (flesh) simply cannot live without Peace - not for very long!

Galatians – 19 – Peace

Have you ever known someone who was troubled deeply for a long period of time ? In such short a time they began to look "ragged and run down." It will show in the face in no time at all! If it continues they will loose weight - and begin to be sick "a lot" - and if it isn't resolved - they will die !

Read John 14:27 and make notes:

Do you notice here that Jesus said, "My Peace I give to you"? Not just "some peace" but "My Peace." He wasn't going to leave them or us with some "Peace" that had not been tested and proven! He left "His Peace" - the peace that surpasses all understanding!

Also look at the finish of Jesus' instructions'; "Do not let your hearts be troubled!" We get plenty of opportunity to be "troubled" and most of us get plenty to worry over - But God says, "GUARD YOUR HEART" - Don't let your heart be troubled !

We choose to not let our heart to be troubled. Why? So we will have life and a future!

What are the benefits to having the "Fruit of the Spirit" - PEACE ?

First, it bonds our unity in the Spirit! It sticks us together.
Secondly, it gives us a future by bringing life to our body.

Read Colossians 3:15 and make notes:

Galatians – 19 – Peace

Peace is not intended to be something we will get to share in the Heavenly Home with God - it is something for us to have and experience right here in this life!

Let's begin to make purposeful choices - to begin allowing the Holy Spirit to develop this fruit "PEACE" in our life. It will bring life to our body!

What changes do you need to make to allow there to be More Peace in your everyday life?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

For most "Church People" life simply is not fun! Life seems to bring one "stress" after another. Life takes them from one trial and testing to another. Most of the time we put on a "happy face" when we come to Church or when we meet other "Church People." But at the very core of our being – we are not happy.

The average "Church Person" does not enjoy life on this earth. The average "Church Person" does not want to hear a message on the Fruit of the Spirit that we will have today. They know it is missing from their life and they don't want to sit and listen to someone else talk about having it!

We're not going to talk about having it as much as we are going to look at how to "get it" and the benefit it will bring in your life!

JOY is a Fruit of the Spirit ! Against JOY - there is NO LAW !

Most people do not recognize the difference between JOY and Happiness. To "have JOY" and to "be happy" are two distinct and separate experiences.

For one to be happy depends almost entirely upon their circumstances and environment. To have JOY - or to be Joyful - has nothing to do with your circumstances, surroundings, or environment! Happiness comes from what we are feeling, or seeing, or experiencing. JOY comes from the heart - the inner being.

The Psalmist encouraged the people to make a "joyful sound" - not a happy sound! An ancient scholar enumerates at least 10 Hebrew words for JOY. In the Hebrew words and concepts, Joy is more of an expression than a feeling - it was more of an action than a feeling.

D.W. Harvey of more recent times list 13 Hebrew root words and 27 separate words for Joy or Joyful. In Zephaniah 3:14 & 17 - there are 8 different words for Joy in just 2 verses. This "heaping" of words for "joy" indicates the greatness of the cause of JOY.

The O.T. says much about Joy, such as:

Job 3:7 - birthday should be an occasion for JOY

Ecclesiastes 11:8 - whether young or old, a person should take JOY in their years

Proverbs 5:18 - a man should take JOY in his wife

Perhaps in the Psalms, personal JOY reaches it's highest expression. In the Psalms, it appears that JOY is a natural consequence of a person's fellowship with God. As we look at the Scriptures, I believe we will see many references to this is truth.

The O.T. expresses the presence of JOY when God blesses His people - and the absence of JOY when God's judgment causes Him to withdraw from His people. The O.T. expresses much in the way of JOY concerning the promise and expectancy of the coming Messiah. Sadly - many "born again" Believers today DO NOT have JOY in the;ghearts or lives. So very few have JOY in abundance.

We need to have JOY in our lives! God desires for us to have JOY in our lives! Why? What purpose does it serve? What is the benefit of Joy? How do we get JOY?

Read Hebrews 12:2 and make notes:

Jesus endured the cross, and indescribable suffering, for the JOY set before HIM! This JOY was evident in His response to those who came and questioned Him while He was on the cross. He did not give them a short and sharp reply - Jesus answered in Love - and could only have done this because He was experiencing JOY - not Happiness !

Galatians – 20 – Joy

Have you ever noticed how people respond to others when they ARE NOT Happy? Because JOY was in effect in Jesus' life - He was able to endure much for us! And how blessed we are because of it! Don't you agree?

Read Habakkuk 3:17 – 3:18 and make notes:

Habakkuk, a minor prophet as he is declared, - understood the difference between happiness and JOY - and he expressed it better than anyone else. We can learn a lot from this prophet that so many NEVER bother to read.

My Happiness does depend upon whether I get the things I need and want. I am not happy when I don't get the things I need. Sometimes I am not happy when I don't get the things I want. But like Habakkuk - I have made a decision and a declaration - that I will "rejoice in the Lord and be JOYFUL in God my Savior." Why? Because God has shown me how much I need His JOY!

Take a look at a couple of the apostles after they had been arrested and threatened:

Read Acts 5:41 and make notes:

Were they happy? NO! Were they JOYFUL? YES!

Galatians – 20 – Joy

Take a look at a different time when Paul and Silas were arrested:

Read Acts 16:23 – 16:25 and make notes:

They had been severely flogged - not just scolded - and yet here they are singing. I don't believe that they were singing, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen" - I believe they were singing something like, "What a mighty God we serve" - or "How majestic is Your name in all the earth".

Were they happy? NO WAY! Were they JOYFUL? YES! Look at what Paul declared:

Read 2 Corinthians 7:4 and make notes:

Where was Paul getting all this JOY? Where did the Apostles get their JOY? Where did Jesus get His JOY? Where did Habakkuk get His JOY? Where do we get our JOY?

Read Psalms 19:8 & 119:111 and make notes:

WOW ! You mean it is that easy? Once the Lord showed me this - I began to make an addition to my prayers - Psalms 1:1-3 (paraphrased)

"Lord, I thank you that you help me not to walk in the counsel of the wicked, and help me not to stand in the way of the sinners, or to sit in the seat of the mockers - Lord, thank you for giving me a delight for your Law, and thank You for helping me to meditate upon Your Law day and night - Thank You Father for making me like a tree planted by the streams of water, that I yield my fruit in season and that my leaves do not wither - thank You Father for making everything I do to prosper."

Hallelujah! How do we get JOY? There are four basic steps!

First, JOY comes from the "precepts of the Lord". God's Word is the seed from which this Fruit comes forth. Joy comes from "His Statutes." I want to meditate upon His Word continually so that I can have the Fruit of the Spirit – Joy!

Read Psalm 97:11 and make notes:

Second, We will receive JOY by being upright in heart. Not upright in actions; but in Heart!

Read Proverbs 12:20 and make notes:

Do we promote peace? Or do we like to pass on those things that will stir up turmoil?

Galatians – 20 – Joy

Third, Promote peace - encourage peace -and you will receive JOY! Promoting peace in our environment, helps bring Joy to our heart.

Read Psalm 16:11 and make notes:

Fourth step; When we are in the presence of God -we receive JOY!

So, Servants of God get their JOY:

- 1 - Word of God
- 2 - righteous heart
- 3 - promote peace
- 4 - be in God's presence

How much does God desire for gia, to have JOY?

Read John 15:9 – 15:11 and make notes:

Jesus told the Disciples that if they loved Him and obeyed His Word they would receive HIS JOY! This lines right up with the Scriptures we read on how you get JOY. But Jesus made an important statement here - not just that they would receive His JOY - but "that their JOY would be complete."

Galatians – 20 – Joy

Read John 17:13 and make notes:

Jesus desired, taught, and prayed that His Disciples would receive His JOY to the "full measure." And He has this same desire for you and me today!

Read John 16:24 and make notes:

Why does Jesus desire for us to have His JOY to the "full measure?"

Read Romans 14:17 and make notes:

JOY - His JOY - is part of what makes up the Kingdom of God. Jesus desires for each of us to share in the Kingdom, right here on earth. We can do that by having JOY. But there is more than the fact that it is part of the Kingdom of God. There is an important benefit to JOY.

Galatians – 20 – Joy

The Israelites had been in captivity for a long time - and the walls of the city of Jerusalem had been torn down. The people had not followed the Lord's Word - finally the Lord made it possible for them to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem - and when they had finished the rebuilding - they had the Priest to bring out the book of Moses containing the Laws and decrees of God. The people began to cry and mourn when they heard the Laws and commands because they realized that they had not been observing the basic Laws of God.

Read Nehemiah 8:10 and make notes:

The Benefit of Joy:

The JOY of the Lord gives us strength! What a wonderful benefit! NO wonder God desires for us to have JOY! His JOY - and to have it to "full measure." Here, with the Israelites, is an example of the JOY of the Lord coming by way of God's Word and an upright heart.

When the Priest read to them that God had commanded them to live in booths during the Feast of Seventh month - it was that time of year and they had never done this.

Read Nehemiah 8:17 and make notes:

When they began to put obedience into action - they received Great JOY! It is JOY that characterizes the Kingdom of God. John 18:36 tells us this Kingdom is not of this world. The JOY that characterizes the Kingdom of God is a JOY "not of this world" also.

Church people get happy and sad just like all other people. But when Church people have trouble in the area of JOY - then they simply are not connected with the Kingdom! When things go against me - and when things get hard on me physically and financially - I am not happy - just like anyone. But I can remain JOYFUL because this comes from the Holy Spirit - and it does not depend upon my circumstances. "The JOY of the Lord is my strength in times of trouble and trials."

Even if we don't have the gift of discernment - when we see people claiming to be a Believer - and they do not have JOY in their life, then we know:

- 1 - the Word of God is not in them
- 2 - they do not have an upright heart
- 3 - they are not promoting peace
- 4 - they are outside the presence of God

It could be "one or all of these"? The N.T. instructs us to be JOYFUL in our sufferings for Christ. Many people struggle with the idea of being "JOYFUL" in times of suffering. It is not humanly possible to be "happy" when things are bad and we are suffering. It is "Kingdom of God Reality" to be full of JOY - NO MATTER WHAT !

Do you want a miracle to marvel over? The Holy Spirit can take human grief and turn it into Kingdom JOY! How can that happen? I don't know how, I just know He does! Listen closely to this. Not just that it can happen - If we:

- 1 - get to know the Word of God
- 2 - establish an upright heart
- 3 - actively promote peace
- 4 - get into the presence of God

WE WILL RECEIVE JOY from the Holy Spirit! WE WILL receive the Fruit of the Spirit – JOY! WE WILL!

That same JOY that the Prophets of the O.T. covenant experienced in their expectation of the Messiah - is the JOY we experience through the Holy Spirit today. And it is this JOY that will be consummated in the "end of the age. The Saints' JOY will certainly be brought to full measure when we see "that Great Dragon's final downfall." When we are brought into the presence of the Lord God Most High and are allowed to remain for ever and ever.

But some of the Good News is that we don't have to wait until the "end of the age" to have JOY. Jesus has made it possible for us to have "real JOY" right here – today.

Today - right here - we can experience JOY - Great JOY. And we can enjoy the benefit of having Joy in our Life.

What changes do you need to make in order to allow these 4 steps to become a reality for you?

1 - get to know the Word of God

2 - establish an upright heart

3 - actively promote peace

4 - get into the presence of God

Galatians – 20 – Joy

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Read Galatians 5:22-23. List the Fruits of the Spirit given in this text:

Why have we studied the Fruits of the Spirit in the reverse order that they are listed in this text? In this week's study is the answer to this question.

Love - is it A GIFT? NO! It is A FRUIT! As with all the other Fruits of the Spirit - We won't just miraculously or mysteriously receive Love. We will choose to allow the Holy Spirit to develop this Fruit in our Life. Why? Why develop LOVE in our Life? What is the benefit of Love, the Fruit of the Spirit? Who are we suppose to Love anyway? How much Love are we suppose to have for the ones we are to love?

Did you know, God only told us to Love two people? Who are the two people we are told to love? I will show you from the Scriptures the answers to these questions in a moment.

Love is the basis for all of God's dealing with man throughout the O.T. and this Love climaxed in the N.T. It can accurately be stated that "Love" is the key word in the Christian summary of "life, purpose, and calling."

Perhaps the most important Hebrew word for Love in the O.T. is the word "*ahab*" - which describes spontaneous and out-flowing Love. This term occurs approx 250 times in the O.T. Probably the second most important Hebrew word for Love in the O.T. is the word "*hesed*" - it denotes deliberate choice of affection and kindness.

The noblest expression of Love in the O.T. is probably that which is expressed in the Book of Hosea - where love is shown in expression to those who are unresponsive, unlovely, and even antagonistic. The highest expression of Divine Love in the O.T. is probably recorded in Isaiah - where we see Grace expressed in Love toward an undeserving people. The Psalms most frequently express human Love toward God. The most distinctive element of O.T. revelation about God is His basic attitude of Love toward His people.

In the N.T., the Greek word for erotic love, "*eros*", never appears. The Greek noun "*philos*" is found approx 38 times - and it denotes close personal friendship. The Greek verb "*phileo*" is found approx 25 times - .t is most often denoting a "parental kind of Love". The Greek word "*agapao*" is found 137 times as a verb and 116 times as a noun - this denotes the Divine kind of Love. Agape Love is set forth in the N.T. as the "keynote" of the New Kingdom in Christ Jesus.

The O.T. concept of Divine Love was to Love one's family and friends. The O.T. Jews even understood this included an' obligation to those they Love - their family and friends. But Jesus extended the N.T. expression of Divine Love to include not only our family and friends - but our enemies as well.

There is evidence in the N.T. that some of His followers caught hold of this new and expanded meaning. Stephen is just one easy example to find - He demonstrated this kind of Love when he prayed for those who were literally killing him.

With so much emphasis on Love found in our Bible - Let's look into the Scriptures:

Read 1 John 4:7 – 4:8 and make notes:

Where does the Fruit of the Spirit -LOVE - come from? GOD! When Love comes from God, as it does, just what is it that you are receiving from God? Something sentimental to God? Something God bought at the "Heaven Eleven" store and had gift wrapped for you? When we receive LOVE from God - We are actually receiving God Himself!

God is Love! Love is from God! It is a "piece of God" Himself! As with all the other Fruits of the Spirit, Love is a part of God's character. When we allow the Holy Spirit to develop Love in our life, We are taking on the characteristics of God Himself. Well, what about the two people God told us to Love? Who are they?

Read Mark 12:30 and make notes:

The First Person that we are to Love is God! And how much are we to Love God? With all of our heart, soul, mind, & strength; With all my "inner being"; with all of my "spiritual being"; with all of my "thinking" or "thoughts"; with all of my "actions" or "physical efforts".

Consider the Lost Person. The person who has never received Jesus as your personal Savior. They cannot Love God! In fact, they cannot Love anyone! They can become "infatuated" – they can become "attracted to" – they can even "lust after" - But they cannot Love anyone. Because "True Love" only comes from God!

Galatians – 21 – Love

Who is the other person of the two we are supposed to love?

Read Mark 12:31 and make notes:

God only wants us to Love "two people." God and "everybody" else.

Read 1 John 4:21 and make notes:

We simply cannot do what so many Church People are doing today. We cannot claim to Love God, but not Love our fellowman. Who does God not Love? God does hate "actions"! God does detest "things"! But God Loves every person! We are only pretending if we claim to Love God but not "that person"!

Why is it important to Love our fellowman? Why can't we afford to Love some people while we don't Love others? ho can live without breaking the Law Who? Who can live and fulfill all of the Law? I can - and you can - if we walk in Love!

Read Romans 13:8 – 13:10 and make notes:

Galatians – 21 – Love

If we are acting in Love toward someone – then we do not have to be concerned about obeying the Law. By acting in Love - We are obeying the Law!

When a man Loves his wife and children - how often does he rise in the morning and say, "Oh my goodness, I'd better go to work and provide food and shelter for my wife and children or else the police will come and put me in jail." We have laws on the books in this state that say a man can be arrested and put into jail if he does not provide these basics needs of life for his children - even if he does not live with them.

Those men who Love their children, never stop and consider these laws! Because they Love the children, they act in Love toward them and as a result of these "actions of Love." They fulfill all the Law! It is exactly the same in God's Kingdom! As long as I walk in God's Love and act in God's Love, I will not violate the Law where my fellowman is concerned!

If I am acting in Love toward you will I:
steal from you?
cheat you?
hurt you?
withhold from you?

Remember, we are not talking about the "Love" that so much of the world calls Love. We are talking Love - Like the Love that comes from God !

So often people will "fall in Love with someone." Their whole attitude and actions revolve around "what that person does for me", or "how they make me feel" (what's in it for me?) The "God kind of Love" says, "What can I do for you? " AGAPE! LOVE!

Now to the question of Why did we look at the other Fruits of the Spirit first?

Read Colossians 3:12 – 3:14 and make notes:

Love is the "outer most garment" of our Spiritual wardrobe. All of the other Fruits of the Spirit are to be "put on" first - then we are to "put on" Love - to "bind them all together in perfect unity." If we "put on" any or all of the Fruits of the Spirit - and "leave off" Love - then the other Fruits of the Spirit will soon "fall off" or disappear, die, and be gone.

The LIFE of the Fruits is in LOVE! We cannot sustain the other Fruits of the Spirit without the Fruit LOVE!

BENEFIT Of The Fruit Of The Spirit – Love: Love binds together and sustains the other Fruits of the Spirit.

Which is more important; the Gifts of the Spirit or the Fruits of the Spirit?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:7 and make notes:

It seems that Paul placed a special emphasis on Love and raised it to the pinnacle of Christian graces. He placed it at the head of the list of effects of the Spirit filled life. He pointed out that in the Light of Love - all the Spiritual Gifts appear somewhat inferior! Of all the wonderful Gifts of the Spirit - Of all the tremendous Fruits of the Spirit - Of all the Callings upon our life - "The most excellent way" is LOVE !

Galatians – 21 – Love

Look at what these verses have listed that "Love is not" and then look at what "Love is." As we minister, and witness to the world (those that do not have Love) we must take Love to them ! To Love" is the highest calling of any person. The Highest form of Love is found in the Spiritual realm.

In the Godly person - Love is both spontaneous and it is commanded. Love on the lower plane of this world is based upon and is prompted by our feelings and emotions. But the "Agape" Love is a Fruit of the Spirit and as such does not depend upon our feelings, emotions, or circumstances. It is completely reasonable that God should command us to "Agape" one another.

We are to Agape God completely - with all our being and all of our resources. and we are to Agape those around us, even as we Agape ourselves.

If you are still thinking this is just too much to ask or expect - and you are thinking this is just next to impossible. Maybe this will help you understand how this is possible for us today:

You may do well to write this down in your Bible:

In the O.T., the Love of God was FOR man -

In Jesus Christ, the Love of God was WITH man -

In the Holy Spirit, the Love of God is IN man !

For the person who is not saved, frankly I believe it will be too much for them to be able to Love some people. However, for those who have the Holy Spirit living within them - then it is possible, reasonable, and it is commanded!

Read 1 Peter 4:8 and make notes:

Galatians – 21 – Love

The Greek word "*Kalupto*", literally means to cover and hide. The world is accustomed to being ridiculed for their mistakes. They have come to expect every wrong thing will be brought back up every so often. They must see something different in God's people! They must see Real Love!

Read 1 John 3:11 & 3:16-3:18 and make notes:

The "Church at Large" for years has tried to talk the Lost into Believing in Jesus as Savior. We have tried to use persuasive words and outlines to win the lost to Jesus. God's Word tells us that if we don't live it, then we should not waste time speaking it.

Read Galatians 6:9 and make notes:

Look and consider how the world is accustomed to being treated. They are offered something helpful or something for free - and as soon as they are interested -SNAP! Don't be discouraged if the world doesn't flock to your door to receive your help. They have been taught through experience to be skeptical. There's always some kind of gimmick or trick or string attached to the "good offers" it seems. But not with us – RIGHT?

Why go to all the trouble of putting on "real Love" if it's going to be so hard to get the world to accept it? Why go to the trouble if I'm going to have to persevere past the "point of giving up"?

Read Galatians 5:6 and make notes:

Maybe you thought Paul was being a little "over dramatic" when he said that to do good works and to not have Love would be like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. When it's all over and it's time to be rewarded - Do you really think God is going to reward us for a "good deed" that we hated to do - or one that we wish we could have been doing something else" ?

It is not really so much of "what we do" as it is "were we letting our faith be expressed through Love"? Do we think God is pleased that we used our Gift to minister while our attitude was wrong toward that person or situation?

We are to Express Our Faith Through Love! Faith without actions is DEAD! Actions without Love is Worthless!

Do you remember the benefit of this Fruit of the Spirit -Love? Well, there are actually two benefits: First, Love binds together and sustains the other Fruits of the Spirit. Secondly, Love gives value to our actions.

Even if you should attain some gift or fruit in great measure, if you don't have Love - That other Fruit WILL DIE !

What gifts of the Spirit, have you been trying to use without them being wrapped in Love? What ministry work have you been trying to accomplish without that ministry work being wrapped in love? What changes do you need to make to allow Love to become the Fruit of the Spirit that is wrapped around everything in your life?

Galatians – 21 – Love

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

If you will remember in chapter 5, verses 19-23 -the works of the flesh are contrasted against the fruits of the Spirit. Neither of these lists are an all inclusive list. The two lists end with the phrase; "and the like" and "such things." It is reasonable then to understand that there are other lust and sins of the flesh that are not mentioned here. And there are other things that are the fruits of the Spirit that are not listed here.

Just because we go on to the next verses does not mean that we go to an entirely new thought. This was not originally written in chapter and verses. This was a letter and the thought process of the verses we have just covered must be kept in mind as we read the following verses. In the preceding verses, Paul has contrasted the "results" of following the "flesh" with the results of following the "Spirit."

It should be evident to everyone, the kind of difficulties for the person who is a "Believer" that continues to follow the flesh. As a Believer, how can we live a life that pleases God, brings honor to Him, and be obedient to Him, when we are following after the flesh and bring about the results listed?

Read Galatians 5:24 – 25 and make notes:

If you will remember, in the message concerning the "lust of the flesh" or the sins of the flesh - it was seen that we must make a daily decision to serve Christ Jesus. The conflict between the flesh and the spirit is continued to be addressed here.

Galatians – 22 – Led Of The Spirit

There are 3 things that stand out in these two verses:

1. Living by the Spirit is different from walking by the Spirit. One of these two statements shows the Spirit to be the source and the other shows Him to be the regulative forces in a Believers life.
2. The word used for "walk" here implies the idea of a row or series and suggest the believer as following a course with the Spirit as the leader; or marching in a line.
3. This is the third time (v16, v18, v25) that Paul mentions the responsibility of the believer to let the Spirit shape our conduct. The concept of the Spirit bringing life is not a new one, it was expressed in the O.T. - Ezekiel 37:14; "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, . . ."

Since we have now "crucified the flesh" and since we now "live by the Spirit" - "let us keep in step with the Spirit." This is the reverse of what most "church people" are trying to do today!

Don't we realize that most of us are trying to make the "Holy Spirit" keep "in step" with us? We want to set the pace - we want to set the direction - and we want to decide when. And all along the way, we are continually asking our Christians brothers and sisters to pray that the Holy Spirit will "line Himself up" with our direction, plans, and timing.

When a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, God puts His Holy Spirit within our hearts. Jesus tells us in the N.T. that this is done so that the Holy Spirit can guide us and direct us in our day to day life.

Rom 8:1 (paraphrased) There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, and do not walk after the flesh but **after** the Spirit.

Rom 8:5-6 (paraphrased) Those who are after the flesh, do the things of the flesh. Those who are **after** the Spirit, do the things of the Spirit.

Rom 8:13-14 (paraphrased) Those who are **led by the Spirit** are the sons of God.

The key words in these text are "after the Spirit" and "led by the Spirit."

When I was in High School, I was in the Band. We spent hours and hours just practicing "marching." In order for us to put on the marching shows, it was necessary for us to "be in step" with the leader. Later when I was in the Army, we practiced marching. There too it was important for the whole squad, platoon, company, and battalion to "be in step" with the leader.

In order for this to happen, it was necessary for some people to move along at a faster pace than they would normally walk. For others, the pace was somewhat slower than they would normally walk. For some people the stride or length of step was at first uncomfortable, because it was wider than their normal step. And for others it was a smaller step than was normal for them. Each person could not "march along" at their own pace. Each one of us had to adjust our speed and our stride according to the directions of the leader. If we had each set our own pace and stride and direction, - we could have moved around on the parade ground - but it would not have been with precision and it would not have provided the show of movement and formations that resulted from us being "in step" with the leader.

When I got married, my lovely wife and I walked at different speeds and strides. If we had not adjusted our speeds and the strides at which we walked, we would continually be stopping and starting. One of us would continually stop and wait for the other to catch up, and the other would continually be rushed to catch up. It would not be "all that much joy" to walk along together that way.

It is not so different for two or more people who plan or decide to walk along together in the Spirit. If we are going at different paces, or moving in different directions, it is uncomfortable to both of us. And it doesn't look all that good to those who are watching us. It should be very clear by now that the flesh and the Spirit are at war with one another. The conflict is at times intense and unrelenting. The qualities of the flesh and the Spirit are fundamentally opposed.

Galatians – 22 – Led Of The Spirit

Read Ephesians 2:1 – 2:2 and make notes:

Read Romans 8:5 and make notes:

This concept should bring to mind the question, "What can I do to attain victory over the flesh?" "How can I achieve victory?" Paul gives two answers. First, he reminds us that when we came to Christ, we repented of our works of the flesh and crucified them with Christ. Secondly, Paul reminds us that we have been made alive by the Spirit.

Read 1 Peter 4:6 and make notes:

The Spirit leads, we as Believers are to get in line with Him and follow Him. We are to keep in step with Him. One of the reasons so many Churches are having problems is that the people are all trying to get others to get "in step" with their program. In many local congregations today, there is more than one person trying to "set the pace" or the direction.

Galatians – 22 – Led Of The Spirit

Even in the churches where most of the people will confess to "being led of the Holy Spirit" - there are many people trying to get others to "get in line" with their ideas, concepts, visions, and time tables. Are we trying to get the Holy Spirit to "line up with" our plans? Are we trying to get the Holy Spirit to come into agreement with us on our financial plans? Are we trying to get the Holy Spirit to come into line with our plans for our life? Are we trying to get the Holy Spirit to get into step with the direction we have chosen for our life? Maybe we just want the Holy Spirit to come into agreement with our time table.

If we take an honest look today, we will see far too many Church people who are making all the decisions about their life, direction, finances, and time tables. Then we get angry when God doesn't come through with what we want - "demand".

It appears that many Believers today, took their flesh and nailed it to the Cross of Christ when they first became a Believer. Then later, have reached up there, take the crucified flesh from the cross, - and have tried to once again put this torn, putrefying mass of flesh onto their "new person." The old fleshly desires are just not compatible with the "new person" we are in Christ Jesus.

Read James 4:4 and make notes:

Could a Real Believer live as an enemy of God?

Galatians – 22 – Led Of The Spirit

We have a choice as to which sphere of existence we will live. It is our "ruling choice" to live in one moral sphere or the other. Our chosen sphere of existence was once according to the flesh and the world around us. When we came to Christ and accepted Him as Savior, - we were supposed to have made an irrevocable resolve to fasten our fleshly desires to the cross and to renounce sin. From this point forward we were supposed to have made the Spirit our choice of rule and domain.

Try to picture Jesus as a member of a local congregation today - when this situation came up:

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”
(Matt 4:1)

First of all, the majority would have rebuked Satan at the first sign of being led into the desert. When things started getting hot and uncomfortable, we would be calling in reinforcements to engage in all out spiritual warfare. And just as soon as we started getting hungry, we would no doubt begin to "command" that Satan release our supply line of food. And of course there would be some dear brother or sister in the local congregation - that would point out that if we simply had more faith, we wouldn't be in a place of discomfort or with a shortage of food. “Just rebuke these circumstances, brother, and believe you, will have all that you want” - would be the more common instruction.

Some of us are struggling in areas of our life because we have made the plans -and the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with them. Why not give up our plans and surrender to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Yes, sometimes, He may lead us into places that are uncomfortable - but He surely will sustain us there. Sometimes we may be asked to go a little faster than we are comfortable sometimes we may be asked to go slower than we like to. Sometimes, He may lead us in a different direction than "feels" right to us.

But He is "up higher" than we are - and can see the "big picture" - He knows exactly where we need to be and which direction we need to go - in order to bring off the work according to the Father's plan.

Galatians – 22 – Led Of The Spirit

The practice of our outward conformation of life must be in harmony or "in step" with the inward life. To "live by the Spirit" is not an occasional influence of the Spirit. It is an abiding state, wherein we live continually. Can we honestly say that the "outward" show of our life reflects the inward condition of our heart? Yes! It most certainly does! Each of us is actually living out our life according to the level of commitment in our heart.

When are we going to give up on our plans and directions?

What plans do we need to give up?

In what areas do we need to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit right now?

In what way do I need to hand over my career to the Holy Spirit?

In what way do I need to give over the control and directions of their finances to the Holy Spirit?

In what way do I need to give control to the Holy Spirit concerning my Kingdom's Work?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Following the description of the life in the Spirit, - we now come to a section of specific exhortations. What does it mean to live the "Spirit Led Life?"

Far too many people today have an idea of some mystical experience - while the Biblical concept of "living the Spirit led life" is a rather practical "down to earth" lifestyle. It seems the majority of Church People today find it easy to talk about the Fruit of the Spirit - while actually doing very little in regard to the reality of that Lifestyle. We as Christians need to know that it is in the concrete situations - more than the emotional highs - where the reality of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in our lives.

Chapter 6 has two sections on this matter : V1-5 = helping one another in the spirit of gentleness and humility; v6-10 = doing good in the recognition of the rule of sowing and reaping. This portion of the Letter to the Galatians reveals - 5 signs of spiritual maturity.

Read Galatians 6:1 and make notes:

Walking in the Spirit will mean the rehabilitation of those who have lapsed into sin. Some of the translations have the phrase turned around somewhat. In the Greek text, the word "Brothers" comes first. The word "someone" refers to a brother or sister in the family of God. Those who are not saved don't get "caught in a sin" - they live a life of sin. You don't "restore" someone who is lost - they have never been delivered. So, this is referring to a Believer who has fallen in regard to sin - perhaps the very thing or things they were delivered from.

The phrase "you who are spiritual" in the Greek text is plural, implying the whole Christian community is responsible for "restoring" a fallen brother or sister. But the phrase "watch yourself, or you may be tempted" in the Greek is singular, indicating it is a personal responsibility to guard ourselves from the temptations we know we are susceptible to.

#1

The first true sign of spiritual maturity is the willingness to restore a fallen brother or sister in a spirit of gentleness and humility.

The Greek word translated "restore" - is "*katarizo*" which is a medical term meaning to set a broken bone. With a broken bone in the flesh - we cannot ignore it - it simply must be addressed - and yet we do not expose the broken bone so that everyone can see it.

When persons who are not spiritually mature attempt to help a brother or sister who has fallen - it seems they want to either expose it for everyone to see - or they want to jerk them around roughly - without any signs of gentleness or humility.

Read Galatians 6:2 and make notes:

Some have interpreted this to mean the burdens of the law. Others have interpreted this to mean the temptations mentioned in the preceding verse. The phrase "the law of Christ" gives us a key to understanding this verse. We know the "law of Christ" entails much more than just the "law" and the "temptations." This verse is really saying we should help our brother or sister in Christ to bear up under all kinds of "weakness, suffering, and every heavy load they must bear."

When the "burdens of life" become too much for a brother or sister to bear and they begin to succumb - then the Church is failing miserably if we are not there helping to sustain them.

If we are really spiritually mature, we will be there helping that brother or sister to be able to stand before they actually fall down.

#2

The second true sign of spiritual maturity is the readiness to bear one another's burdens.

In much of the N.T., Jesus and the Law are contrasted. “The Law of Christ” spoken of here is the commandment of Love. Jesus said to love one another is one of the greatest of commandments.

He also spoke of the commandment of Love as a "new commandment" He was giving us.

Read Galatians 6:3 – 6:5 and make notes:

Those who imagine themselves to be "somebody" usually are unable to bear the burdens of another person. They usually fancy themselves as being above "that sin" or "that weakness." The one "who thinks he is something"- will most likely compare himself (or herself) to the one who has fallen, and see themselves as somewhat superior, or more spiritual. It is very difficult to restore someone in gentleness and humility, when we see ourselves as stronger or better than that person.

This text is saying, we should not see ourselves as some kind of standard against which we judge everyone else. We should "judge our own actions" and if we are going to take pride in our obedience to Christ, then it needs to be without comparison to others. And we should not see the actions of the majority as some kind of "norm" against which we judge our actions.

Galatians – 23 – Signs Of Spiritual Maturity

V2 and V5 do not contradict one another . In v2 the Greek word is "*bare*" which means "the heavy loads and stresses that are more than one person should try to carry." in v5 the Greek word is "*phortion*" which is the common term for a "man's pack." In v2, the "heavy burdens" spoken of are the temptations, sufferings, and trials of life. In v5 "each one should carry his own load", is referring to the individual task or job we have been given.

We should take seriously the responsibility to perform our job given to us by the Heavenly Father. We should not be lax or negligent and allow our ministry purpose to go undone, or leave it for others to have to pick up.

#3

The third true sign of spiritual maturity is seen in our doing our job regardless of others.

Read Galatians 6:6 and makes notes:

The text above, spoke clearly to the fact that every believer - should take the responsibility to carry out their own job, or ministry. Others in the N.T. address the right of the "teacher" or the "preacher" to live by the gospel. But this particular verse is no addressing the "right of the preacher" - it is addressing the responsibility of the one being taught.

If we are being taught "the Word" then we "must share" all the good things with our "instructor." We are obligated! This is not a different and disjointed thought from the previous text.

Galatians – 23 – Signs Of Spiritual Maturity

V2 said we are to bear one another's "burdens" , which is our way of fulfilling the "law of Christ." One of the burdens of this life is the concern that our family has a place to live and something to eat. Being concerned that our family has the necessities of life.

When the congregation takes on the responsibility to bear the "teachers" burden in this area, it makes it possible for the "teacher" - to apply themselves wholly and completely to the "job they are called to do." When the "teacher" must bear the burden of meeting the needs of life for their family – in addition to ministry - then in every case, other people must do part of the job the "teacher" has been called to do. It is interesting, to find at the very beginning of the section - of "doing good in regard to sowing and reaping" - the obligation to share the good things with the "instructor."

Read Galatians 6:7 and make notes:

Man cannot "mock God" - God has established some laws that govern this universe in which we live. We cannot mock God and say, "I'm not going to do what you say, Nah, Nah, Nah." God does not have to reach out and smack us on the head. He has already established laws that will give us back "like kind" of what we sow. If we sow a life of ignoring our responsibilities, then this is what we will reap. Our own personal needs will not be met fully.

A number of people have tried to make a doctrine out of Paul's lifestyle in this area and ignore his teaching - while others have tried to make a doctrine out of his teaching and ignore his lifestyle. Some have demanded they be provided for financially and in other ways without lifting so much as a hand for themselves. They base their attitude on verses like these and they demand the congregation "must" provide their needs.

Others look at the fact Paul frequently took time to make tents and provide his own financial needs - and from this they conclude that no preacher should be "paid by the church", because Paul paid his own way.

If we survey the N.T. carefully, we find Paul did receive financial assistance from the Church from time to time, and he also engaged in "tent making" from time to time. As we read the text, it seems Paul did the one or the other based upon the particular people to which he was ministering. When ministering to a responsible group, he allowed them to provide for his personal needs. But when he was ministering to a group who was tending to look to someone else to provide for them, Paul set an example that we should not be "parasites" but should each carry our "own load."

#4

The fourth true sign of spiritual maturity is when we are willing to waive our rights in order to meet the needs of others.

Sure, we may have an undisputed right to something - but are we more concerned with others receiving what they need over what we have a "right to?" Remember, we are looking at this in regard to sowing and reaping. If we will not fulfill the responsibility to meet the needs of others, then our needs will not be fully met. If we forego the right to have our needs met in order to meet the need of another, then we will have needs met. If this could just connect in the heart and mind of every Believer, what a difference it would make in our nation.

Read Galatians 6:8 – 6:10 and makes notes:

"Doing good" is "sowing in the Spirit." There may be someone who knows the frustration of "doing good" or "sowing in the Spirit" and not seeing the fruit come forth quickly - better than I do. I do know what it is like to know for a fact that you have "good seeds" - they are certified "good seeds" and to sow them faithfully, looking and hoping to see them sprout up and begin to grow - and the hours turn into days, they days turn into weeks, the weeks turn into months, the months turn into years - and you don't see the crop coming forth, and you know you don't get the fruit until after the crop comes forth and then reaches maturity. I know what it is like to sow and sow and sow, and still not have the results come forth.

V9 is the summary statement - don't be "weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

#5

The fifth true sign of spiritual maturity is found in our not giving up on "doing good" even if the harvest does take a long time to come in.

How many "Church People" grow weary of "sowing in the Spirit" and just quit! How many grow weary of "doing good" and quit because they don't see immediate results! When is the "proper time"? Sometimes it is much latter than we think it should be, but know this, THERE IS A PROPER TIME!

So then, let us take advantage of every opportunity - let us do good to all people, but especially to those who belong to our Spiritual family of believers in Christ Jesus.

v12-15 speaks of those who want to place restrictions and commands upon the Believers. v12 cautions us about following those who are driven by the need to make a "good impression" - and those who want to "avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ." When we find someone who is concerned that we make a good impression or they want to avoid being persecuted, then this person will lead us into all sorts of legalism and bondage.

Galatians – 23 – Signs Of Spiritual Maturity

Think about it - those congregations where they have made a list of "you had better not's"; and a list "you most surely must's." They are concerned with what others may think of the congregation - or they are designed to avoid giving anyone reason to persecute them for their stand with Jesus. Those people who want us to come under a law - for the Galatians it was circumcision – have completely missed the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I don't want people to think bad things about me and I certainly don't want to be persecuted - BUT - I will not allow either of these considerations to rule my life and actions or to direct my service to Jesus!

Those who make the civil laws, don't fulfill the "law of Christ" and that is why we are here. We are here to "fulfill the Law of Christ"- which is to Love God with all our being and to Love others as ourselves.

Let us not boast in obeying some bunch of "do's or don'ts" - but let us boast in the Cross of Christ. (v14)

"Circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything" (v15)

What really means something, what really counts, is that we are a "new creation" in Jesus Christ. (v15)

Galatians – 23 – Signs Of Spiritual Maturity

Review the 5 signs of spiritual maturity and place names of people who had demonstrated having that trait:

#1

Willingness to restore a fallen brother or sister in a spirit of gentleness and humility.

#2

Readiness to bear one another's burdens.

#3

Doing our job regardless of others.

#4

Willing to waive our rights in order to meet the needs of others.

#5

Not giving up on "doing good" even if the harvest does take a long time to come in.

Galatians – 23 – Signs Of Spiritual Maturity

Now review the signs of Spiritual Maturity again and this time list things you need to change in order to allow Spiritual Maturity to become more evident in your life:

#1

Willingness to restore a fallen brother or sister in a spirit of gentleness and humility.

#2

Readiness to bear one another's burdens.

#3

Doing our job regardless of others.

#4

Willing to waive our rights in order to meet the needs of others.

#5

Not giving up on "doing good" even if the harvest does take a long time to come in.

Galatians – 23 – Signs Of Spiritual Maturity

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group: