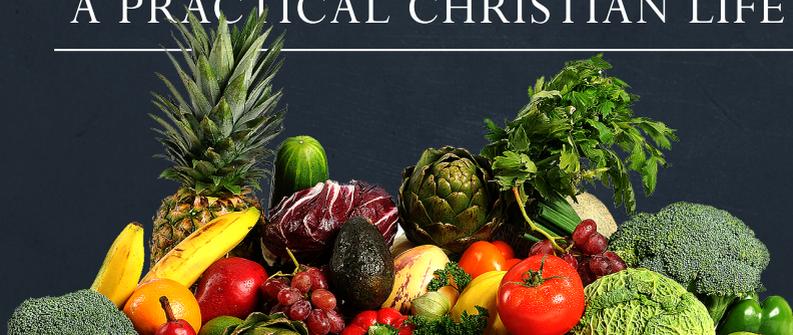


THE  
WORKINGS  
OF THE  
HOLY  
SPIRIT'S  
*Fruit*

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A PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

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DR JOSEPH AGYEI MENSAH



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DR JOSEPH AGYEI MENSAH

## • DEDICATION •

I dedicate this work to Sarah my soul mate and partner in ministry. To my daughters Gloria and Priscilla and to my sons Joshua, David and Joel. For their support and patience in allowing me to spend time in my office outside the home while working on this project. I am grateful for their love and prayers. We are one family called to serve the Lord. We are partners in God's Kingdom business. May God richly bless you all.

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## • FOREWORD •

As Christians what should distinguish us from those who do not follow Jesus? Is it health, wealth, prosperity and a life free from problems or troubles? No, it is a particular “fruit” that shows forth in the life of a true follower of Jesus Christ—the Fruit of the Spirit.

Dr Joseph Agyei Mensah is a pastor, professor and scholar who, in this book, offers practical insights and applications that every believer can employ in daily life to achieve a victorious spiritual walk and credible Christian witness. This volume focuses on the Apostle Paul’s command to “walk in the Spirit” rather than the flesh from Galatians 5:16-26 with a chapter dedicated to each of the nine “Fruit of Spirit.”

I commend Dr Agyei Mensah’s message to readers throughout West Africa and beyond. He is offering here practical principles for effective Christian living based on biblical principles that have been tested by believers throughout the centuries. Indeed, true Christian prosperity is the miracle of “walking in the Spirit”—living out the Fruit of the Spirit in a world that focuses on satisfying the desires of the flesh.

Dr David D Durey

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## • ACKNOWLEDGEMENT •

No book is the solo effort of one person, and this is no exception, am grateful to all the authors whose works I read for insight. I am likewise grateful to my Spiritual Formation Professors of George Fox University Graduate School Newberg Oregon U.S.A where I studied for my Doctorate. I specifically want to acknowledge the contributions the following professors have made in my life: Dr Jules Glanzer, Dr Charles Conniry, Dr Steven Delarmater and Dr MaryKate Morse. These professors introduced me to quality Christian Spiritual life and disciplines.

To them I am eternally grateful.

## • INTRODUCTION •

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is paramount. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Galatia to emphasize the unique role of the Holy Spirit. (GALATIANS 5: 16-26)

The Galatian churches had come into being as a result of Apostle Paul's missionary labors.

The Apostle Paul was especially exercised in his spirit when he learned that Jewish Christians had circulated among the pagan converts seeking to impose circumcision and the Mosaic Law upon them as necessary for salvation. Writing with clarity and deliberation he met the issue head-on. In this letter, Paul gives the polemic against this Judaizing error.

In this letter, Paul plainly states that the gospel is a message of God's grace that calls for faith on the part of every seeking heart. In this letter Paul takes pains to state that the Law of Moses does not produce faith—but it rather works as a curse from which the Lord Jesus has to redeem us from.

Then beyond receiving the gospel is the challenge of living it out. In Galatians 5:16-26, Paul presents the power of the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit as the great means whereby we may live victoriously. He goes to the great lengths to teach that the law has no power to save us.

It is against this background that the fruit of the Spirit will be studied in this work.

We will learn just how practical the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit is in the life of every believer.

When one is controlled by the Holy Spirit----- there are some remarkable divine enablements that take place in his or her heart. The word fruit indicates very clearly that it is not something we can produce from within our own hearts. Fruit is the result of a definite principle. In this instance—the principle of what comes from the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone. It is utterly impossible for anyone of us to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is something we can not do. The only thing we must do is to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit's workings in us.

Each fruit will be treated separately and some practical steps will be given to guide readers to Christian Growth.

CHAPTER 01



THE FRUIT  
OF THE SPIRIT

*Love*

## Love's Atmosphere

It is said that, if a young boy loves a young girl, there are at least twenty ways he may tell her so. That is the paucity of the English language in this regard. We have but one word for love, and that one word must do duty to many feelings.

I can say that, I love my dog or that I have love for roasted groundnut and corn. I can say I love football or I love fufu and light soup. Or I may say I have patriotic love for my Country. I may have a paternal or maternal love----- or a love for family and friends.

The Greek language has at least four words for love culminating in a word used solely to express a love that which surpasses and transcends the highest aspects of human love. It is agape, a love that in the first place is not an emotional love--- but it is the love of decision—it is the love of commitment--- it is love that does not seek love in return---- it is purely an unselfish love----- this indeed is the love of God.

*Charles Wesley made a point when he wrote:*

Love Divine, all loves excelling/  
Joy of heaven to earth come down/  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
All thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion/  
pure, unbounded love thou art/  
visit us with thy salvation/  
enter every trembling heart.

Christian love--- is indeed this agape love--- It is indeed “all love excelling” It is nothing less than a fruit of the Holy Spirit. The first result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is not a sentimental love, it is not an automatic love unsought emotional response. It is the final analysis, a victory given through the Holy Spirit over our selfishness and unloveliness.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit brings us into an atmosphere that is love—saturated and love motivated. This is what the Lord Jesus speaks about in John 13:34-35 when He says,

“A new commandment I give you... Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”

We must understand this in context. To love others was not a new commandment. For the Old Testament taught this. But to love others as much as Christ loved us was revolutionary. We are called upon to love others based on nothing less than Christ's sacrificial love for us According to the text —such love will bring unbelievers to Christ. It is also a proof of our discipleship.

Any petty bickering--- any faultfinding Spirit negates the whole purpose of love. It pollutes the atmosphere of love. We all need to work at loving as Jesus loved. And to love as Jesus loved is impossible without the dynamism that comes as the result of the sanctifying Lordship of Christ.

This love that creates an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance must be worked at. It must become a way of life. And this will be greatly pleasing to God.

Let us for a moment look at 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a. We will look at it in different ways as we substitute certain words with other words (in the place of love the word Jesus--- and in the place of love the word “I am. . . .”)

“If I speak in the tongues of angels and men, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and I have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to be burned, but have not love I gain nothing, Love is patient, love is kind, It does not envy, it does not boast, It is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects always trusts always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

The next aspect of this wonderful fruit of love is:—

### **Love’s Attitude.**

Love is more than warm feelings. It is an attitude that reveals itself in some definite action. It is a love that calls us to act as Jesus did. It is love that gives when it is not convenient to give. It is a love that absorbs the hurt

that others inflict on it without fighting back. Because this type of loving is so unnatural, be in the church or outside of it people will be quick to notice its supernatural source. They will be quick to notice that this kind of love, this dimension of love can only be of God.

This is what real Christianity is all about. It is about going the second mile. It is all about loving even enemies. Love is the universal force of the Christian faith. There cannot be any claim to being a Christian without the love of God, this special kind of love--- being an integral part of our lives.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 16:14 “let all things be done in love” love is the secret of Christian unity. We read in Colossians 2:2 “my purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” Love opens the door to understanding and more and more of who Christ is. A love that goes out in ever winding circles.

This love begins by being a love for all believers. We read in Ephesians 1:15-16, “for this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you.” It is love that expands to every personal enemy you may have--- for we are commanded to love our enemies.

Ed McCully was a young missionary who worked in Ecuador among the Auca Indians. He was murdered by the very people he had come to help. Ed McCully's father prayed “Lord let me live long enough to see those

fellows saved who killed my boy that I may throw my arms around them and tell them I love them because they love my Christ”

This is what the fruit of love is all about. The Holy Spirit works within us to produce a supernatural love even for those who have harmed the dearest and best we know this side of heaven.

*Again listen to the words of John Wesley:*

O love divine how sweet thou art/  
When shall I find my willing heart  
all taken up by thee?/  
A thirst, I faint I die to prove/  
The greatest of redeeming Love/  
The love of Christ for me.

Stronger His love than death or hell/  
its riches are unsearchable/  
The first born sons of light/  
Desire in vain its depths to see/  
They cannot reach the mystery/  
The length and breadth and height.

God only knows the love of God/  
O that it now shed abroad/  
In this poor stony heart/  
For love I sigh for love I pine/  
be mine this better part.

It is love attitude that creates love atmosphere. Let us now consider:

## **Love's Appeal**

Love is the ground of Christian appeal. When the apostle Paul is pleading with Philemon on behalf of a runaway slave--- it is to love that Paul makes this appeal. In Chapter one verse 9 we read ‘yet I appeal to you on the basis

of love” Because Paul was an apostle he could have uses of his authority with Philemon, commanding him to deal kindly with Onesimus. However Paul appeals to love. Paul wanted Philemon’s heartfelt, not grudging obedience. In verse 14 Paul says “But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you will do be spontaneous and not forced.”

Love always prepares the way in difficult church situations. Love paves the way for spontaneous results. There is so much that can be accomplished when there is a spirit of love that reigns. There is nothing so wonderful--- nothing that brings about such a spirit of cooperation as when things are done with an attitude of love in an atmosphere of love.

But there is also another facet to love. Love while its very essence is tenderness, yet love can also have a strong side to it. It is sometimes just as loving to say ‘NO: Love is not obliged to always respond with a “YES’ Paul’s correspondence with the Corinthian Church uses two illuminating words that speak of love.

In 2 Corinthians 2:4 we find Paul writing a stern and severe letter which had caused the Corinthians much grief and pain. But Paul says that the letter was written not to cause them sorrow—but in fact it was to prove his love to them. Paul says, “For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you”

The point that needs to be made is this. Sometimes those we show love show wrong attitudes or they make sinful choices. If we ignore their wrong

behavior and let them continue in it, we won't be showing love to them at all. We show love by honestly sharing our concerns with that person. We need to tell the truth in love. We are duty bound to do this. In fact when we do not make any move to reprimand--- we show that we are more concerned about being liked than what will happened to our loved ones.

In fact Paul goes a step further. He says that when the guilty party has been disciplined we need to go out of our way ---- and in the words of verse 8 “reaffirm your love to him”.

I believe that there are two mistakes that should be avoided, when it comes to church discipline. One is that we must guard against being too lenient and not correcting a person, or being too harsh and not restoring and reaffirming a person in love. There is a time to confront and there is a time to comfort.

This Corinthian letter ends with the words “My love be with you all” Love in the New Testament sense of the word, never makes mistake of thinking – that to let a person do as he or she pleases is to love them. To the contrary, there are times when anger, discipline and rebuke are essential parts of love.

Do we then read in Hebrews 12:6 these challenging words? “Because the Lord disciplines those he loves and punishes he who he accepts as son”. It is true that when we have learnt the lessons of God's disciplining love that we can again sing with Charles Wesley these immortal words?

Jesus Thine all victorious love / shed in my heart abroad/ Then shall my feet no longer rove/ Rooted and fixed in God.

My steadfast soul from falling free/ shall then no longer move/ While Christ is all the world to me/ And all my heart is love.

## **Conclusion**

We need to do some heart-searching as to where we really stand spiritually.

In this chapter I have introduced the subject on the fruit of the spirit. The concept of fruit in the Bible is very important. The Bible makes mention of fruit in 24 of the 27 books of the New Testament. What we bear is the indicative of our spiritual standing.

In Matthew 7:20 Jesus says, “Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them” And in the Christian sense of the word, God is the true source of the fruit. If we see a person filled with this agape love we know that he or she is filled with the Holy Spirit and is indeed a child of God.

If you fall short of the love spoken about in this chapter, then it is time to turn to God in repentance. Perhaps you have never been saved. Or, perhaps, having being saved you have not yield your life totally to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

The fact is that this world will not care one bit about what we know about the Christian faith--- until they know that we Christians really care and

our care for people is demonstrated by our love for them. We can witness all we want about Christ---- but it is only when our hearts are filled to the brim with the love of God that we will be able to make a transforming difference in the lives we rub shoulders with every day.

Is it a question of being more loving towards people? NO, it is rather that above all else we see to it that we are moment by moment living by the power of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love. Is your life lived under the control of the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 02



THE FRUIT  
OF THE SPIRIT

*Joy*

The Spirit-filled life is a life of joy. Yes, there is a cross to bear. There is a world to shun. There is a devil to resist. But all these do not alter in the least the fact that the central truth of our glorious Christian faith is the inexpressible joy that comes from being fully surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

The word for Joy in Greek is an exuberant word. The summons to rejoice is sounded no less than seventy times in the New Testament. Joy does not necessarily mean happiness. Happiness is dependent upon what happens. If the happenings in my life are not good then I am filled with unhappiness.

Joy, in the Biblical sense, is an emotional response to the wonderful certainties of God's sovereign presence. Joy is also the response of a heart that has been cleansed of sin by the blood of Jesus—it is a heart that can come into the presence of God with confidence.

In a little book called "The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion" Dr L.P. Jacks wrote "Christianity is the most encouraging, the most joyous, the least repressive, the least forbidding of all the Religions of mankind. There is no Religion which throws off the burden of life so completely, which escapes so swiftly from our moods, which gives so large a scope for high spirits of the soul, and welcomes to its bosom with so warm an embrace. Christianity does not brood upon the sorrows of mankind. It is always music that you hear, and sometimes dancing as well."

Witness the joy that flows through the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son. There is rejoicing in heaven and on earth when

a sinner comes to Christ. Joy has a sense of Holy hilarity. This boisterous abundance of joy which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit is obvious in the very hour of the Holy Spirit's descent on a person.

Honest men at Pentecost thought the apostles were drunk. Any time the living water burst from the rock the same exuberance, gladness has been manifested.

The first Franciscans missionaries had to be reprov'd for laughing in church, they were so happy. The pioneer Methodist stormed the unbelieving world with their songs, some of them set to dance tunes.

How we need this true joy of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I'm not talking about levity—or a spirit of small talk or incessant joking—for as some has suggested--- a spirit of joking and levity is a poor substitute for the genuine joy that gushes out of the heart of a Spirit –filled person. Imagine what transforming difference it would make if more Christians were filled to the brim with love and joy?

Is it at all possible to have this Spirit of Joy in the normal sense? NO, like love it is a supernatural endowment of the Holy Spirit. It is something absolutely divine. And O, how much we need this true joy of the Lord Jesus made manifest in our hearts today.

O, Lord let me make a difference for you that is utterly disproportionate to who I am, to be filled with such joy unspeakable and full of glory, that is indeed disproportionate to who I am. A joy that is induced—an infusion of joy that comes from the Holy Spirit alone. That I will shout aloud with

sacred joy, that Christ's praise shall all my powers employ His blessed name my tongue extol for His spirit is in my soul.

In Psalm 16:11 we find the Psalmist saying "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" Isaiah the prophet records in Chapter 12:3 "with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation"

### **Joy the Basis of Service:**

In the Old Testament during the time of Ezra when the foundations of the Temple were laid and the restoration of worship took place we read:

"But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while others shouted for Joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away Ezra 4:7

Both the weeping and the shouts of joy were appropriate to the occasion. The Holy Spirit can stimulate us to both rejoice over the goodness of God's marvelous grace and to grieve over the sins that required God to correct us.

In the book of Isaiah 12:2-3, we find a short song of praise. The prophet records: "surely, God is my salvation; I will not be afraid, The Lord, is my

strength and my song; he has become my salvation, with joy you will draw water from wells of salvation”

When the church decided at the council of Jerusalem that the door was to be opened to Gentiles they sent them a letter. It is significant how the letter begins. It begins with “joy be with you” (Acts 15:23). The word “Greetings” is used in; the Greek word is a word of joy.

When James was writing to the Christians scattered around the world, he begins with the word “Greetings” and it is a word that rings with joy.

In Acts 11:22-23, we learn of Barnabas being filled with joy as he witnessed how many Greeks were turning to the Lord in Antioch.

In the New Testament the verb “rejoice” occurs 72 times and the word “joy” occurs 60 times. The New Testament is a book of joy. We read for instance, how the seventy disciples that had been sent out on a mission by Jesus returned with joy as they witnessed the power of the name of Christ in action.

The Greek word joy is *charas*, and it speaks of a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of sweet assurance and confidence that sets a cheerful heart on fire. And no doubt, a cheerful heart will always lead to cheerful behavior.

There is still great joy to be experienced by all those who will fearlessly go out in Jesus name to preach His gospel. Oswald Smith wrote a hymn of joy, the refrain rings out these words.

There is joy, joy, joy in serving Jesus,/ Joy that throbs within my heart,/ Every moment, every hour/ As I draw upon His power,/ There is joy, joy, joy that draw upon His power/ There is joy, joy, joy that never shall depart.

Not only is there joy in serving Jesus but in the second place:

## **Joy is the Basis of the Christian's Strength**

Nehemiah 8:10 tells us that “the joy of the Lord is your strength” The background to this text is significant. The people had been weeping when they heard how they had wandered from the law of God. But now they are told to give gifts to the poor and then to come and celebrate and be filled with joy.

There is such joy to be had when we turn our thoughts from ourselves and begin to think of others. When we rise up out of our disobedience and begin to do what the Lord requires of us--- When we look to the needs of the poor around us--- we then will receive God's joy in our hearts---- and this godly joy brings a tremendous inner strengthening in our hearts.

In Philippians 1:4 Paul says “In all my prayers for you, I always pray with joy “what kind of prayer is this? Paul's joy in prayer was because this congregation had entered a partnership with him in spreading the gospel. What is this joy that Paul speaks about?

It is a joy divine. It is possessed and given by the Holy Spirit alone. I want you to know that this joy is nothing less than the joy of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 13:52 we read “And the disciples were filled with joy of the Holy Spirit.” We serve such a God. In John 15:11 we read the words of Jesus, “I have told you this so my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete”

When we are in a close relationship with Jesus it is inevitable that the deep joy that is in the heart of Jesus will be in our hearts as well. In Romans 14:17 we read “for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” In 1 Thessalonians 1:6, we read “you became imitators of us and the Lord, in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit” where does this wonderful and deep joy have its origin? It is a joy given by the Holy Spirit.

It was this Holy Spirit infused joy that gave the early church the strength to persevere in the midst of severe persecution. But it must be noted that this joy is also the result of our faith. In Romans 15:13 Paul says “may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”

God wants His People to be filled with his joy. He wants us to trust Him for this wonderful joy which He will give to every surrendered heart. This joy in the heart is indicative of the strengthening work of the Holy Spirit deep down in our hearts.

But this joy is not only an individual matter; it is also something that we experience when we know true fellowship with one another. In his first letter John writes, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ we write this to make our joy complete” In the New Testament there is nothing of an independent which isolates people. They knew the joy that renewed reconciliation brought. They walked in harmony with one another.

Paul writing to the Philippians says “if you have any encouragement from being united in Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Holy Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love being one in spirit and purpose.” Phil 4:20.

I think we are beginning to understand then that there is no virtue in the Christian life which is not made radiant with God’s very own joy. A joyless life is not a Christian life. If there is no joy there is no strength. What after all is this joy? Joy is the flag that flies with the king in his residence.

Yes, indeed, joy is the basis of our service and strength, but in the third place:

### **Joy the Basis of Victorious Suffering.**

What is joy? It is to be full of God’s presence and glory. Is it possible to be full of the presence and glory of God and be in suffering and pain at

the same time? Yes; indeed, this is the wonderful quality of divine joy. It is a supernatural joy. Remember every aspect of the fruit of the spirit is supernatural.

I remember one Sunday after preaching I came home and at midnight two of my children got sick .and I had to struggle through the night to find transportation to take them to the hospital in the midst of that, the devil turn to me and said “look what happens when you serve the Lord I replied “Get behind me Satan God will give me the strength to sail through this. This too shall pass and indeed God saw me through.

This strengthening joy of the Lord is a joy that will prevail through all kinds of sorrow and trouble. Jesus told his disciples in John 16:22, “Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice with me, and no one will take away your joy”

The cross could not rob Jesus his joy We read in Hebrews 12:2” let us fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

It is in the midst of trouble that, David cries out, “But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing with joy (psalm 5:11). Who can understand the contradiction with which Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 6:10? “Sorrowful yet always rejoicing” or In 2 Corinthians 7:4 “Paul Exclaims.....” in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds ... O the sheer invincibility of our faith that is filled with so much joy.

In 1 Peter 4:13 we find the apostle rejoicing, “But rejoice that you participate in the suffering of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed

## **Conclusion**

There is a joy for service. There is a joy that gives strength. There is a joy in suffering.

A joy that Jesus promises no person will ever be able to take from you. Do you know this joy? Are you a child of God that is filled with joy even in the midst of your sorrow and suffering?

It is told that the great missionary to Burma, Adoniram Judson, was so constantly filled with joy that the local people gave him nickname “Mr Glory Face”

Wouldn't you like to have a face like that? Then why not make it a matter of faith Why not yield to the workings of the Holy Spirit in your life? Jesus prayed to his father and said, I am coming to you now , but I say these things while I am still in the world , so that they may have full measure of my joy within them (John 17:13). The Lord Jesus wants nothing less than that you should have the full measure of His joy within your heart  
Open up your heart and welcome his joy.

CHAPTER 03



THE FRUIT  
OF THE SPIRIT

*Peace*

In classical Greek, the word peace was mainly used in the negative sense, implying freedom from war. The New Testament usage of the word has a far broader meaning. It has a more positive meaning. It would speak of harmony within total community. It has the idea of being woven together with God and with every one else. It means order instead of chaos.

Let's be practical about this. In what context ought this fruit of peace come to fruition? Let us look at it from two perspectives

### **The Church.**

Some persons within the church are just downright troublemakers. They grumble, complain, gossip, criticize; some are terribly self—centered, proud, selfish and intent on getting their own way. Self is put before Christ and the church and its mission.

### **The World**

Some persons in the world go out of their way to make trouble for Christians .They oppose the believer.They mock and ridicule the believer. Some go to the extreme of persecuting the believer. Other people in this world are power—builders and ego crazy. They are warmongers and filled with corruption and all kinds of greed.

The Christian is called to “make effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord”The very purpose

for the believer's being on earth is to—in a most holy way bring peace between people and God, man and his or her fellow.

The New Testament word for peace is *eirene*--- and it is inextricably tied up with the Hebrew word “Shalom” It certainly has the meaning of freedom from trouble--- but it means so much more than that. It also means experiencing the highest good, enjoying the very best, possessing all the inner good possible. It means wholeness and soundness. It means prosperity in its broadest sense. It speaks of a heart that is flourishing and overflowing.

There is the peace of this world. This is the peace of escapism, of avoiding trouble, of refusing to face issues of reality. But then there is peace of God. This is a peace deep within each believer's heart. It is tranquility of mind, a quiet composure—even in the midst of most trying circumstances. It is more than a feeling--- it is something of the Holy Spirit—it is indeed a fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks about the peace of God and the God of peace. True peace is from God.

And also you find out quickly that when you are tempted to give a person a piece of your mind --- you will have no peace of mind;

Is peace then just the wistful pursuit of most people? The ancient Philosophers thought that peace came as a result of elimination of provocative situations. Take away from people all human actions which brings frustrations to life and make life a continual battlefield--- and then people will have peace.

Others taught that peace could only come through the death of our emotion; so many of us have cultivated the “stiff upper lip” attitude to life. These people taught that in order to have peace, people must make themselves emotionless. People must never give their hearts to anyone. People must also never wear their hearts on their sleeve. These people made of life a desert and called it peace.

Yet others taught that peace comes from complete self-sufficient independence; for a person must never in any sense whatsoever become dependent on anything that is outside that person’s life. People’s lives must be absolutely self-contained—defended by determination.

Yes some people in this world saw peace in terms of detachment, self-isolation—and insulation against life. The one forbidden thing was any involvement in any human situation; the sort of thing that cries out “once bitten twice shy”. The type of attitude that says “I have enough trouble of my own to worry about.”

Now how dramatically different this is to the Christian concept of peace. In the New Testament sense of the word, peace is not solely in the negative; it does not mean that if certain things or persons are removed, then this will equal peace. More positively it describe peace as a God-given, Holy Spirit infused quality of mind that no matter what the circumstances may be— there is a serenity—a tranquility—a deep sense of control—a divine decorum and stately poise within our innermost soul.

This peace—God’s peace—this wonderful fruit of the Holy Spirit, occurs 88 times in the New Testament. And this word concept of peace occurs in every book of the New Testament. The New Testament is therefore, a book of peace.

We will take a closer look at this fruit of the Holy Spirit. We will look at the following three things: the purpose of peace, the place of peace and the pursuit of peace.

### **The Purpose of Peace.**

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 God is revealed to us as “the God of peace” As we look at this verse we see the contrast. God is the God of peace while we are creatures of utter frustration. There seems to be such an unrest and fearful turbulence in many a heart.

The purpose of the God of peace is to deal with our inner tension. There are things which tear at our insides; Things that we speak of as “eating us up” What God wants to do for each of us is to cleanse us of everything that has led us to the discord in our hearts. God is then also concerned that once cleansing us of our sins and unrest of heart---- not to then leave those hearts with a vacuum. He wants to fill every cleansed heart with His own peace--- so that in an environment of unrest we may live with an inner poise and tranquility of heart and mind.

Peace is something that comes from the very heart of God. In Philippians 4:7 Paul speaks about the Peace of God which passes all understanding. This is the peace that comes from a quiet assurance that everything is under God's control. Peace is also a gift from the Lord Jesus Christ for He said "peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)

We have no reason to fear the present or future. The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ within us is greater than every hostile force outside of us. We have the calm assurance that our Lord Jesus is completely and sovereignly in control of every situation.

Many years ago I was able to lead a highly intelligent Man to faith in Christ and some time afterwards received a delightful letter from him which among other things said, "pastor, I have found what millions are still searching for – Christ's own peace in my heart"

Peace is God's purpose for us and it comes by believing. In Romans 15:13 Paul prays, "may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Peace is the result of trusting God in all of the trying and vacillating circumstances of life. Peace comes from obedience—the obedience that is grounded in the word of God--- the obedience that is the result of completely submitting to our faithful heavenly father. When we do so--- peace is the result.

The Hymn writer, E.H Bickersteth says,

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?/The blood  
of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?/To do  
the will of Jesus, this is rest

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrow surging round?/On  
Jesus bosom naught but calm is found.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?/Jesus we  
know, and He is on the throne.

Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours? Jesus  
has vanquished and all its powers.

In the human and worldly sense, peace is what people endeavor to achieve through peace treaties, cease—fires, negotiations, ,summit meetings and all kinds of political maneuvering--- but in the New Testament sense, peace is not something we achieve--- it is rather something we receive. We receive the fruit of the Holy Spirit called peace and this is God's purpose for each one of us.

In the second place we consider

## **The Place of Peace.**

Peace means right relationship in every sphere of life.

### *Within the Home.*

The Corinthian Church had many problems in regard to homes where the dividing sword of the gospel had brought about a new perspective in relationships. Paul urges the Christians not to be the cause of any breakup of the marriage. Paul urges the Christian spouse to bring the unbeliever spouse to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul gives his reason, for he says, “for God has called us to peace” (1Corinthians 7:15)

This word of peace describes the unbreakable unity which should exist between a husband and a wife.

That is the wonder of Christ’s own gift of peace. God wants to give this peace to every home in his church. We need peace in our homes. But we also need peace in:

### *The Church*

Paul reprimands the Corinthian Church for their disorderliness in worship .And we find him in 1 Corinthians 14:33 telling them, “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace” In a worship service everything must be done with a sense of decorum and harmony. Even where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are being exercised there is no excuse for disorder.

We learn from Ephesians 4:3 that, Paul urges the Ephesus Church to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit through the bond of peace” Here we see how the Holy Spirit is involved in bringing about the unity within the body of Christ. This unity through the Holy Spirit results in peace through the same Holy Spirit.

To the Colossians Paul uses a vivid metaphor In Chapter 3:15 He says, “Let the peace of Christ rule your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace”

We are called as a people of God to live in peace with one another. To be at peace does not necessarily mean that we no longer disagree. We can disagree without becoming disagreeable. Peace needs to be made where disharmonious relationships have led to there being no peace.

Now the word “rule” that is used here is from the vocabulary used in sports. The word means “umpire” or referee”The peace of Christ is to be an umpire in our hearts. I as far as my personal Spiritual life is concerned, whenever, I have lost a sense of Christ’s peace in my heart—this wonderful peace which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit—then the heavenly umpire has stopped the game—an infringement has taken place—and I know full well, I’M going to get nowhere in my spiritual life until I listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to my heart and I do everything I can to get that peace restored.

Within the Church our decisions must never be ruled by anger, unrest or bitterness.

Peace is something which must be sought after between all Christians and the world around them. Are you at peace with everyone in your Church and outside your Church? Are you actively engaged in bringing people who are not at peace with each other together again? Jesus says “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God”

We have looked at God’s purpose for peace. We have looked at the place where God wants His peace to operate. We now look at the third aspect of this fruit of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Pursuit of Peace.**

Peace is a relationship which must be sought after between each one of us. We have already been exhorted by the text that tells us to follow after peace and the holiness without which no one will see God.

These Hebrew readers were familiar with the ceremonial cleansing that prepared them for worship. They knew that they had to be clean of heart in order to worship God in the sanctuary. Sin always blocks our vision of a holy God and it impairs our fellowship with one another. Holiness is here coupled with living in peace. There cannot be a right relationship with God and not being at peace with everyone else.

The great challenge is that although—for whatever reason we do not feel loving towards some people—we are commanded to make every effort to be at peace with everyone. How important is this?

We read in 1 pet 3: 9-11, these words, “do not pair evil or insult with insult, but with blessing. For whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good he must seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil”

We understand that the Lord is desirous of being attentive to our prayers—but then we must be a people that seek peace and pursue it. Anything less than this, in God’s eye, is unacceptable behavior. We have to be active in building relationships. We are to personally be at peace with everyone within our sphere of activity. But more than that, we are to act as peace-makers.

Many a time, making peace is far a bigger challenge than making war. It is easier to destroy than to build. We need to rise above wanting to get revenge. We need to seek peace in our own hearts and then actively pursue it in the lives of others.

Peter in speaking about last days, the days just before God’s final judgment on earth when that day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in heat—2Peter 3:14, Peter says “so then dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to found spotless, blameless and be at peace with Him”

We understand yet again how holy a holy life is a life that is at peace with God. All our unrest and frustration is a result of not being at peace with the Lord Jesus. Peter urges the Church to make every effort at being holy and at peace with one another.

## **Conclusion**

We conclude. We have covered the aspects of the purpose, place and pursuit of peace.

It is a fruit of the Spirit. It needs to come to full growth in our lives.

The hymn writer says:

Drop thy still dews of quietness/  
Till all our strivings cease,  
The beauty of thy peace.

CHAPTER 04



THE FRUIT  
OF THE SPIRIT

*Patience*

Once again we are reminded of the contrast that Paul sketches here. (Gal 5: 19-23) He contrast two radically different lifestyles. We either live by the Spirit or we act out what our sinful nature dictates we do. Some of the sins that Paul mentions are gross and obvious.

Others are more subtle like selfish ambition and envy.

People are masters at the art of covering up sin. Thomas Watson a Puritan writer of many years ago said “When men for bear vice, they do not hate it. There is no change of heart. Sin is curbed, it is not cured...”

Paul minced no words when he said people who live according to the dictates of their sinful natures will not inherit the kingdom of God. The Greek word “live according to the dictates of their sinful nature” has reference to something that has become a habit, something that is done over and over again. We must understand that a Christian is empowered by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit within and is therefore kept from habitual uninterrupted sinning.

It is also of great worth to notice that, Paul speaks about the multiple acts of the sinful nature in contrast to the singular Greek term “fruit” of the Holy Spirit. The acts of the sinful nature are shown in many different ways in the lives of different individuals. Not everyone who is living out the energies of the sinful nature will be doing all the things mentioned in that bad list of sin. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit produces a single fruit in our lives.

For instance I cannot say, I have love, joy, and peace in my life---- but don't have patience. We either have all of the fruit of the Holy Spirit or

we have none. It is also a fact that we are not the cause of the fruit of the Holy Spirit which manifest itself in various virtues---- all we have to do is to yield to the Holy Spirit--- For it is only He that can produce His fruit within us.

This brings us to reflect on another fruit of the Holy Spirit ---- Patience.

There is a saying which goes “patience is a virtue, catch it if you can. Seldom found in women, never in a man

A century or so if a fellow missed a train it did not upset him. After all there would be another one in two weeks time. But today in our pressure filled age--- we get all up tight when we miss one section of a revolving door in a banking hall.

As much as God desires that our lives are filled with joy, love, and peace--- so too He wants us to be filled with patience. I am of the view that there are two ways of obtaining patience.

1. By allowing the blessed Holy Spirit to sanctify us through and through and in so doing imparting to our hearts this precious fruit – which has been described as “love under pressure, with the power to continue to exhibit itself as love”
2. Or conversely, you can trust God for a time of suffering. We read in Romans 5:3-4 “Not only so, but we know that suffering produces perseverance’ perseverance’ character’ and character, hope”The KJV says “we glory in tribulation also knowing that tribulation worketh patience....”

Now precisely what is patience or perseverance? In biblical sense it is the ability to patiently endure the injuries inflicted on us by others. This is where the rubber meets the road. The Holy Spirit plants within us an ability to be patient with people who are very difficult to get along with.

Someone has said it this way: “To live above the saints we love, Oh that will be glory. To live below with saints we know well that is another story.”

In describing this patience I would like to say “we need long—mindedness, to bear with the frailties and provocations of others, from the consideration that God has borne long with ours and that, if it had not, we should have been speedily consumed”

The point that we need to reflect on is this: How on earth can we be impatient with others when God has been so patient with us? To bring it out more simply ---- This patient or longsuffering is a Spirit or attitude of self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong. It is all about being good—tempered under provocation. It speaks about a person who under pressure does not explode.

We will look at the fruit of the Spirit Patience in the following ways: The examples of God and the examples we need to follow.

## **The Examples of God.**

God is a God of infinite patience. In 2 Peter 3:15 we read “Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation...” This means that God is slow in avenging wrongs—God gives people an opportunity to repent.

We must understand the context of this statement made by Peter. It was a time of great persecution. Many Christians were suffering for their faith. They were terribly disillusioned and disappointed that the second coming of Christ had already taken place. Peter takes pains to point out that this apparent slowness of our Lord must not be interpreted as slackness. What Peter says is that it is in fact a demonstration of God’s patience. For God is still giving people an opportunity to repent. For we read in 2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”

God may have seemed slow to these believers as they faced the fires of persecution—but God is not slow--- for certainly He does not follow our agenda or timetable. In Psalm 90:4 we read “for a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night” The Lord Jesus is waiting so that many more sinners will repent and turn to Him. And we are to be involved in this. Instead of pining about things that are not happening in your life--- why not get involved in proclaiming the good news that Jesus is waiting for people to turn their lives over to Him.

What we hear about the patience of God is that it is a characteristic of God that is willing to forbear with people when our impatience would long ago have given way to totally giving up on people.

May I address my next remark to anyone reading this book who is outside the mercy of God. To someone who has time and again heard the gracious call of the gospel but has not responded to that call in repentance and faith--- don't my friend for one moment presume upon the patient of God. Although God is slow to anger—the moment will come that His spirit will no longer strive with you—and you will feel the full burst of His anger. For our God is a consuming fire.

Don't even dare to tempt the patience of God—for though God is very patient with sinners you can go too far. And then you would have reached a place of no return.

We now turn to consider:

## **The Example We Need to Follow**

In the book of Ecclesiastes 7: 8-9 we read “the end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit for anger resides in the lap of fools.” What these verses are really saying is that we must not start out on project--- but that we must have the patience, the staying power to see it through to its completion. It also has reference to self-control. An impatient person is a person who is sure to quickly lose control. And the Bible says that the anger that comes about from impatience is something that is utterly foolish.

The Greek word for patience is *Makrothumia* which actually means having the God-given ability to bear a long time provocation. It would also speak of an enduring spirit. God's spirit gives every believer a patience that never gives into adverse circumstances. All kinds of circumstances may afflict us, but the magnificent power of the Holy Spirit enables each one of us to patiently endure them to the end.

Discouragement may come our way, but the Holy Spirit enables us to be patient in the circumstances and takes us through the circumstances. People may do us wrong, abuse, slander, and injure us; but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient even while we are heap with abuse.

Two significant things need to be noticed about patience 1. Patience never strikes back. The spirit-filled Christian is given the power of patience. 2 Let us ever remember, that patience is one of the great characteristics of God. Patient is a fruit of the Holy Spirit—it is a fruit of God's very own spirit—and each Christian is to yield to the Holy Spirit for patience and endurance.

Listen to the words of Proverbs 15:18 "A hot tempered man stirs up dissensions, but a patient man calms a quarrel. "Also Proverbs 25:15 "Through patience a ruler can be persuaded and gentle tongue can break a bone" It is clear that a patient spirit wins the day. Listen to this one from Proverbs 14:29 "A patient man has great understanding, but a quick tempered man displays folly."

A person with quick temper which comes from an impatient spirit is like fire out of control. Anger divides people. Impatience pushes us into hasty and irrational decisions.

How foolish we can be to immediately respond selfishly to personal insults. A person who is submissive to the Holy Spirit will allow every personal insult and every aggravation to first of all work in us a heart that seeks for the truth. A heart that will seek to be humble and find out what God thinks about the situation. A heart that allows the powerful working of the cross to crucify every vestige of self and pride.

Listen again to the wisdom we find in the book of Proverbs. This time from Proverbs 16:32 “Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city” Self-control is far superior to great exploits. Great successes in the field of sport, education and business can be thrown away by a person who has an impatient and angry spirit. The greatest of all controls is the controlling of an impatient spirit.

Losing control results so many times in you forfeiting what you want the most. The person who is under the sanctifying control of the Holy Spirit is better than a mighty military commander who captures a city.

We find Paul in Ephesians 4:2 speaking to the subject by saying “Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love” We must know for a fact, we are dealing with imperfect people in every sphere of life. We are called to love people in spite of their many

imperfections. Is there a person in your neighborhood, office, school, or church whose mannerisms and idiosyncrasies annoy you to no end? Rather than dwelling on that person's weaknesses or looking at that person's faults, pray and bless that person with the strengthening touch of the Grace and love of God. And more than that a cure for your impatience concerning that person can occur if you would take the time to get know to that person and learn to love and help that person. This is what godly Patience is all about.

In Colossians 3:12 we read "Therefore, as God's chosen people, Holy and dearly loved, clothed yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. " Our real problem is not the other person's failings that upsets and unsettle us—rather it is our impatient reactions to their failures that lies at the heart of the matter. We need the old self to be crucified and the new self to be sanctified.

We read in Colossians 1:11-12, "Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the father..."

This verse speaks of three virtues essential to Christian maturity.

1. Great endurance: The Greek is "hupomone" its meaning is most illuminating. It is not only the ability to bear with trying circumstances and difficult people, but it is that tranquility of mind that takes every trying circumstances and turns it into something worth. It is a God-given virtue which is so strong that no circumstances of life can vanquish it. It is the Spirit-given ability to deal triumphantly

with anything life throws at us. It speaks of patience in adverse circumstances.

2. Patience: “macrothumia” This has more to do with patience with people. It is the Spirit-given ability to deal with unpleasant and uncooperative people without any sense of bitterness. It is a spirit of endurance that will never allow another person’s unloveliness to spoil the love that is in your heart. It speaks of a strong self-restraint that does not hastily retaliate when a wrong has been done.
  
3. Joy: “meta charis” with joy; speaking of the Spirit-given ability to be patient and joyful at one and the same time. It speaks of a calm sweetness. And in the context we are so filled with God’s power and glorious might that—even in the midst provocation, we are filled with joy and thanksgiving to God. Ours is not a grim struggle with people and circumstances. We have God’s ability to adopt a sunny—hearted attitude towards life with all of its adverse circumstances. This God-given patience and joy—is a joy in any circumstances. A cheerful heart will eventuate in cheerful behavior.

### *Conclusion*

You and I have a choice. We can either look at life with a morbid and cynical attitude—or we can be people determined to be filled with the Holy Spirit who gives patience and joy as supernatural qualities—which brings sunshine and laughter into every dark situation.

Many years ago in Scotland a young woman asked a superintendent of a Sunday school if she could teach a class. The superintendent assigned her to a class of very poor boys. The superintendent told her to visit the boys and bring them to his house where each boy would receive new clothes.

The worst of the boys was called Bob and he only came for three weeks. When the teacher went to find why he was missing she found him and his beautiful new clothes dirty and torn. The Sunday school teacher patiently invited him back again and he was given another set of new clothes. But Bob again went missing; once again this teacher with infinite patience went after Bob and he was given his third set of new clothing. She prayed for Bob and pled with him to be faithful; and this time something happened. Bob started attending Sunday school and church regularly.

A short while later Bob gave his life to Christ and was received into church membership. His life was so changed that he was invited to become a Sunday school teacher. He later felt the call to the ministry and studied for it. The end of the story is that, this discouraging boy, ragged, run-away Bob, became none other than Dr. Robert Morrison, the great missionary to China. He was instrumental in translating the Bible into Chinese language, and by so doing, opened the Kingdom of God to teeming millions of that vast nation.

This all is because a young Sunday school teacher in Scotland was filled with the Holy Spirit, who imparted to her God's patience and God's joy-- and a young helpless poor boy's destiny was changed and a destiny of a nation touched by the power of the gospel.

What can God do through you if you would repent of your unholy impatience?

How many lives have been sent away from Christ because you gave up on them. I implore every Sunday school teacher in our churches please do not give up on one child--- hold on to that child---- visit that child pray for that child-----you never know what God has in mind for that child. I close with the words of James 5:8, "you to be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near"

CHAPTER 05



THE FRUIT  
OF THE SPIRIT

*Kindness*

The greatest need of each individual Christian is to be directed, influence and controlled by the Holy Spirit. We must realize anew that, we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. We are no longer under the dispensation of the law. We live in what the prophet Joel Prophesied about, but what they in the Old Testament never experienced. Today we live with gifts God has given to His Church. Pastors, teachers and evangelists; these offices were unknown in the Old Testament. They had kings and the Aaronic priesthood. They had the Temple and the daily sacrifices.

Today we live under the new terms of the New Covenant. We live in time of the Holy Spirit who indwells the life of every true believer. Now instead of vows of obedience to the law of God--- the New Testament teaches us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is all about the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in our lives. It is not so much the question of will you obey the law? But rather, will you open up your heart and mind to be controlled by the Holy Spirit?

That is why Ephesians 5:8 is so important. Literally, in the continued present tense it reads “keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit” why this emphasis? Because in the Christian life or walk is hopeless without the Holy Spirit.

The point is you may give people all the law you want to. You can throw at them every rule book the human mind can conceive; but nothing is going happen unless the Holy Spirit lives His life through the obedient heart of the believer. It is only the Holy Spirit who can make us like Jesus. A question of great importance then is this: “Is the Church the body of Christ making disciples that are truly spirit-filled?” It was Catherine Booth

of Salvation Army who over hundred years ago said, “Burning words; that is what I’m looking for. I travel all around, and I hear oratory I hear clever preaching. But what I’m searching for is something that will burn in my heart like the men on the road to Emmaus” (Luke 24:32)

It is all about the Church being filled with Holy Spirit. It is all about us who make up the body of Christ in this world being filled with the Holy Spirit. And Spirit-filled people will be seen by the fruit they produce in their lives. Only the Holy Spirit working in us can change the natural man for the better life that Christ offers.

God is good and God is so kind. And He wants to fill us with His wonderful kindness as well. It is the fruit of kindness which we are going to look at in this chapter.

Epicetetus, a pagan philosopher who said “Man has lost the very essence of manhood—the distinguishing quality which makes him a man, when he has lost kindness. He continues we know a coin and we know to whom a coin belong to by the imprint on it. We know that a man belongs to God when He has on him the imprint of kindness.”

The Afrikaans of South Africa interprets this virtue as friendliness. The Oxford dictionary tells us that kindness is the quality of being gracious and friendly. The Authorized Version of the Bible translates this virtue of the Spirit as gentleness. It basically addresses itself to a sweetness disposition. It speaks of the wonderful ability that is able to put people at ease. It speaks of a disposition that shrinks from hurting another person.

We will look at two aspects of this virtue. Kindness as an attribute of God and as an action of man.

## **Kindness as an Attribute Of God.**

In Isaiah 63:7 the prophet says “I will tell of the kindness of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us—yes the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindness”

When we speak of the attributes of God we speak of two things.

1. God’s absolute attributes such as His Omnipotence; Omniscience, Omnipresence Eternity and Immutability.
2. God’s moral attributes such as His Love; Mercy; Holiness; Grace; Compassion and Kindness.

God’s absolute attributes overawe us. God’s moral attributes draw us to Him. We who were far from God have been brought near through the blood of His son in a magnificent display of kindness. And grace. It is this Divine display of kindness that was able to put our fearful hearts at ease. Kindness has being called a warm goodwill to others.

This is so characteristic of the God we love and serve. His heart is filled with such warm and goodwill towards each one of His children.

Paul, in Romans 2:4 poses the question “O do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you to repentance” In this kindness God holds back His judgment, giving people time to repent. It is a fact that God in His infinite kindness will forgive sin. We dare not, however, despise this kindness. The kindness of God towards sinners is no ground for them presuming on that kindness and going on living in their sin. God is not a blank check for sinning.

In Romans 11:27 we read, “Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you provided you continue in his kindness” As we set our hearts upon following this infinitely kind of heavenly father—we will continue to walk in his warmth of goodwill towards us.

In Titus 3:3-6 we read “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice, envy, being hated and hating one another. But when kindness and love of God our savior appeared, he saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus our savior”

The sheer kindness of God is of such a magnitude that it can take people enslaved by hate and all kinds of malice—and bring those people to a glorious rebirth and renewal by the power of the Holy Spirit. We move from a life full of sin --- and the kindness of God leads us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And people once unkind now become kind. It is really a contradiction in terms to speak of an unkind Christian.

It will do us well to ponder again and again on the kindness of God. We now move on to consider kindness

### **As An Action On Our Part.**

There are so many conventions and treaties and so many creeds. So many paths that winds and winds while just the art of being kind is all the sad world needs.

In Ephesians 4:32 we read “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as Christ in God forgave you” kindness comes from such words as kin and kindred. This means that we are to treat others as if they were part of one’s own family.

The fruit of kindness should implant in us a compassionate and forgiving disposition which is based on the simple but amazing fact—that this is the very Disposition which has been shown to us in God’s kindness demonstrated in His great act of forgiveness .offered in Christ.

Kindness is warmth of love within our hearts toward one who has wronged us and who seeks our pardon. How are we to respond to those who have wronged us?

Are we to get that person repenting in a way and in words that we dictate?

Or will there be an expression of love’s warmth toward the one who is at our mercy?

The acid test will be those moments of confrontation whether you will exhibit the spirit—controlled fruit of kindness. Will you be warmhearted towards that person? Will you through the power of the Holy Spirit be able to put your offender at ease?

I remember when our daughter Priscilla was young we had our morning devotion and discussed the virtue of kindness. Her little brother Joel have being teasing her to death and always make her upset. During the discussions Priscilla asked me daddy that does that means that I have to be kind to Joel as well? I said of course. She replied daddy that will be really difficult.

Yes; this fruit of the Spirit called kindness is to be exhibited in all kinds of frustrating circumstances. In 2 Peter 1:5-7 we read “for this very reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self-control and to self-control perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness, love.

We learn from this that our relationships with one another must be governed by that is warm and cordial. We must never make a brother in Christ our enemy. We are called to be filled with the Holy Spirit and in so doing be filled with friendliness and kindness. The true Christian knows that he is his brother's keeper- and he does not shrink from the cost that this involves

This disposition of kindness is something so self-forgetting. We do not show kindness to draw attention to ourselves. Because it is a fruit of the Spirit—God gets the glory.

Charles Wesley wrote:

*Behold, how good a thing  
It is to dwell in peace.  
How pleasing to our king  
This fruit of righteousness*

*When brethren all in one agree  
Who know the joys of unity  
When all sweetly joined  
True followers of the lamb*

*The comfort is unspeakable  
E'en now our Lord doth pour  
The blessing from above  
A kindly, gracious shower of heart reviving love  
The former and the later rain  
The love of God and love of man.*

We find a wonderful example of kindness in the life of King David. In 2 Samuel 9:1 we read “David asked, ‘Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’”

This portion of scripture centers on Mephibosheth the crippled grandson of King Saul.

Now it was King Saul that had sought to kill David his own son-in-law. Mephibosheth now feared for his life and well he might have if it were not

for the kindness in the heart of David he would have been a dead man. For most kings during that time tried to wipe out the families of their rivals in order to prevent any descendants from seeking the throne.

The challenge would come to each one of us. Is there perhaps someone in your house of enemies that you may show kindness to for Jesus sake? Is there a person in your life who has deeply hurt and offended you? Do you have a rival somewhere in your life?

Will you seek to be filled to overflowing with the power of the Holy Spirit so as to demonstrate the fruit of kindness to that person?

Some year ago I read a pamphlet with these words

“Life is too short to quarrel, Heart are too precious to break. Come let’s be friends again for our Lord Jesus sake.”

We have to face the facts, throughout Church History multitudes of righteous people have not been kind. When one wonders why the gospel of Jesus Christ has not swept the world one must look for reason not only in the strength and obduracy of sin, but in the lack of kindness in many who have been prominent in church life.

There is such a wonderful strength in kindness. It is hard for human nature to resist a genuine warm-hearted kind person. And every day brings the Christian face to face with opportunities to show all we meet kindness, friendliness and warmth of heart.

*Conclusion*

Let me conclude with a story of Dr Albert Schwietzer who at the age of eighty-five years was still actively engaged at his jungle Hospital at Lamnarene Island.

It was about eleven in the morning. The equatorial sun was beating down mercilessly on Dr Schwietzer when he saw a woman struggling with a huge load of firewood. Then this white-haired eighty-five year old man rushed to her aid.

Some people were visiting the hospital and were amazed to see Dr Schwietzer do that and thought that at his age he shouldn't be engaged in such strenuous activity; to which he replied "no one should ever have to carry a burden like that alone."

This world is full of people carrying burdens too great to handle. And young and old need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and especially the fruit of kindness. No one should ever be left to carry heavy loads alone. Will you respond to the Spirit's call and become a person who is filled with virtue of kindness? So that you can be friendly and warmhearted to all. There is a world waiting to be won by people who have the kindness of God burning in their hearts.

CHAPTER 06



THE FRUIT  
OF THE SPIRIT

*Goodness*

The Greek word for goodness is found only in Biblical and ecclesiastical writers. The meaning and essential quality of this word was apparently so lacking to the unbelievers observation as not even to call for the coining of such a word. Unbelievers knew good deeds but as a constant quality, it was beyond their grasp. This fruit of goodness is such an unusual thing that it can only be understood as being a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Inter-varsity New Bible Dictionary suggests that Goodness is, ‘The general sense of ideal character—but with a righteousness softened by Love” Righteousness without love is such an unattractive thing. Goodness is the central flame of holiness. This Holy Spirit infused Goodness does not only describe a pure heart, but also a big heart. It speaks of an active goodness and a generous goodness. This goodness speaks of an uprightness of heart and life. This virtue is revealed in the life of someone who out of the sheer goodness of heart will reach out to the most undeserving of people.

Goodness is the perpetual desire and sincere study, not only to abstain from every appearance of evil, but to do good to the bodies and souls of men to the utmost of our ability John Wesley spoke of this virtue as” tenderness in behavior” It has also been referred to as an uprightness of heart that hates evil. A clean-cut honesty of motive and conduct.

Dallas Willard in his book THE DIVINE CONSPIRACY speaks of this fruit of Goodness and I quote “Many people have equated sanctity with keeping an ethical code, but the ethical code is only the consequence of Christ-centered life, and if the path of ethical achievement is deliberately chosen, and a man comes to have a pride in his achievement, we are back

to the sin of Pharasaism again. He goes on to say “They keep the code by their own taut wills and lapse into sin of supposing they have done it themselves –the test of sanctity is not by those rules but by Christ-centered character of life itself.

What we are saying is that this fruit of goodness is something that is absolutely from God. No adherence to any rules can make someone good. Goodness here means moral excellence. It speaks of something indescribably beautiful in the life of every truly Spirit-filled life.

We will look at the following: 1. God’s Goodness 2. Our Goodness.

## **God’s Goodness**

There is a beautiful hymn that says

The King of love my shepherd is/Whose Goodness faileth ever;/I nothing lack if I am His/And He is mine forever” H. W. Baker

Goodness was a virtue lived out in the life of Christ. We read in Acts 10:38, “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went about doing good and healing all those who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him. OUR Lord Jesus was not only good—but He went about doing Good.

A.H. Ackly, the hymn writer says it well:

Wonderful life full of service so free/ friend to the poor and the needy  
was He;/ Unfailing goodness on all He bestowed,/ Undying faith in the  
vilest He showed.

It is all about active goodness. It is all about manifesting this goodness in all the practical situations of life. Once upon a time there was a little boy whose mother made eating beans mandatory. One day she found him crying in a tall tree in the garden. Upon enquiry about why he was crying he told her it was all about forcing him to eat those beans and then sobs. “It awfully hard to be good in your Kitchen Mamma”

This fruit of goodness is all about God sanctifying you wholly. It is all about being filled with God’s own goodness.—not that you should then be put in a glass case marked “fragile—this side up---don’t bump---handle with care. No; it is a goodness that is meant to touch a world in need. Remember again—it is “a righteousness softened by love”

Look for a moment at Romans 5:7 “very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die” What is implied here is that there is a difference between righteousness and goodness. By way of an example a righteous could evict a widow for not paying her rent. For all that righteousness is doing is following a regulation or standard. Goodness, however, would pay the rent for the widow. The Bible teaches us that God is both righteous and good. Jesus was good and He went about doing good. It was a goodness that touched broken hearts. Our God is a good God.

We see this illustration in the life of Moses. We find that after Moses in anger had broken tablets of stone—when during his absence from the people they had made themselves a golden calf to worship. God tells Moses to start all over again and for the second time Moses brings the tablets of stone upon which the Ten Commandments are recorded. God then passes before Him and proclaim, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth...” (Exodus 34:6-7)

This speaks of mercy extended towards a sinning people--- and it is a mercy that is abundant in goodness. In Psalm 107:9 we read “for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things”The hungry soul is filled with goodness.

We read in James 1:17 “Every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the father of lights, in whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” God never changes. With Him there is “no shadow of turning.”This suggests also not only that God is immaterial and therefore incapable of casting a shadow, but also there is no shadow side to God” The Hebrew word for God includes all that is beautiful, the attractive, the useful, the profitable and what is morally right. God’s goodness is an immaculate—to be trusted goodness; God knows indeed how to be good and tender.

Philosophers such as Plato equated ultimate goodness, highest good with God Himself. God acts according to what He is. There is the sense in which God’s glory draws from us our wonder of praise. God’s holiness evokes

within us a distinct sense of our sinfulness--- but it is God's goodness that brings us to the place of true obedience.

In Romans 8:28 we read "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose". Yes it is true that in this life we encounter pain and persecution; yet God in His infinite goodness transcends all of life's happenings and causes the good and the bad to work together for our good. For the Christian, ultimately, there are no tragedies. Ultimately, the providence and goodness of God works all these proximate evils for our final and eternal benefit.

And then to crown it all we read in Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever"

We now look at:

## **Our Goodness.**

We read in Romans 15:14, "I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another"

One thing we can be sure of, this was no empty comment by Paul. When Paul commends them for being full of goodness--- and competent to

instruct others. This goodness—this moral excellence was to be seen in the life of this congregation Paul wrote to.

Why was this so? Only because they were people who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit had brought into the very texture of their lives this clean-cut excellence; This softness; this tenderness this holiness of life; this desire to always do the right thing. It was because of the Spirit's indwelling that there was that there was an outpouring of divine goodness.

What we are to others is because of what the Holy Spirit has done in us. It is His unction that leads to our action. There is no inherent goodness in us. There is dynamic expression or fullness of goodness without the Holy Spirit indwelling in us.

We read in Ephesians 5:8-9 “For you were once in darkness, but now are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

When we are living in light—when we are walking in light—our lives will be filled with goodness. Our actions will show goodness of heart. And the very meaning of the word speaks of a goodness the overflows with generosity. This word would also speak of a balance in life. A sense of equilibrium. It would speak of a balanced personality. It speaks of a perfect blending of virtues. It speaks of being “even-keeled”

It speaks of a person who because of being filled with the Holy Spirit is absorbed with the desire to promote the well-being of others. We are told it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance. A person filled with the fruit of the fruit of goodness---will go all out to glorify God through good works and deeds so as to influence people to God and to repentance.

It is a heart that looks upon misery of others—and even sees their sin—yet nevertheless reaches out to that person with tenderness and goodness of heart. It is all about improving the lot of others. It is all about bringing beauty and perspective into the life of someone who has been warped by life's ugly

*Realities.*

Goodness is in essence holiness fleshed out. Goodness is also wholeness expressing itself through human personalities who know the total freedom that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit. In a wholly human way we reflect the beautiful life of Christ in all that we say or do. Our humanity is at its very best when the Holy Spirit is allowed to produce His fruit with our lives.

In no way does the Holy Spirit want to suppress our sanctified humanity. The Holy Spirit will never turn us into world-denying ascetics or into religious fanatics. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to make us like Jesus. And Jesus was holiness and goodness personified. But it was a holiness and goodness that could comfortably relate to saints and sinners alike. This life in the Spirit—is life filled with laughter and joy..

It is through a life that exhibits the fruit of goodness that people are won to Christ. We are no more like Christ than when the Holy Spirit is producing in us the fruit of the Spirit. We are to be like Jesus, not for our sakes, only but in order that others may be pointed to Him.

I believe that this is how the Holy Spirit performs His main task of convincing an unbelieving world that Jesus is Lord.

A group of young Christians were involved in feeding the homeless people in their city. One day one of these homeless people said “others give us food and much more to eat, but you Christians seem to wrap up everything in goodwill” The loveliness of Christ lingered long after the food had been digested by these poor people.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to invite the sanctifying work of the Spirit into our lives. Sanctification means renewal in the likeness of Jesus. Jesus by His Spirit shares His risen life with us and gives both His goodness and power. The fruit of the Spirit is something that grows in us. The gifts of the Spirit are what the Holy Spirit shares with us.

To have the fruit without the Gifts is to be ineffective; to have the gifts of the Holy Spirit without the fruit leads to superficiality. To have both in balance is to be like Jesus. How well do you know the Holy Spirit? Is He merely a doctrinal proposition or is He a dynamic person to you?

## Conclusion

An engineer was showing some visitors around some oil wells. As he passed by one of them he paused in order to oil some equipment on the well. Because the machinery was squeaking badly.

The visitors were amused at the idea that an oil well should be oiled. Something that is not so amusing, however, is a Christian who needs oiling when he or she is trying pump oil for others.

How we as Christians need to repent when all we have been in this world is a squeaky piece of machinery. Why repent? It is a sin not to be constantly keeping in step with the Holy Spirit. But we must not only repent but also surrender to the Goodness of the Spirit.

Surrender means, letting go. In the words of Selwyn Hughes, “just as the canvas surrenders to the painter, the violin to the musician, the wire to the electricity, so we must put ourselves at the disposal of the Holy Spirit”

CHAPTER 07



THE MINISTRY  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Faithfulness*

The essential message of the book of Galatians is a message of liberation. It speaks of true freedom that comes not from being enslaved to the law but by being filled and led by the Holy Spirit. There is not a person on earth who does not seek for freedom. We speak of our freedom of speech; our freedom to vote; our freedom to have dissenting view.

But true freedom can only be brought about by truth. It knows the truth that sets a person free. Paul writes this letter to establish a crucial promise; spiritual freedom comes true the Lord Jesus Christ. And the life of Christ is made manifest in us through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

It is the essential ministry of the Holy Spirit to produce in us both His Gifts and His Fruit. Life lived by the power of the Holy Spirit is the only true freedom that a person can ever experience. Anything else, leads to bondage and frustration

O' the joy of being controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit from deep within our hearts and minds. Paul's purpose in the letter is to tell his readers how to be free and to stay free and how to enjoy this freedom that there is in Christ.

In this chapter we consider the Spirit—produced fruit of faithfulness. It has to do with that quality of heart and mind which makes you a person upon which others can rely.

Faithfulness means trustworthiness. It speaks of someone who is steadfast; someone who is loyal' Churches are built and grow because there are

people who can be utterly depended upon to do a job of work well' people whose word is their bond.

God is faithful: 1 John 1:9/ 1Thessalonians2:24/1 Corinthians 1:1-7/ 1 Corinthians10:13/ 2Thessalonians 3:3.

We will look at two things 1. Faithfulness is required by God: 2 Faithfulness is rewarded by God..

## **Faithfulness is Required by God.**

1 Corinthians 4:2 reading from Philips translation. "And it is a prime requisite in a trustee that he should prove worthy of His trust" The living Bible has it " Now the most important thing about a servant is that he does just what his master tells to do"

The word "steward" or "trustee" or "servant" denotes any person of trust within the church and indeed, any person who is a member of Christ's church--- and is in a position of sacred trust. We must very seriously consider this. As Christians, we are men and women who have been called to be faithful. We are required by God to be dependable.

We are required to be loyal to the task to which God has called us. Every single Christian has a call upon his or her life. And you are called to be faithful no matter what the cost; for it is a call that comes from God Himself.

The Hymn writer E. H. Bickersteth writes:

Stand soldier of the cross/ Your high allegiance claim/ And vow to hold  
the world but loss/ For you redeemer's name.

Faithfulness is all about a vow of high allegiance we make to the Lord our God. It has to do with a Spirit—filled relationship of loyalty to all that God is in Himself and requires of us. Can we be depended upon to take our stand upon those things which are consistent with the word and the will of God?

May this be our prayer “Oh give me Samuel's ear the open ear O Lord  
each whisper of your word like him to answer at your call and to obey  
you first of all”

Where does faithfulness all begin? It starts off in being faithful in the small things of life. Faithfulness is a relationship of dependability in small things.

We read in Luke 16: 10-12 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much, so if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who give you property of your own?”

What Jesus is saying is that faithfulness in little things will lead to greater responsibilities. Jesus is saying that if we are faithful in regard to the things the things of time we will receive the worth of eternity.

It is told of the great English Scientist, Michael Faraday who was a Committed Christian and a member of a rather small congregation. He was called upon to give a lecture on the wonders of a magnet at which England's Royalty were present. After giving a brilliant lecture, the crowd stood and gave him a wonderful standing ovation. But Faraday was nowhere to be found. He had slipped away to attend the weekly prayer meeting at his church which was comprised of just a handful of people.

O" that wonderful power of the Holy Spirit who works in each of us that carefulness in maintaining our God-given responsibilities. Praise be to God for His enabling and that grace that works within our hearts--- that punctuality in performing our promises to Him Ah, the wonder and blessings of the vows of high allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

*The HymnWriter T O. Chrisholm writes:*

Living for Jesus a life that is true/ Striving to please Him in all that I do/  
Yielding allegiance glad-hearted and free/ This is the pathway of blessings  
for me.

God has His requirements. And they are binding upon each one of us. There can be no options. We dare not live irresponsibly and live self-pleasing lives. The point is, however, that, the way to real blessing is through an allegiance that is glad-hearted and free.

Jesus in the parable of the unfaithful and undependable servant says, 'The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him

and at that hour he is not aware of. He will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Mathew 24:50-51)

We also need to understand that not only does God requires faithfulness--- but in the second place

### **God Rewards Faithfulness.**

In Mathew Chapter 25 we have the parable told by Jesus on the talents he gave to certain men and required of them to use those talents to gain even more. We read of the two men who were faithful in making significant gains for their master. In verse 21 it is recorded. “well done good and faithful servant” You have been faithful with a few things” I will put you in charge of many things come and share your master’s happiness.”

Jesus is referring to faithfulness that result in observable gains. There is no doubt that our Lord knows unbounded joy when He sees us faithfully working at making His kingdom great. What joy He knows when we are faithful to the life of a young Christian in the congregation.. Staying the course with a young Christian until he is established in the faith and become a pillar in the church.

What about investing time in being a mentor to someone who is new in the faith until that person is strong enough to mentor someone else in turn. This is the way a church is built. This is the way Jesus’ heart is gladdened. My greatest reward is to know that my master is smiling and His great heart of love is leaping for joy because I did not fail him.

Frank Crosby the hymn writer wrote:

When Jesus comes to reward His servants/ Whether it be noon or night/  
Faithful to Him will He find us watching/ With our lamps all trimmed  
and bright?

In Revelation 2:13 we read “I know where you live ---where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city--- where Satan lives”

Pergamum was called the city where Satan “had his throne” Surrounded by worship of Satan and the Roman Emperor as god, the Church at Pergamum refused to renounce their faith, even when Satan worshippers martyred one of their members.

In Revelation 2:10 we read “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life”

Yes there are requirements. Yes, there are rewards too. And the rewards of faithfulness become clear. There is the reward of one day entering into the joy and gladness of our master's heart and there is joy of being given a crown of life.

The New Testament world was famous for its athletic games. A crown was the victory wreath, the trophy given for the winner of a contest. If

we have been faithful in running the race, we, too will receive the prize of victory--- eternal life.

Faithfulness is also a virtue upon which the church of Jesus Christ is built. We read in 2Timothy2:2 these words “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable (faithful) men who will be qualified to teach others”

Here we find the true secret of growing a church. If the church were to consistently follow the advice found in this passage ---if there are reliable men and women in the church who pass on to others what they have been taught ---the church will grow. The church would expand geometrically, as well taught believers would teach others and commission them, in turn to teach others. Disciples need to be equipped to pass on their faith.

Our work is not done until new believers are able to make disciples of others.

Faithfulness speaks of firmness of purpose. And it is a purpose has observable results. Paul was able to accomplish so much as he went from place to place because of an army of faithful men and women.

In 1 Corinthian 4:17 Paul writes” “For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which aggress with what I teach everywhere in every church”

Timothy had traveled with Paul on Paul’s second missionary journey and was a key person in the growth of the early church. Timothy, though a

rather timid young man, had nevertheless, become one of those reliable and faithful men upon whom the Lord Jesus could depend to build His church.

In Ephesians 6:21 we read “Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant of the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. Who is Tychicus? Mention is made of him at least five times. And whenever you find Tychicus he is being sent by Paul to some place. Paul calls him a dear and faithful servant of the Lord. We thank God for people who are willing to be sent. And who keep on being willing to be sent.

People sent to places of need; sent and willing to go wherever they are wanted. The church advances in rapid strides through faithful and willing people. Wherein does this willing and faithful spirit lie? It is rooted in the Lord Himself. It has its source in being filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Colossians 4:9 we read, “He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, Who is one of you” Who was Onesimus? He was the runaway slave who had somehow reached Rome. But he no longer calls him a runaway slave; he now calls him a faithful and dear brother. Paul, through the power of the Holy Spirit had stuck with a runaway slave until he became a faithful and useful servant of God. Paul was faithful and so Onesimus became faithful too.

In 1 Peter 5:12 we read “With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God stand fast in it.”

Silas was a man that both Peter and Paul could rely on at Philippi. He probably assisted Peter with writing of his letters. His name crops up at various places in the New Testament. He is always serving with someone. Silas was one of these men whom the church can never do without. He was always content to play second fiddle just so long as God's work could be done.

What we need to learn here is that many of us cannot be Peter's and Paul's—but everyone can be a dear and faithful servant upon whom a Peter and a Paul can utterly depend.

Then in 3John verse 5 we read “Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers even though they are strangers to you”

In the Church's early days, traveling prophets, evangelists and teachers were helped on their way by people like Gaius who housed and fed them. Here was a man and his household who were faithful in their hospitality. They could always be depended upon to provide hospitality for traveling preachers.

There is a great thought here. A person's circumstances may be such that he or she could never become a missionary or preacher. Not everyone can be on the frontline, so to speak. But every person by supporting those who are in the frontline of battle, can make themselves allies of the truth. By being faithful in the giving of our practical support we are carrying on the wider work of the church.

I know some missionaries and preachers are going to be rewarded one day. But, so too, will an army of supporters who unstintingly gave of their love and services over many years, you too have gladdened the heart of your Master.

## **Conclusion**

God requires our faithfulness and God will certainly reward our faithfulness.

There is a well-known story worth repeating. It concerns the city of Pompeii which was destroyed by eruption of Mount Vesuvius. In the ruins of the city they found in the lava the form of a Roman Soldier standing guard. He had been placed there by his captain. They found him with his hands still grasping his spear. He stood immovable while the earth shook beneath him and he was engulfed by flaming cinders, smoke and molten lava. But he stood at his post and did not budge an inch.

Spirit-filled people stand at their post. Spirit-filled people stay the course. Spirit-filled people are faithful first of all in the small things and then later on as they are trusted with more and more.

The form of the Roman sentinel was found a thousand years later. What will be recorded about your life and my life a thousand years from now?

Be controlled and influenced by the Holy Spirit and He will make you faithful in both the small and big challenges of life. Jesus is waiting to reward every faithful man or woman with a “well done good faithful servant receive your reward—and enter in to my banqueting house of joy and gladness. Greetings.

CHAPTER 08



THE MINISTRY  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Fruit of  
Gentleness*

The word gentleness or as some translators use the word meekness is really a difficult word to translate from the original Greek. This fruit of the Holy Spirit would describe a life that is gentle, tender and humble. There is an emphasis that the Greek language gives to this word. It speaks of a life that is strongly considerate of others but in a sweet gentle way.

While this fruit of gentleness would speak of a sweet humility, it does not by any means suggest that, the person is weak. It is really a sign of great strength. When someone is suffering in pain or injustice, gentleness steps in to do what it can. Gentleness has the element of strong self-control.

When the Greek Philosopher Aristotle used this word he used it as the mean between the extremes of being terribly aggressive on the one hand and to lack total anger on the other. What Aristotle had in mind was a spirit of equanimity. In the days of classical Greece, this spirit of humility and gentleness was not praised or sought after at all. To the ancient Greeks and to many of us today, the spirit of gentleness and humility is seen as a weakness and not a strength.

We need discernment to distinguish between a true gentle spirit and the hypocrisy of a fawning spirit. Most Western society prides itself on its expectation of assertion. We have come to expect a certain pride and assertion in others----- and consequently some of us may mistake this true spirit of meekness or gentleness for hypocrisy. That hypocrites have on occasion simulated humility, cannot be denied. Sometimes it is true that the fruit of gentleness has been confused with Satan's greatest sin, the pride that apes humility.

It is true, that for personal gain, manipulators will often feign meekness to get what they want. However, think what you will, the real fruit of Gentleness found in a Christian's life is for real. It is not a fawning cringing pretense--- It is not the sign of an inferiority complex.. It does not signify the absence of ambition .It is authentic, because it is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is a revelation of the incredible strength of sweetness—anger under control.

We need to be reminded that it was said that it was of our glorious Lord, the one who epitomized the very essence of true manhood—that He was meek and lowly at heart.

Humility as a sovereign grace is the creation of Christianity.

We will look at this fruit of Gentleness and Meekness from two angles 1. Illumination, 2. Illustration

## ILLUMINATION

Let me make you aware that the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit is consistently made manifest in the life of every Christian. If we know that the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in our lives. In fact, our bodies are now Temples of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes and makes real in our hearts His Gifts and Graces. He comes to live out in our lives –love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It is one harvest.

Christians or as the New Testament says, are “saints” And the saints are those who have caught a glimpse of God. They are people who have been

transformed by the love and grace of God They are on their way to greater discoveries of the ways of the Holy Spirit as they walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit.

When a person has a real God-encounter his or her life can never be the same again.

Conversion is nothing less than a God-encounter. The eyes of faith have been opened to see God. A life of prayer and communion with God leads us into ever more glimpses of God's glory. And the closer anyone gets to know God—the more they will see their contemptible selves. None of us ever see the full glory of God—however, just glimpses of that glory leads to true humility and meekness.

As naturally as we shield our eyes from the full intensity of the sun so the more we see of the glory and holiness of God—the deeper we will bow before Him in humility. I think it goes without saying the more proud we are the less of the glory of God we have seen. The more meek and gentle we are—the more of God we have. Pride is the deadliest of sins. It is pride that asserts itself against God. Meekness and Gentleness are the opposite of pride. The less pride, the more of God.

Isaac Watts say so descriptively:

When I survey the wondrous cross/ On which the Prince of Glory died/  
My richest gain I count but loss./And pour contempt on all my pride.

We may think it rather odd the way Nuns are drilled in various disciplines. First they are trained to take correction without offering any excuse. They are not allowed to talk back when they are reprov'd in any way. Second, they are trained to welcome humiliations. Third, they are taught to seek humiliations and to squeeze as many of them into a day as possible.

Now, while that all may sound very exemplary for a Nun, it sounds crazy in a world where self-assertion is taught as a virtue. It seems to modern ears rather pathological to pour contempt on all our pride. Within each human heart there is this primal force that wants nothing to do with full-in-face-humiliation.

Now I'm not saying that what takes place in the training of Nuns, in so far as humility is concerned, is a good thing—in fact, I find it very unnatural thing. The reason is that while we can learn all kinds of self-effacement restrictions and through discipline apply them to our lives--- it will never get rid of the deep-seated heart of pride that is at the core of every heart. That is why God has given His Holy Spirit to live in us.

When prayer when longing prayer takes you and me into the presence of God, and we catch glimpses of that glory—the meeker we will become. In Isaiah 57:15 we read “for this is what the high and lofty one says—he who lives for ever whose name is holy , I live in high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in Spirit”

God lives in meek and gentle hearts. When His son came, He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, yes even the death of the cross.

He was ever meek and gentle in heart. He stooped to kneel as he washed the feet of His disciples.

When the son of God humbled Himself for you—can you be proud?  
He became poor for you can you run after riches?  
He accepted dishonor —can you strive after honors?

In Gal 6:1 Paul admonishes the Galatian leaders. “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently” Oh how much harm has been done in the church because church leadership did not restore sinners in a spirit of gentleness. The Holy Spirit is not a Spirit of harshness—but indeed one of great gentleness.

Those who catch frequent glimpses of the Glory of God—and who live in meekness are the ones that totally outwit the devil. Satan uses a proud heart. God uses a meek heart.

We have looked at the illumination that comes to a heart who is in pursuit of God’s glory. We now turn to:

#### ILLUSTRATION.

It is in Romans 12:3 that Paul says “for by the grace given to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

A healthy self-esteem is in place because God does not want us to underestimate ourselves. The danger is where we overestimate ourselves. The key to an honest and accurate evaluation is to know the only true basis of our self-worth. It all has to do with our identity in Christ. In Him we are capable of worthy service. When we are filled by the Holy Spirit, we are able to live in meekness and exhibit a sweet and gentle nature.

In 1 Corinthians 15:9 Paul tells us that he is the least of the Apostles: In Ephesians 3:8, Paul informs us that he is less than the least of all saints. Not is he only the least of the Apostles but he also says he is the least of all the Christians. And many years later we read in 1 Timothy 1:15 where Paul says “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst”

We see Paul as the hero of the faith. Paul saw himself as the chief of sinners—the least of the Apostles and the less than the least of all the saints.

Way back in Church History there was a man who was a pastor. He was not very well-educated and his fellow pastors took no pains to conceal their dislike of him. They wrote him scathing letters and said that they were going to petition the Bishop to remove him. He replied to these pastors with a profound sense of gratitude, begging the prayers of those who had written these letters. He said “pray for me that I may do less harm and more good’. Finally a letter was written to the Bishop and signed by

all these malicious pastors. Before it was handed to the Bishop, they let this poor man read what they had written. He carefully agreed with all that was written and then appended his very own signature to the letter.

One of the great missionary societies in the world is the world-wide Evangelistic Crusade, founded many years ago by the famous English missionary C.T Studd. He was succeeded in his work by a man who did not have talents C.T Studd had. But have an undeterred Harrison went to work in the heart of Africa. Accepting the dictum of Gandhi that if you have an article in your possession that you were not using and which some one else could use you were thieving, he kept almost nothing and gave he had to needy people.

He never had a real home. He planned to build a small cottage at one time, having lived in an office-cum storeroom for many years, it all stopped by a chance remark of a servant who worked for him. This servant remarked to Harrison saying “everyone is saying that it is a good thing that you are going to build your little cottage up on the hill. You are an important man we should climb a mountain to come and see you at your house. That finished it. The man wanted to be of no reputation like his lord, decided that his office cum storeroom was adequate to his need.

The great American missionary and Revivalist David Brainerd had such a poor opinion of himself as a preacher that he said “I was almost overcome by it my soul was grieved for the congregation that they should sit there and hear such a dead dog as I preach.

Of course Brainerd was so wrong in his estimation of himself—History

has proved that. But the point that needs to be made was that he walked with God with a meek heart and God used him and revival broke out among the Indians for whom he had given his very life.

We must understand that a meek heart is one that attracts God's favor. Jesus said, 'Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth' This fruit of Gentleness and Meekness is love's sweet voice to a proud world. A gentle-spirited can rebuke without rancor. Argue without intolerance. Face truth without resentment. Be tough yet be tender.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7 we read "we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children" Gentleness is often overlooked as personal virtue in our assertive loaded society. Is it not generally true that the more powerful and aggressive a person the more that person commands respect. This is true even though people don't like to be bullied. What is gentleness? It is love in action. It is being kind and considerate of others. It speaks of a life that goes of its way to meet the need of others.

Moses the man whom the Bible describes as meek beyond all men that were upon the face of the earth was no spineless, subservient creature. When called for Moses could blaze with righteous indignation—and yet could be found on his face before God pleading for God to spare the nation. No spineless spiritless man could have led those fickle Jews as Moses did. Moses had meekness, manners and manliness combined, spirit-filled virtues all blending to make him a great leader.

Take a look at our blessed master. He invited His disciples to learn of Him; The one who was meek and lowly of heart. There was always such a sweet demeanor about Him.

Christ no doubt had an athletic body. Muscles of steel developed over the years from using the tools in His father's carpentry shop. He walked great distances as He preached from place to place. Yet see those muscles rippling—see those eyes blazing as this meekest and gentlest of men drives those who had turned His father's house into a den of thieves. It was said of him that the zeal of His father's house had eaten Him up.

### *Conclusion*

Yet again we are brought to realize the beauty and fragrance of a spirit-filled life. A life lived where gentle answers turn some explosive situations around. The sweetness of heart that melts the ice around it yet it knows all the strength of a burning sun at its zenith.

Many years ago there was well known Indian poet named Tilak. While traveling in a train and English man engaged him in conversation. Tilak was very impressed with this Englishman and gladly accepted a New Testament from him. The Englishman said to him study this New Testament and if you do so you will be a Christian in two years.

Tilak was so impressed with the gentle demeanor of the Englishman that he began to read the book given to him. Tilak said "this book gripped me and I could not tear myself away from these burning words of love and tenderness" Two years later Tilak was baptized in a church in Bombay.

Now it was undoubtedly the reading of the New Testament that led to the conversion of Tilak; but the fact remains true that he would never have

begun reading the New Testament had it not been for the meekness and gentleness of the unknown Englishman whom he met on the train.

Ah, if the truth be known there are many attempts to bring men and women to Christ but that does not exhibit the spirit and loveliness of Christ. But when we with the spirit of meekness tell about Christ, people will be drawn to him.

May be we should all become children again as we say

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild/look upon a little child/pity my simplicity/  
Bid me come to thee.



CHAPTER 09



THE MINISTRY  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Self-Control*

This ninth and last gift is the crowning glory of the spirit-filled life. The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer is so infinitely rich and varied. When Adam and Eve fell into sin and consequently plunged us all into sin--- we lost that essential virtue of self control. But when we receive Christ into our lives, the Holy Spirit is immediately began planting in each of our lives the full fruit of the spirit. It begins as a very tiny fruit, but as we walk with God, more and more that fruit grows. We become progressively more loving--- more at peace —more faithful—more filled with joy ---more patient--- more kind--- more of being good----more gentle and then the crowning virtue more self-controlled. In the Biblical sense self-control means the mastery of mind, will and body---it speaks of having all our appetites and our emotions under control.

It has been said that, “joy is love’s security” patience is love’s endurance, kindness is love’s conduct, Goodness is love’s character, Faithfulness is love’s loyalty, Gentleness is love’s victory”

But this is not without sterling effort on our part. When God saves us and when God wholly sanctifies us—and we are being sanctified moment by moment---we need to remember that we never become dehumanized human beings. We still have powerful temptations to face---but now we have the Holy Spirit living in us —and there is an entirely new dynamic at work in our minds and bodies. There is now a mastery over self, we have been infused with the Holy Spirit’s power. We live controlled and disciplined lives—and we are brought to daily obedience by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

In 1 Cor 9:24-27, Paul says “do you not know that in a race all the runners

run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last but we do it to get to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Winning a race requires purpose and discipline. Paul uses this illustration to explain that the Christian life takes hard self discipline and grueling preparation. It means entering the games. Don't merely observe from the grandstand. Train for the race with all that You have got—because your spiritual life depends on it.

Paul in speaking about the requirement for church elder write in Titus 1:8 “ he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright and disciplined” Prov 28:28 declares “like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control” Even though city walls restricted the inhabitants, people were happy to have them. Without walls they would have been vulnerable to attack by any passing group terrorists. Self-control limits us for sure, but it is necessary. An out of control life is wide open to all sorts of insurgency attacks. Self-control provides you and me with a strong wall of protection.

We will now look at specific areas in which self-control through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit needs to be exercised: 1. The area of the body 2. The area of the will. 3. The area of the mind 4. The area of our possessions.

## 1. The Area of the Body

Paul uses different phrases in describing the body.

See Romans 6:6, 8:13, Galatians 5:19-21 “for we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--- For if you live according to the sinful nature you will die, but if you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. . . . The acts of the sinful nature are obvious:”As there is so much to say on this subject, I curtail my remarks just to the following statements.

1. Paul speaks about the body of a sinner. He uses various metaphors but the message is clear. Paul talks about a body in which sin resides. In some translations of the Bible it is called the “flesh” Some other places it is called the body of sin. Some modern translation refer to it as the “sinful nature” which rules over the body. He speaks about the deeds of the body. Paul speaks about the “old self” People are under the power of the sinful nature which finds expression through the body. Sin holds every person born, in an inescapable bondage.
2. Paul speaks about the body of a Christian. In Philippians 3:21, Paul refers to it as a “lowly body” who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. This phrase does not imply a negative connotation. But by way of compassion—the new bodies we will receive when we are raised from the dead will be glorious, like Christ’s resurrected body. Paul also sees His Lord

Jesus in Ephesians 5:23 as the savior of the body “so in a certain sense the body of a believer is saved already and it too will be saved. And because it is presently a saved body it is in a real sense immunized from sin. Because Paul informs us that because our old self was crucified with Christ—and the reason he gives is—that the body of sin might be done away with and then Paul further qualifies it by saying —that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

For the sake of clarity let us elaborate on this a bit more. Our old self—our sinful nature, died once and for all, so in Christ we are freed from its power. The body of sin is not the human body--- but our rebellious sin-cleaving nature—a nature inherited from Adam. Though in our sinful state our bodies willingly cooperated with our sinful nature—we must never regard our physical bodies as evil—it is the sin in us that is evil —it is this inbred sin that Christ so powerfully dealt with when He died on the cross.

Now the body of every Christian has become the Temple of the Holy Spirit. But always bear in mind that because sin entered into the world and we all became sinners—however, no more an inherent sinfulness—but an inherent weakness in all of us—and all the more reason for the fruit of self-discipline to enable us to be watchful and vigilant. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we now know deliverance from sin and victory over temptation. Paul tells us in Romans8:9 “You are however are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit of God who lives in you”

So we now understand that there is a vast difference between the body of a sinner and the body of a Christian. The sinner's body is controlled by a horrible sinful nature. The body of a Christian is controlled the beautiful nature of the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit who now indwells in our human bodies makes real all the beautiful fruit of the Holy Spirit.

There is God's part to this—and there is our part to this. The minute you put your full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save you all your sinful desire were seen as crucified with Christ—that was God's part. Here is your part. Paul says "So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" How does this work out in practice? Well the Holy Spirit who now indwells you—will you that fruit of self-control—and so declare you a winner every time.

We are never absolved from the necessity of constant self-discipline Romans 8:13 says "for if you live according to the sinful nature you will die but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live" Only vigilance can keep clear and clean the channel of the Spirit's entry and make sure the victory is maintained.

Our human bodies need the control of the Holy Spirit in all of the basic desires of the body with which each one of us is born. They are all God-given but horrible distorted

When we were sinners and ruled by the sinful nature. Now it is all different—for now all those God-given drives are surrendered to the Spirit's control and direction—and the result is peace. William Law who lived some centuries ago was inflexible in his fasting habits. He said that

almost every ill-temper every hindrance to virtue every clog in our way of piety and the strength of every temptation chiefly arose from the state of our bodies.

The challenges for every believer then is to—through self—discipline—get the natural drives of the body under the control of the Holy Spirit. It may take prayer and fasting---but in the final analysis it takes place when there is a simple surrender to the Holy Spirit and there is moment of faith when your lays hold of this —and then most importantly--- there is a life long watchfulness and vigilance. The fight is not over until you step onto the heavenly shore.

But make a big start in this very service to present your body as a living sacrifice to God.

## **2. The Area of the Will.**

Coming to a definite decision as to how you will live the rest of your Christian life is so important. One thing for sure —whatever your present experience is---is because of what you have decided to be. For better or for worse what you presently are is what you have already, positively or negatively chosen to be. Victim or victor the choice is yours

The WILL is probably our biggest battleground. Our wills decide every day the that will destine us for victory or defeat. We are what we are either by neglectful default or by positive decision. If ever you are to experience

the mighty moving of God in your life your will your power of volition will have to come under the self-controlling power of the Holy Spirit. But how tragic it is when our wills settle for easy and comfortable choices—always settling for the line of least resistance.

Our should be “God harden me against myself my arch traitor, my deadliest foe. God roll the strangling load from me break off the yoke and set me free.

The hymn Writer George Matheson wrote

“Make me captive Lord/And then I shall be free/ Force me to render up my sword/And I shall conqueror be/I sink in life’s alarms/When by myself I stand/Imprison me within Thine arms/And strong shall be my hand.

### **3. The Area of the Mind.**

1 Peter 1:13, 4:7 Declares “Therefore, .prepare your minds for action: be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed; . . . . The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray”

From the context of the original language we understand that the mind must be rigorously disciplined. We must not allow anything to freeze up our minds. The context of these verses speaks to us of a living hope to which each one of us has been called. We are asked to banish from our minds everything that would disturb the joy which the Holy Spirit has

given us. Our minds need the self-discipline which is gracious fruit of the Holy Spirit. While we are very real people in a very real world realizing all the responsibilities to which we have been called nevertheless. We cultivate a mind that looks on the bright side of life.

Paul urges the Roman church to have minds that are transformed and renewed. We are not to be lazy –minded or dull-minded. Renewed minds are disciplined and do not allow the things of this world to press it into its mold.

Charles Wesley wrote:

A heart in every thought renewed/  
And full of love divine./Perfect, and  
right and pure and good/

Paul urges the Philippian Church to have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. While no one can read your mind, your actions will portray what is in your mind. A lazy mind will soon enough show a lazy person. An impure mind will be sure to manifest an impure life.

## **4 The Area of Our Possessions**

Must we have everything our eyes see? I'm not referring to things that are functional and essential to conducting our lives in an orderly way: But how tragically we cling to our security in terms of money and security and possessions.

Just prior to world war one, there was a German Christian business man who felt the urge to do all he could to spread the Gospel throughout the world. It was his intent to support Christian missions. However his philosophy at that time was that he would begin after he had made his first million. He came close to his noble goal and then lost everything when German lost the war.

There was a South African farmer who bought large farms in the country of Mozambique and became a millionaire He was a Christian and vowed that he wanted to use his money for the furtherance of the Kingdom. But he never saw that happen. The country became Communistic and he had to escape for his life. He was imprisoned in appalling conditions—He escaped a broken man. Millions could have gone to missions—but he was not disciplined enough to have made God His first financial.

### *Conclusion*

As with all the fruit of the Spirit self-discipline is something every Spirit-filled Christian has. It is not something optional. It is as we would say all “built in” Disciplined in body will mind and possessions---we seek to glorify God through the power of the indwelling Spirit. I close with some thought-provoking by Amy Carmichael

“When I refuse the easy thing for love of my dear Lord,/And when I choose the harder thing for love of my dear Lord ,/and do not make a fuss or speak a single grumbling word,/that is discipline

When everything seems going wrong and yet I will not grouse/when it is hot, and I am tired and yet I will not grouse/But sing a song and do my work in school and in house/That is discipline.

When Satan whispers Scamp your work/To say to him I won't /To rule myself and not wait for other's door don't /That is discipline.

When I look up and triumph every sinful thing / The things that no one knows about/The cowardly selfish thing/And when with heart and will I live to please my glorious king./That is discipline.

To trample on that curious thing inside me that says I/To think of others always never, never of that I/To learn to live according to my savior's word/That is discipline

Paul's grand finale ends with "Against such things there is no law "Because the God who sent the law also sent His Spirit---Therefore the fruit of the is in perfect harmony with the intent of God's law.

A person who exhibits the fruit of the Spirit fulfills the law far better than a person slavishly and foolishly bound to ritual and tradition. People of God--- Be filled with the spirit.



CHAPTER 09



THE SPIRIT  
FILLED MAN, HIS  
RELATIONSHIP WITH  
THE LORD, HIS WIFE  
AND CHILDREN

The Spirit-filled man's relationship with the Lord: The Spirit filled man has a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and knows the Holy Spirit lives in him. Jesus is the Lord of His life and manages him through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

He involves the Lord in every area of his life and relies on the Holy Spirit every day and seeks His help in all he does. He acknowledges that there is no true success without the Holy Spirit. We may make lots of money, buy lots of nice things and climb the social ladder of success, but if we leave God out, our achievements will be unfulfilling and short-lived.

The Spirit-filled man has a deep and intimate relationship with the Lord. Such a person is relaxed and is at peace with God and himself so it is easy for others to get along with him. He carries the very presence of God with him and radiates the glory of God. He radiates joy and is a contented person. This man is prayerful, he is a worshipper of God. He receives direction and guidance from Him. A man who prays and knows the voice of God is an asset to his family, the church and all who cross his path. Such a man wields power with God and with man.

The Spirit-filled man reads, studies and meditate on God's word. (Josh 1:7-8) He is obedient to God's word and allows it to guide and shape his life instead of relying on his own intelligence and other people. He is principled and does not compromise his principles. He loves God's word and seeks God's success not the success of man. He avoids bad friends who will corrupt him. He has a home church and allows himself to be nurtured and to receive support from other Christians. He is active in Church and

serves the Lord cheerfully. He grows from strength to strength in the Lord.

The Spirit-filled man serves the Lord: He is not a “pew warmer” He seeks ways to share his faith in Christ with others. He also discerns his talents and gifts and uses them to support the Church and bless others. He serves God with his substance, pays tithes, give offering avail his property for the use of the body of Christ.

The Spirit-filled man grows constantly in maturity. He is selfless. The opposite of maturity is selfishness or self-centeredness. A mature person is not led by what he thinks, feels, wants or says etc. He relies on the Lord and thinks also of those in partnership with him. He allows the Lord to guide him in his relationships He is not shallow or petty, he is not vindictive but sensitive to the feelings and needs of those in his life.

No matter what people do to him, he loves them. He does not complain or grumble or whine all the time.

Through immaturity, many friendships have been destroyed, marriages disrupted, Churches split, families polarized, wars started, lives lost and hearts broken.

The Spirit-filled man know how to handle frustrations, disappointments, how to turn problems to opportunities. Defeats to victories, he does not give in to hatred and resentments, he dos not quit on life he perseveres. He also knows how to forgive. Not to forgive enslaves and does us more

harm spiritually, emotionally and physically than our offenders eg. Loss of appetite, loss of zest for life, enthusiasm for work, loss of sleep etc can all be caused by un-forgiveness or bitterness.

The spirit-filled man reach out to others instead of being obsessed with his problems.

He has a good sense of humor, he has learned to laugh at himself and at life—he rules over his circumstances by the grace of God. He pardons rather than punishes.

The spirit-filled man is MEEK.

M---Mighty but does not use his power to crush others.

E----Emotionally stable—does not act impulsively, not irrational, not erratic.

E----Educable, teachable, docile.

K----Kind-full of kindness.

Meek he does not fight or argue with God. He submit his will to God,, he trusts God to shape his will into a force for goodness, into something God can use. Meekness builds up, lifts up others. It is not a hand that strikes it learns to shield, it is not a tongue that wounds, it learns to comfort, seeking out a person's needs so that he may help instead of attack.

This man is bendable, adaptable to God and to life. He is strong on the inside and can face any challenge—he is not afraid of the future. While

others fight their way through life, the spirit—filled man walks quietly about getting things done.

He is a peace maker, an encourager. The world needs such spirit—filled people who will encourage rather than discourage them, who will lift them up, rather than put them down. The spirit—filled man knows this, the world is hungry for people who listen, who care, who affirm, people who help and support one another.

### **The Spirit Filled--Man At Home.**

HIS WIFE. Prov 18:22—There are certain blessings God has for you just because you are married. He loves his family and cherishes them he sees them as a blessing from God and not as a burden or bother. He plays his role as a spiritual leader, provides for his family and gives them a protective covering. He cares for all the members of his family. He meets emotional need for survival. Every human needs unconditional love (acceptance recognition feeling needed) significance (importance, knowing you matter, you are valued) and security (feeling at home, relaxed, comfortable) Women and children need to be feel loved unconditionally, they need to feel important (no prejudice, favoritism) and secure at home.

The spirit—filled man has a deep relationship with his wife. He is sensitive to her needs, her moods and how she feels. He discerns needs beyond material and financial provision. A woman's greatest need is to be loved, cherished and protected, understood and listened to. He knows that man was created to be a giver of love.

A woman needs love in order to be fulfilled, if she does not get the love she is meant to receive, she can not fully function in the way she created to when her husband gives her the love she needs she will function properly because she was born to be loved.

So the Bible says to husbands –love your wives. The spirit—filled man prays for his wife. He does not leave the marriage to chance He nurtures his wife through the word of God. He leads his family in devotion and provide strong spiritual covering for his wife.

Satan seeks to attack the wives of men who are committed to the Lord and are serving Him.

The spirit-filled man sanctifies his wife i.e. set her apart she is the most special person to him, his best friend, the object of his love and best thing that happened to him. He communicates well with her and seeks to be with her, be kind to her and give her deep respect. He know her giftedness is a blessing from God to him and not a thing to afraid of or intimidated by.

As the man's companion, a woman is an enhancer, she enables the man to achieve the vision and purpose of God for them. Her support and respect can boost the man's morale and ego. She can help bring out the best in him. The spirit-filled man is appreciating and affirms his wife and children. They feel at home with him and his presence encourages them and gladden their heart. They do not pray he will always be away so that they can have their peace.

A woman will reflect the love or lack of love of her husband. The spirit-filled man relies on the Lord to love his wife he does not see her merely as an outlet for sex but shows her kindness, sympathy. He takes interest in her world---little things matter to a woman.—things that make her know you think of her---birthdays, anniversaries, acknowledging a new dress, shoe, hair style etc.

She loves to be listened to. A woman talks her problems- she likes to know her husband cares and feels for her.

The spirit-filled man expresses love to his wife through affectionate words and gestures.

The spirit-filled man is discerning—he discerns from God that whatever you give to a woman she is going to multiply

--If you give her sperm she gives you a baby (a human being)

-If you give her a house she will give you a home.

---If give food items she will give you a meal.

--If you give her a smile she will give you her heart.

A Woman enlarges and multiplies what is given her. She is a life giver not only to babies but to ideas'

A woman sees possibilities and potentials. She ponders words, actions and relationships between things, she can read people's motives better. She processes words, ideas, needs and problems. She conceives and invents. She develops ideas, plans and programs. She protects what she has received while it develops.

She produces something new from what she receives. She multiplies what she is given including unkind words, abuse, injustice etc. What a man says ad forgets after thirty seconds a woman can recall even after ten years.

## **The Spirit-Filled Man and His Children:**

The spirit-filled man provides confidence, self esteem and security for his family especially the females---his wife and daughters. They look up to him for acceptance, affirmation, and encouragement.

Research shows that prostitutes had an unloving or absentee father. Father –daughter relationship influences future wife- husband relationship.

The spirit-filled man is aware of a growing daughter needs of warmth affection, attention and communication. She needs his smile and hugs and reassurances of his love. Fathers can loose their daughters simply by not being there.

Relationship with parents of opposite sex is vital to future marital relationship. Father daughter, mother-son. The father is the first man his daughters know the picture he gives them is the picture of men they are going to get.

He is also the model of mankind for his sons they take after him. If he leaves spiritual things to his wife, the boys will think spirituality for women. H instructs them about life, handling finances, decision making honesty, diligence, transparent living.

A spirit-filled man is still human he has his weaknesses, he makes mistakes, but he is ready to be taught to learn, to try again, he does not quit his God or quit life. His God keeps him and he grows from strength to strength and glory to glory. He is blessed. His life is fruitful and productive. The Lord prospers him even in old age he continues to flourish (Ps 71:18-24)

APPLICATION: Practical steps and guide to Christian Growth.

Introduction: Your life in Christ should change the way you think and talk and live the application segment of this book will help you see how being a Christian has an effect on every decision you make in life. It will help you to show that your faith in Christ works.

- A. The causes of backsliding (falling back into old habits and bad habits and sin)
- A. Christian does not have to become a backslider. God has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. (2 Pet 1:3). If we sin we lose the joy of our relationship with God, and it is our own fault.
- B. However, we should know the cause and cure of backsliding. This will help us to avoid being backsliders and will teach us how to help others who may have this problem.

How does backsliding begin? It is usually a slow process rather than a sudden happening. Simple pleasures may crowd out our Bible study and prayer times. Bad company may draw us away from interests in spiritual

things. Secret sin may dull our sense of right and wrong. Bit by bit we give in to temptations of this world, the flesh, and the devil. We fail to speak openly of Christ. Soon we don't seem to be different from the unsaved people around us. We can see this process working in the life of Samson (Judges Chapters 14-16) Elimelech (Ruth 1:1-5), and Peter (Luke 22:54-62)

## **Picture of a Backslider**

There are certain things that we usually see in the person who has wandered away from the Lord.

1. She or he has no taste for Bible or for prayer. Like a sick person her or his appetite is gone.(1 Cor 3:1-2)
2. She or he does not care to spend time with those who love the Lord. If such a person attend church worship service she or he does it to hide what she or he is really like and not because she or he enjoys it. (2Tim 4:10)
3. She or he does not care about growing spiritually. Growing in grace does not seem to matter as much as it did before(Heb 5;12)
4. She or he feels she or he can get along without God. She or he wants to make hers or his own plans and live the way that pleases her or him. (Jams 4:13)
5. She or he is not happy a backslidden Christian is a poor unhappy person.(Ps 51:12)

6. She or he is always pointing out what is wrong in the lives of other people blaming everybody for their own unhappiness.(Mat7:3)
7. She or he is always making excuse for themselves saying people have not been fair to them and that everything has been against them. They may even say that they are more spiritual than other Christians. (Malachi 2:17)

Sometimes we may think that a person is a true believer, when she or he has never really yielded her or his life to Christ. She or he has never confessed and repented from her or his sins nor trusted Christ for forgiveness and eternal life. The picture of a backslider that you just read is also a picture of an unsaved person. Is this a picture of you? If your answer is YES” then test yourself to see if you are truly saved? Use these tests:

- a. Have you really repented (turned away from all your sins those you know and those you do not know about? Lk 13:3)
- b. Have you believed (committed yourself) to the Lord Jesus Christ?(Acts 16:31)
- c. Are you now trying to obey Christ and His word?(2 Thess 1:8)
- d. Do you keep away from all sins that the Bible warns you about? (Eph 5:3-6)

If you can answer a ready yes to this test then you need to receive Christ as your savior now”

## **The Results Of Backsliding.**

Most backsliders do not realize the danger they are in

1 First the backslider can fall into any kind of sin. Believers who have brought shame on the name of the Lord by their disobedience have brought tears and sorrow on themselves, their families and their church (Acts 5:1-11)

2. Even a moment out of touch with God can bring ruin to a life, a wrong choice, a false step a single sin may make a person not fit for the Lord's use in public (1 Cor 5:1-13)

3. Backsliding often brings into a person's life unhappy results that she or he can not get away from. The believer may feel the painful effects of her or his sins in this life.

4. When a Christian goes on in life of backsliding and disobedience, God sometimes cuts her or his life short. (1 John 5:16)

We should never forget the sad words of Naomi after she had come home from her stay in Moab: "don't call me Naomi call me Mara (Naomi means pleasant Mara means bitter) for Almighty God has dealt me bitter blows I went out full and the Lord has brought me back empty (Ruth 1:20-21)

Naomi lost her husband and two sons through death as a result of backsliding.

## The Cure of Backsliding

The backslider can always be thankful that the way back to father's house is ever open (Lk 15:20) The happy family spirit does not have to stay broken. The father is waiting for us to come back: Here is the way:

1. Confessed to God.

A) God promises that: if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness "we must tell God all about our sins (1John 1:9)

B) We must be truly sorry for our sins. If we don't mean it in our hearts it doesn't do any good to say we are sorry. Read Psalm 51 to see how David felt about his sins. When we feel this way about our sins we will not blame anyone or give excuse for ourselves. We will say I have sinned I am guilty.

C) We should tell the Lord about our sins one by one. As we name them before the Lord, we will see how evil and wicked they really are. We will not want to do such things ever again (Prov 28:13)

2. Making things right with other people: When we turn back to the Lord, we will want to make right the wrong things we have done to others. If we have said or done something to hurt someone, we should tell her or him we are sorry. The shame of having to do this will help to keep us from sinning again.
3. Beginning over again: Now that we have confessed our sins to God,

and made things right with other people, we must believe that God has forgiven us. We believed that we were saved when we trusted God. We must believe now that we are forgiven and brought back into happy fellowship and able to walk with God.

By this time you should have learned to do four things everyday.

1. To read, and think about what you read, in the Bible.
2. To spend time alone with God in prayer.
3. To spend time in the company of other believers.
4. To tell people openly that Jesus is your savior and Lord.

## **Worship An Offering Of Praise To God.**

One of the most important words in the life of a Christian is worship. Therefore, a Christian, who wants to grow, will want learn how to worship.

We worship God for who he is --- the greatness of His person for what he has done for us --- the greatness of his work. It is the overflow of a heart that has been thinking on Christ. When we pray we often kneel down when we worship our souls are kneeling before God. When we worship we are giving to God, not asking Him to give something to us. But worship always brings joy to us as well.

## **The Need For Worship**

Why do we need to worship? Why is it important? The scriptures gives us some reasons.

1. We were created in order that we might bring glory to God (Isaiah43:7) we were created so that we might bring honor to God, (Eph 1:12) Christ died so that heaven and earth might be filled with worshippers.
2. God our father wants us to worship Him (John4:23). Only those who are God's children can really worship God.

## **Examples Of Worship**

There are many examples of worship in the Bible. We should study carefully. The following examples can teach us much:

1. The worship by the wise men. They traveled a long way and brought costly gifts to Christ. The gold they brought speaks of His deity, the frankincense of His gracious sinless life--- the myrrh of the bitterness of suffering that He would have to bear. It has been well said wise men still worship Him.
2. The worship by woman who had the bottle of expensive perfume she poured it out on the Lord. His disciples said what a waste' she should have sold the perfume and given the money to the poor. But no act

of love and worship is a waste in God's eyes.

3. The worship by Mary: Mary was listening with her whole heart to Christ, while Martha was busy serving meals. Worship and service are both important, but notice that the Lord said Mary has chosen that good part. Did He mean that worship should come first?
4. The worship by the cured leper. Ten lepers were healed, but only one returned to give thanks to God. The Lord said "where are the nine? Today many are glad to take the gift of salvation, how many truly thank and praise God?"

## **How to Worship**

I suggest two ways both are important in the Christian life.

1. Worship when you are alone.  
You can include worship in every prayer. Every time you speak to God, you can thank Him for all that the Lord Jesus means to you. In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God Philip 4:6
2. Worship with others  
You can worship when you meet with the Church. One meeting of Church has been linked with worship in a special way since the early church days. That is the Lord's Supper, also called Communion or Breaking of Bread. Just before Judas betrayed Him on the very night, the Lord Jesus gave His disciples bread and wine and taught the special meaning of these simple things

- a. to remember Him: this do in remembrance of me Luke 22:19
- b. to show us in a picture His death, for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you do show the Lord's death.... 1 Cor 11:26
- c. to look forward to His return till He comes
- d. to show the oneness of the body of Christ. The one loaf and one cup help us to remember that all true believers are members of that great fellowship (communion) of the body of Christ.

## **Principles of Worship.**

In closing our discussion on worship, we must state two important principles:

- 1, True worship must be “in spirit and in truth” true worship comes from the heart.
2. There is no special place on earth where we must worship. By faith the child of God enters into the very presence of God with praises. Let us then “draw near with true heart in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Heb 10:19-22

## **Memorizing and Meditating on the Word Of God.**

Every one can learn scripture by heart. Some Christians think that only special people are able to learn and remember passages of the Bible. That

is not true the great question is not “can I memorize the scripture? But do I really want to memorize? If we want with all our hearts to do it, we surely succeed.

## **Reasons Why.**

1. It is profitable for time and eternity: Any Bible knowledge you gain down here will go with you into eternity. Many other kinds of learning will be of no use to you in heaven, but the word of the Lord remains forever(1 Pet 1:25)
2. It helps us to live pure lives. The psalmist said, your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11) Do you remember how the Lord Jesus answered Satan when He was tempted in the desert? He used scripture (Matt 4:4, 7, 10) the enemy always runs away when we use the sword of the spirit (the Bible) on him.
3. It is a help in finding out God’s will for us. That is what David meant when he said “your word is a lamp unto my path (Psalm 119:105) The lamp and the light tells us what our next step should be. That is just what the Bible will do if we have stored it in our hearts (Deut 6:6)
4. It is a great help in winning others to Christ. It is not our own words that really matter when we are leading people to the savior. It is the word of God which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. (Heb 4:12). When you are talking with unsaved people you can repeat a verse that will meet their needs.
5. It is a wonderful help when we need comfort. There may be times in

our lives when are not able to read the Bible. If we have its promises in our hearts they will give us comfort at every time of need. If you want to memorize scripture and it s too difficult pray about it tell the Lord that you want to learn verses of the Bible for His glory and He will give you the help you need. (Psalm37:4)

## **What To Memorize.**

1. You will likely want to start with single Bible verses. Choose number of verses that makes the gospel plain, some precious promises or a group of Bible verses and learn one by one.
2. Next go on to memorize whole chapters of the Bible. This is one of the finest ways of getting to really understand the message of the book.

## **How Do You Do It?**

Now the problem is, how can I memorize? What is the best way to do it? First be very clear on this one point: there is no easy way or short cut. Buy some small cards write the verse on one side and the reference on the other side. The very act of writing out the verses help to fix the words in your mind. (We remember 10% of what we hear, 50% of what we see, 70% of what we say, and 90% of what we do) Now take a card and read it over and over again. Notice the exact words of the verse. Learn it right the first time. Every time you read the verse and the reference too. Read it

aloud, if possible. In this way you get the message through the ears as well as through the eyes. When you do this often, you will soon have to look at the less and less it works try it:

But do not think that your work is ended when you can say the verse and reference without the card. As you go on to new verses, be sure to go back over those you have learned look at the reference and see if you can repeat the verse. Ask some one to test you as you say your verses to him or her. In your first burst of interest, do not try to memorize too much at a go. It is better to learn one verse a day than to try to learn several verses and then give up. If you learn one new verse a day and go over those learned, you will know 365 verse of the Bible at the end of the year. You will also have formed a pleasant and profitable habit that no longer seems so hard.

## **Finding Time.**

The question you may ask is, “when shall I find time to memorize scripture? The best way is to set a regular time each day perhaps during your daily quiet time or Bible reading and prayer time. If you learn a verse in the morning, you think about it during the day and enjoy it. You may also have some free moments, waiting to see some one or during your time for lunch. These times can be put to use for God and eternity. Take out your set of Bible verses and work on them.

You can also enjoy learning scripture verses when we are with family or friends at meals. Each one tries to see if he or she can learn the verses

better and faster than the others. Also learning the verses will often start us talking about the meaning of them.

Now nothing I have will do you any good unless you put it into practice. You will have a rich reward both in this life and in the life to come, if you hide God's word in your heart.

Start to memorize scripture today.

### **A Belief that Behaves.**

When we talk with those who do not believe the gospel, we try to make it very clear that no one can be saved by doing good works. But when deal with Christians, we must make it equally clear that we are saved unto good works. (Eph 2:8-9). Over and over in the New Testament Christ's followers are told that they are expected to practice good works. (Matt 5:16, 1 Tim 6:17, 18, 2 Tim 3:17, Titus 2:7, Heb 10:24, 1 Pet 2:12,) we read about the savior that "He went about doing good. (Acts 10:38) It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his or her Lord. (Matt 10:25)

Now we live in a very selfish world. Almost everyone thinks of himself or herself first and others last. But Christianity says "do good, live for others, Give your money and yourself to help others. Everyday we have many opportunities to show kindness, to help someone, to speak words of comfort. Let us not miss these ways of serving others and telling them about Christ. Here are a few ways to do just that:

1. Sick people. What can we do for those who are ill? We can make a friendly visit take along a bag of fruit and some good material for reading pray with them and read verses of scripture from the Bible. These are fine ways to show love to both Christian and unsaved people.
2. Aged people. Those who are older are most thankful for kindness. They enjoy in a special way those kind acts done for them by young people. A ride in a car a meal in the house giving up our seat for them on a bus, a greeting card at special times--- these are special ways to let Christ live his life through you.
3. Poor people. A very little knowledge of the Bible is enough to show us that God loves poor people in a very special way. Those who care for the poor are blessed, and those who wrong them are punished. Though you can only give a little some good used clothing or a little gift of money, the master will say well done. Could you pay for a child from a poor family to go to a fun and educative trip or camp? Many such children have been won for Christ through such kindness of Christian friends. Be careful however, to notice the real need, and those people who are always begging and trying and trying to live off the kindness of others.
4. The outcasts: In almost every place, there are some people who are shut out of society because of their shameful lives. We try to keep away from them, but Christ would try to win them to himself. Each one is precious to the Lord who died for them. I heard of a story about one experienced servant of Christ who dressed in rags and went to live in the slums just to have opportunity to share the gospel with those who live there.

5. Those who have trouble. Many times people experience trouble and suffering through accidents or other causes. At such times Christians it will be noble for Christians to willingly and gladly help those who are suffering.
6. Your own family: In trying to be kind to others, do not forget your own family circle. God says we are to honor our parents. There is always work to be done at around the house, and we should volunteer to work around the house for our parents. It does not honor the Lord if we are very good when we're with other people, but unkind and selfish at home.

The suggestions given above are not exhaustive. You will be able to think of many more.

### **Some Useful Rules When You Are Doing The Above.**

As you try to something kind everyday, the following rules will be helpful..

1. Try to do something kind everyday. Ask the Lord to show you how to do this
2. Look for work that needs to be done and do it. An employer was meeting with several people who wanted a certain job. He placed a torn piece of paper on the floor where they would have to pass it. Six people walked right over it. The seventh person picked the paper up and threw it into the wastebasket. He was the one who got the job.

3. If you feel strongly you should do a certain good deed be sure you do it. Remember the warning of James “to him that knows how to do good and does it not to him or her it is sin”(James 4:17)
4. Do your good deed as quietly and as secretly as possible. It is not important whether men praise you or not the great thing is to please the Lord. (Matt 6:2-4)
5. Show kindness to those who hate you or try to hurt you. (Rom 12:20)
6. Show kindness to those who can not pay you back. God’s hands is bigger and His rewards are greater than Man’s.
7. Do whatever you are fitted and able to do. A needle and thread, or even a pen in the hand of a faithful Christian can do great things for God. Each one of us can do something to the glory of God. (Ecc 9:10)
8. Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Use every kindness that you do as an opportunity to tell others about Jesus.

### **Certain Rewards.**

We will be rewarded for everything we do for others. If not in this life then surely in the life to come. And the reward will always be much greater than the service.

Give yourself to doing good works. Live for others in the name of Jesus.

## **Feed Your Spirit Man On The Word Of God**

*(Spend Quiet Moments With God In His Word And In Prayer)*

The Bible is spiritual food for the Christian, therefore, every serious Christian will want to spend a part of each day feeding on the scriptures which is the bread of life.

The time set apart for this purpose has been called the daily quiet time. Usually it is a half hour or more in the morning or any suitable time when we talk to God and listen to what He says to us in His word.

### **See The Need.**

We need this daily quiet time very, very much. Why is it so important?

1. Because Christ is there. Believe that when you go to meet him, He is there waiting for you. It is an appointment meeting. And it makes a world of difference. It matters not what your feelings are if God is there sit quietly and make that affirmation of faith.
2. Because without it your spiritual life will become dry and weak. You must talk with God and listen to him or your soul will die.
3. Only in this way will your soul be happy. In your daily quiet time try to be quiet before the Lord so he can speak to you through his word.

GET STARTED: Here are some suggestions to help you start a daily quiet time.

1. Begin with prayer: Try to forget about the day's work and all that has to be done sit down quietly and put your life into God's hands (Psalm 5:3,141:2) Ask God to speak to you as you think about his word.
2. Choose a short passage of scripture. You will probably want to a regular plan of Bible reading. This is better than choosing a chapter here and there each day.
3. Read it carefully and think about it. George Muller wrote "I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God, and to meditate on it that my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed and that by means of the word of God while meditating on it my heart might be brought into communion with the Lord that I might experience the presence and share the thoughts of the Lord.
4. Think about it until you understand it. Let God speak to you through it. The thing that will help you very much is to sit quietly to open every avenue of your being to the influence of the Holy Spirit to tell Him that you are willing that all barriers and hindrances to your spiritual growth shall be put away and that you will make a day by day fresh consecration of your life to God, your time, your talents, your will and everything.
5. Write your thoughts in a notebook. The Lord will give you many precious thoughts you will want to remember
6. Turn what you are thinking about into prayer. Ask God to make these things real in your life and in the life of others.

7. Share your thoughts with other people during the day. This will fix the lessons more deeply on your mind, and others will have to share in your blessings.

KEEP IT UP. You will not find it easy to set aside this daily time and keep it regularly. Here are some things that will hinder you.

1. The rush of life in today's world. The many duties of life press upon us. We are in such a hurry to get at them that we often neglect the word of God and God himself.
2. The lack of discipline: we wake up in the morning feeling dull and heavy. Instead of getting up for our morning quiet time, we take a little extra sleep. The Spirit indeed is willing but flesh is weak.
3. Mind wandering: All sorts of thoughts pass through our minds we can't seem to center them on what we are doing. Saying our thoughts out loud helps to cure this problem.
4. Being unable to understand what we read: It is very hard to meditate and feed on a passage when we do not understand it. We can get help from Bible commentaries which explain difficult passages.

By God's help, you can have victory over these things that would hold you back. If you give your self each day to a time of feeding on the word of God, you will be a happier Christian and more useful to God. Other people will know that you have been with Jesus.

As you read and think about a passage of scripture, try asking yourself these questions:

In this passage is there

- ▶ a sin I should keep away from?
- ▶ a promise I can call my own?
- ▶ a command for me to obey?
- ▶ a blessing I can enjoy?
- ▶ a failure from which I can learn from?
- ▶ a victory for me to win?
- ▶ a new thought about God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, man Satan?
- ▶ What seems to be the truth in this passage which has had the greatest effect on me?

## Stewardship

A steward is a person who cares for the property and manages the affairs of someone else. Every Christian is a steward of what God has given him or her. All that we have, our time, our ability, and our money belong to God. They are to be used for Him and for His glory (1pet 4:10)

The Lord Jesus said. “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he or she possesseth” (Lk 12:15) or as the Living Bible puts it “real life and real living are not related to how rich we are” Instead of trying to build up a large fortune for himself or herself, the Christian should try to live simply, so that he can give more to the work of God. William Burns, a missionary to China, used to say “if a man have Christ

in his heart, heaven before his eyes, and only as much temporal earthly blessings as is needful to carry him safely through life, then pain and sorrow have little to shoot at, and he has all a poor sinner needs to make him happy between here and heaven” Another servant of Christ, Hudson Taylor, used to go through his belongings regularly in order to get rid of all that might be considered excessive in view of the return of the Lord being near. “it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful”(1 Cor 4:2) Therefore, in trying to care for the things his master has trusted to him or her the Christian should think carefully about the whole matter of giving.

## **When Should I Give?**

You should give “regularly” We read in 1 Corinthians 16:2 ‘ upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as the Lord has prospered him” It seems that the early Christians gave each Sunday in the Church offering some of what they had earned during the week.

## **How Much Should I Give?**

Someone has suggested that we might better ask, “how much shall I keep? All we have belongs to God. The amount I give should be settled in prayer between me and God. However, the following guides may be helpful.

- a. I should give as God has prospered me (1 Cor 16:2) according to how much the Lord has helped me to earn.

- b. I should give bountifully (2 Cor 9:6) in large amounts with open hand.
- c. I should give at a cost to myself (2 Cor 8:1-5). This is how Christ gave. He was rich, yet He became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich (2 Cor8:9).
- d. I should give proportionately (Prov 3: 9-10) according to the amount I earn or again in other ways In the old Testament, the Lord commanded Israel to give the tithe meaning on-tenth of their income (Lev 27:30-32)

## **In What Spirit Should We Give?**

We should make it clear that stewardship is not just something we ought to do, it is a pleasure and favor we learn in 2 Corinthians 9:7 that we should give---

- a. Purposefully---not hit or miss, not carelessly.
- b. Willingly---not we are forced to give.
- c. Cheerfully---gladly, or as the word really means, hilariously(with joyful laughter)
- d. Secretly---not to seen by other people(Matt 6:2-4 Lk 18:12)
- e. Honestly --- not pretending to give all we have and then holding back a part for ourselves (Acts 5:1-4)

## To Whom Should We Give?

We should always keep in mind that all our giving is giving to the Lord. We are really giving to Him when we give to His work or to His workers. The Christian who cares will not find it hard to find good and worthy objects for his giving. He will often wish he could give more in order to help in the world-wide spread of the Gospel.

We should make it our habit to give to the local Church. It cost something to keep the work of the Church, each of us should be glad to help in this.

- a. The poor(Galathians 2:10)
- b. Widows(1 Tim 5:3-4)
- c. Ministers of the Gospel(1 Tim 5:17-18)
- d. Christian activities which are true to the Bible and which are carried on in ways pleasing to God.

## The Blessed Results.

The Lord Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35) There is no doubt that every Christian has proved this to be true. Here are some of the results of giving.

- a. Material blessings: (Prov 3:9-10) This does not have to mean large amounts of money. God is too wise to trust most of us with riches. But it does means that God gives us enough to meet our daily needs. (Philippians 4:19) Notice that this promise from God follows after

willing sacrifice. When the Philippians at real cost to themselves sent gifts to Paul.

- b. Spiritual Growth: If we are faithful with are material blessings God will entrust us with the true riches (spiritual knowledge and wealth.
- c. Happiness: Blessings means happiness. God pours out so much blessings on the one who gives that there is not room enough to take it in.
- d. A treasure in heaven: If we give even a cup of cold water in the Lord's name we will get a reward.

## **Thinking About God's Will.**

In one sense, every true Christian should be a full-time worker for the Lord. Whatever his or her daily work may be, he or she must do it for the Lord. However, there is another sense in which certain people are set apart in a special way by the Holy Spirit to serve the Lord (Acts 13:2). This call might be to do some kind of work in the homeland or to do missionary work abroad, but it is a clear-cut experience. This enables a person to enter into the work with full assurance that God has called him or her to it.

## **Finding God's Will.**

If a person is earnestly thinking about Christian service, what should he or she do? The first step is to keep himself or herself yielded to God. This yielding to God is not just a single act, but something you do as a way of

life. You offer yourself to God for whatever He wants you to be and do. Even if God never calls you to serve Him in some far away place, He will reward your willingness to go, quite as much as if you really went (1King 8:18).

Second, you must in close touch with God, both by prayer and by feeding on His word. Every Christian should do this anyway, but you simply can't do without it if you want to hear God speaking to you.

Then, too, you should serve God faithfully while you wait for His leading. You must show yourself to be earnest and faithful in service at home before you can work for God abroad. Remember the Savior's "Go home to your friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for you and has had compassion on you" (Mark 5:19). If you cannot lead people to the Lord at home, do not think that crossing an ocean to another land will make any difference. Often we find it harder to witness for Lord the at home than anywhere else. It is hard to speak of Him to our own relatives. Yet the Lord told His disciples to preach the Gospel first in Jerusalem then all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the farthest parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). You must begin in your Jerusalem, in your own home and city.

Be careful to avoid acting in a hurry. If you are in the current of God's will, you do not need to be in a hurry. Many people feel that they should do something right away after they hear a moving talk by a missionary. They should learn to pour water on the sacrifice, as Elijah did (1 Kings 18:33). By this, we mean that they should take time in order to be very sure that God is directing their steps. As you become surer of God's leading, you would be wise to tell other Christians and ask them to pray with you and

counsel you. Go to those in your own Church who know you well and know what gifts and abilities you have. The counsel of older Christians should be thought, over seriously by anyone who is hoping to go into full-time ministry for the Lord.

I should add here that every servant of the Lord should be linked with a church or para-church organization in the place where he or she lives. The New Testament does not show us any independent workers. Each one should be accountable to a church, which will watch over his or her behavior and teachings and expect him or her to put right anything that is questionable in his or her life in the light of the scriptures. To cut yourself off from this care and discipline of the local church is to put yourself in a dangerous position.

### **Knowing God's Will.**

If and when God speaks to you, you will surely know it. His call has been described as “the tap on the shoulder” and as a mysterious communication of the divine will. “His Holy Spirit makes you sure and gives you such strong feelings that you know you must act, or you will really be disobedient. You are so sure of His will you can step out with complete trust that God will provide all your needs. You must go because you cannot stay. (1 Cor 9:16)

## Doing God's Will.

To those who do obey God's call and step out into Christian service I add three suggestion.

1. Do the work that God has given you to do and do not look at other Christians and what they are doing. Bitter feelings about another Christian or his or her work are harmful (Hebrews 12:15) to all who grumble about another's success, the Lord says "what is that to you? Follow me" (1 John 21:22)
2. Do not look for a great ministry that will draw attention to yourself. At times we see a little results from our work, and we find that God was using us quietly all the time, far more than we knew.
3. Do not speak proudly about what you have done Even our best service is not worthy of praise. We are expected to be faithful God will take care of the results. It has been well said, "Heaven will be the best and safest place to hear the results of our work. (1 Cor 3:8b)

Concluding Remarks: Begin to ask God to clarify for you His purposes for your life. This will not happen by doubling up on activities but through prayer, exposure to scripture and times of reflection. This process may take months or years, but it should lead to a brief written statement of purpose that can be used to determine and evaluate your objectives and activities. In this way, your activities will be determined more by the word and the influence of the Holy Spirit than by external pressures of the world. A Biblical purpose is always an unchanging reason for being. It holds true for you regardless of your circumstances or seasons of life.

When a Spirit-filled life or Christ-centered life becomes the focus of your life, it harmonizes all the other areas, such as family, work, finance and ministry.

It is my prayer that you benefit from reading this book and that you will use it to help cultivate your Spiritual growth and that you will explore some of the models for spiritual growth that may have been less familiar to you.

The Lord bless you, and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you,  
And be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up His countenance on you,  
And give you peace.

Amen

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THE WORKINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S *fruit*



# BIBLE TEACHINGS VERSUS POPULAR THEOLOGY IN WEST AFRICA TODAY:

A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHRISTIAN'  
SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY.

BY DR JOSEPH AGYEI MENSAH



Introduction: This paper attempts to present a scenario of popular theology in the Church in West Africa against the backdrop of Bible usage and its challenge for the average Christian's spiritual growth and maturity. The premise is hinged on the presupposition that there are popular theologies today in most West African Countries all of which lay claim to the Bible as their basis for theologising. These theologies have not been without their fault, and sometimes excesses which call for serious consideration if we must contribute to the universally acceptable biblical truths and standards which do not necessarily betray our peculiar ministry setting in which true theology must be practiced.

This work is pertinent because as an observer puts it "Africa has the fastest growing Church in the world today and also has the fastest declining Church by way of biblical standards"<sup>1</sup> Numerical growth outpaces spiritual depth and maturity in the African Church. This observation is apt description of the Ghanaian Church which seems to be shifting grounds from biblical Christianity.

For our working definition, we shall define the Bible as God's word contained in the Old and New Testament. For the Judaist the Old Testament contains the revelation of God and his salvific plan for the people of Israel. For the Christian, the Old Testament finds its fulfilment in the New Testament which reaches its crescendo in the "Jesus event" which is summed up in the mission, passion, death resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. Gordon Delal sees the Bible as God's word which has eternal relevance, as it speaks to all humankind, in every age and in every culture.<sup>2</sup>

By popular Theology we mean the theology that is propounded by some lay men and women as well as pastors which simply appeals to emotional and physical needs without in depth biblical foundation. This is what we will refer to as “expedient theology”. This is a theology which merely meets the mood of the day. Bulus Galadima calls it non-formal theology<sup>3</sup> He opines that non formal theology is becoming popular because the formal theology done by trained Christian scholars and theologians and written in technical language does not appear to be interested in the daily issues that are foremost in the lives and minds of the laity<sup>4</sup>

#### Popular Theology: Current Trends in West Africa Today:

Perhaps Mathew Hassan Kukah’s observation that there is a shift from the theological to the mundane motivational conceptions<sup>5</sup> best sums up the current trends of theologising in West Africa today. Part of today’s Bible reading could best be described as a growing trend of selectivity. Most emphasis today centres on prosperity, healing deliverance, breakthrough and power encounter among others. This trend of concentrating on selected passages which relate only to the material needs of the Church has become more of a vogue. This is to say the least is done to the exclusion of some perceived “dormant” passages which contains mere historical details genealogies, poetry, and warnings of apostasy among others. Even the salvation message which is the kernel of the apostolic kerygma has been given the second place

For the purpose of this paper we shall refer to two issues among others which have attracted much prominence among Bible readers in West Africa: “the curse prayer and prosperity gospel

**CURSE PRAYERS:** I came to know of curse prayers otherwise known as “dangerous prayers” in a conference organized by Pauline Walley ,a Ghanaian born Evangelist based in the United States of America, at the University of Ghana. Since then my interest has grown to investigate the biblical basis of such prayers. A Nigerian revivalist Mike Ofoegbu has popularized and published three series of “dangerous prayers” along with other works on spiritual warfare generally. The “dangerous prayers” are quotations drawn from the Old Testament which some Pentecostals in particular use as forms of prayer in order to combat foes and oppressive situations. These prayers are used as Religious formulae and passwords in their daily prayers. A few examples of such passages are cited below.

Jeremiah 17:18says:

“Let my persecutors be put to shame. Let them be terrified, but keep me from terror. Bring on them the day of disaster, destroy them with double destruction”

Lamentation 3: 64-65

“Pay them back what they deserve, O lord for what their hands have done put a veil over their hearts and may your curse be upon them”

Psalm 55:15

“Let death take my enemies by surprise, Let them go down alive to the grave”

Psalm 56:7 says “On no account let them escape, in your anger, O God bring down Nations.

Others are

Psalm 35:4,8.

“May those who seek my life be disgraced and put to shame. . . . may ruin overtake them by surprise may the net they hid entangle them. May they fall into the pit, to their ruin.

And verse 26 says “May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion, may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace.

Psalm 109:9 says:

May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. May his children be wondering beggars, may they be driven from their ruined homes. May creditor seize all he has, may strangers plunder the fruit of his labour”

These and other similar passages in the Old Testament have been grouped as “dangerous prayers” meant to invoke God to visit harm and evil on enemies, trouble makers and “God haters”” Some even say “I render you useless in Jesus name”

Much as these and many other Biblical passages in the Old Testament which typified the old dispensation of the law, in Jesus “teachings, however, “love your enemies” Passages supplant and superimpose a new ethic which radically alters the age hate and revenge.

A.E Harvey has provided a clue as to why the Old Testament seems to have called on God’s punishment on enemies.

The Jewish laws of war displayed a ruthless severity towards the vanquished enemies (Deut 7:2)

During the exile and again under Hellenistic and Roman occupation, a similar hatred was expressed towards the captor and oppressor (Psalm 137:7-9, Psalm 57: 4-16) and meanwhile these sentiments had been interiorized as a “spiritual hatred” felt by the righteous towards those who took lightly the things of God (Psalm 139; 19-21) or adopted as justification for their strict exclusiveness by the Qumran sect<sup>6</sup>.

Harvey further notes that “Jesus” injunction “love your enemies” endorses a wide spread of moral attitude which is expressed in a trenchant manner<sup>7</sup> The “love your enemies” teachings of Jesus in Mathew 5: 43-47, presents a new way of living which is Christian and Godly. The reactionary response by the Jews during their harsh conditions and oppressive experiences do not provide justification for “curse prayers” which negates what Jesus lived and died for. Due to our natural tendency of unforgiveness and hatred we seem to have missed the biblical teachings of reconciliation, intercession, restoration and forgiveness upon which the biblical teaching is based.

## **Prosperity Passages:**

One of the most often-quoted Biblical passages which “prosperity gossellers” have popularized is Mathew 6:33 “but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you as well.

“Prosperity gossellers” understand this verse to mean a promise of “good things” by God to those who live a righteous life. These “good things” of life include education, good marriage, position of power, money, good health among others.

It is to be noted that the emphasis in this verse “seeking God’s kingdom and righteousness” demands obedience to God’s injunctions and his will. The resultant effect which is God’s additional blessings (bonus or benefits) does not in any way precede “precede God’s righteousness” as most preachers and teachers will have us to believe today. Craig Kreener has corroborated this thus:

Some people today associate faith with being able to obtain possession from God but Jesus did not even associate it with seeking first basic needs from God.

Pagans seek those things he warned we should seek instead God’s kingdom and his righteous will. It is when people care for others in need among them that God supply their own needs<sup>8</sup>

Phil Parshall has also noted that some prosperity preachers such as Schuller, Jimmy Swaggart and Oral Roberts live in expensive mansions, drive expensive cars and live expensive lifestyles amidst a multitude of people who live in hunger, deprivation and need. In fact Robert Schuller charges as much as \$15,000 per speech in a crusade.<sup>9</sup> This practice is already catching up in Ghana contrary to the “free message received without pay” (Matt 10:8). Jesus’ life of self-sacrifice precludes a life of luxury, affluent and glamour.

Jesus also cautioned that “man shall not live by bread alone but by every word which precedes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). It is true that bread is necessary for survival, but man’s purpose for existence is not just to eat and prosper a trait which distinguishes human from non human creatures. Material possessions is not all that is important to man, rather his primary concern should be doing the will of God. There are other prosperity passages such as Phillip 4:19, Eph 1:18, 3:16-20, Gal 6:7, 111 John 3. These and other passages are example of biblical passages which have been used to commit hermeneutical blunders or errors of over sight.

When the prosperity preachers ignore even though scriptures speak of this clearly and repeatedly is the exemplary significance of Christ’s suffering and death (Jn 15:20, 1 Pet 2:21, Heb 12:3-4, Philip 3:10)

If the Bible upon which the Christian experience is based does not include suffering (see Lk 14:25-33) then the story of Job must be a farce, or even death of Jesus must seek in Rudolf Bultman’s words another demythologizing “Tite Tienou puts it strongly that “the gospel without

the scandal of the cross is no gospel at all, It must be stated that prosperity without the cross is an incomplete and unbalance message (see 1 Pet 4:13-16,19) Proponents of “prosperity Gospel must shun the temptation of falling into the trappings of exalting man into a demi-god, just as was the Marxist humanist emphasis upon which Marxist fallacies were based. Obvious consequences of these false “theologies” are now part of history’s garbage. With the fall of the Soviet Union. Marxist false utopia collapsed to the utter amazement and embarrassment of its proponents around the world.

Communism as global phenomenon breathed its last breath with all its unfulfilled promises of a “heaven on earth”” The same will be true of date setters whose apocalyptic “Doomsday delusions” have turned their eyes from the biblical message and made them speculators of their own capricious biblical interpretations.

## **Implications For Authentic Theology**

How do we evolve in authentic theology within this scenario presented above? The danger of “popular theology” to Biblical Christianity in West Africa today, is that what we seem to be evolving is a cheap theology produced by ill-equipped hands, lacking Biblical backing. This “cheap theology” has also produced “cheap faith” a butter and bread faith” which does not prepare Christians for hard times, trials and persecutions which the Bible also projects as part of the Christian’s experience (see Matt5) Okwori notes that “a prosperity gospel” which de-emphasize intellectual

objectivity, but stresses a subjective faith with a promise of prosperity is easily acceptable<sup>11</sup>. He further notes that ‘in Africa today, it is difficult to separate the success of the “prosperity gospel” from the peculiar socio-economic context into which this message is propagated<sup>12</sup>. This situation is worsened by the fact that, only a few West African Christians really read the Bible for themselves. While some may not be able to afford one, others do not have it as a priority. Thus, most West African Christians can be regarded as being in the general pool of poor reading habits, which has in turn affected their Bible culture.

The danger of this is that most Christians in West Africa have become mere consumers of what our pastor or our church says” without personal verification of what is heard based on Biblical truth.

As a teacher of a course titled “New Testament Survey” for Basic Certificate of Ministry at our Baptist Denominational Ministry Tract training Program at Accra. I got stunned repeatedly as I taught a group of church pastors and local church leaders, most of whom could hardly understand the Jesus story in the Gospels. These are the materials we learned as youngsters at Sunday School level. One imagines what these Church leaders and pastors preach and teach about Christ in their churches. This could be a representative of the wider West African. Church experience today.

Another area which poses danger to our Bible reading culture in West Africa today is our ideological reading of the Bible. J.S Mbiti captures the essence of this method when he notes that “Christians are only human so they read and hear in the Bible what they either want to read or are capable of accommodating in their lives<sup>13</sup>

But John Paratt has cautioned that ideological reading of scripture cannot provide us with a generally accepted principle for understanding the Bible in Theology.<sup>14</sup> This is because ideologies are never permanent for example Marxism, Socialism, Communism, Nazism etc.... which were once adored have collapsed.

Even black theology which was popularized at the height of liberation struggles in South Africa has bowed out to reconciliation theology in the post apartheid South Africa. The question therefore is: Is it possible that the prosperity gospel emphasis today will fade out if poverty and disease conditions in West Africa change?

Was it not the premise upon which Karl Marx predicted the “death of Religion?” When the earthly utopia would have been attained, which of course, did not happen before Marxism fell? These might as well be questions for serious Bible readers and interpreters in West Africa and Africa as a whole.

The challenge is to allow new Biblical insights to enrich our own Christian experience as we evolve theologies within our own historical contexts. We must allow God to speak to us and not the other way round. Okwori captures it well, that instead of the message defining the need it is our felt need that defines the message we are to receive<sup>15</sup> . Doing theology is a delicate balancing act, which involves balancing spiritual truth over issues which affect our personal life experiences. Thus Mbiti has advised that any visible theology must have a biblical basis, and African theology must develop upon this foundation<sup>16</sup>. Our theology must be authenticated by the Bible.

If Mbiti's observation is right that Africans use the Bible both in daily life and in practical life of the church<sup>17</sup> then our reading and understanding of the Bible must be sound. And if Jonathan Perus observation is true that "the Bible speaks more directly and clearly to listeners than readers<sup>18</sup> then the greater challenge for Bible teachers is to "teach the word correctly" (2 Tim 2:15) As listener's deserve nothing but God's undiluted word. Teachers and preachers of the Bible must avoid distorting the truth, which they do to their own destruction. (2 pet 3:16)

Above all, the Bible must challenge us to understand its message, live and practice its injunctions

Peru puts it this way

"if the Bible is to be relevant, it has to relate to everything personal behaviour, socio- political and economic activities, ... this is a challenge for Bible interpreters to maintain both the relevance and the uniqueness of the gospel<sup>19</sup>

One can only imagine the tremendous impact Christianity could have in West Africa's socio-political life. Involving corruption, ethnicism bribery violence and other vices as we witness even in churches today would have been reduced completely if not completely eradicated.

Danny McCain sums this up in respect of the African situation thus:

In spite of the positive features Christianity has failed to halt the growing corruption in Africa. Though the ethical teachings of Jesus are at the heart of Christianity, the church in Africa continues to be guilty of the kinds of corruption which characterize society as a whole. Preaching is often loud and emotional but devoid of substance. Even worship services often appeal to the more physical part of man's nature than the deeper spiritual part<sup>20</sup>

We must understand and use the Bible much more than just a mere magic wand or formulae which could be manipulated to achieve results, but as an active word which speaks to man in all ages saves transforms heals delivers and provides signposts for godly living. This, the Bible must achieve in West Africa and in Ghana in particular if it is to be relevant in the twenty-first century.

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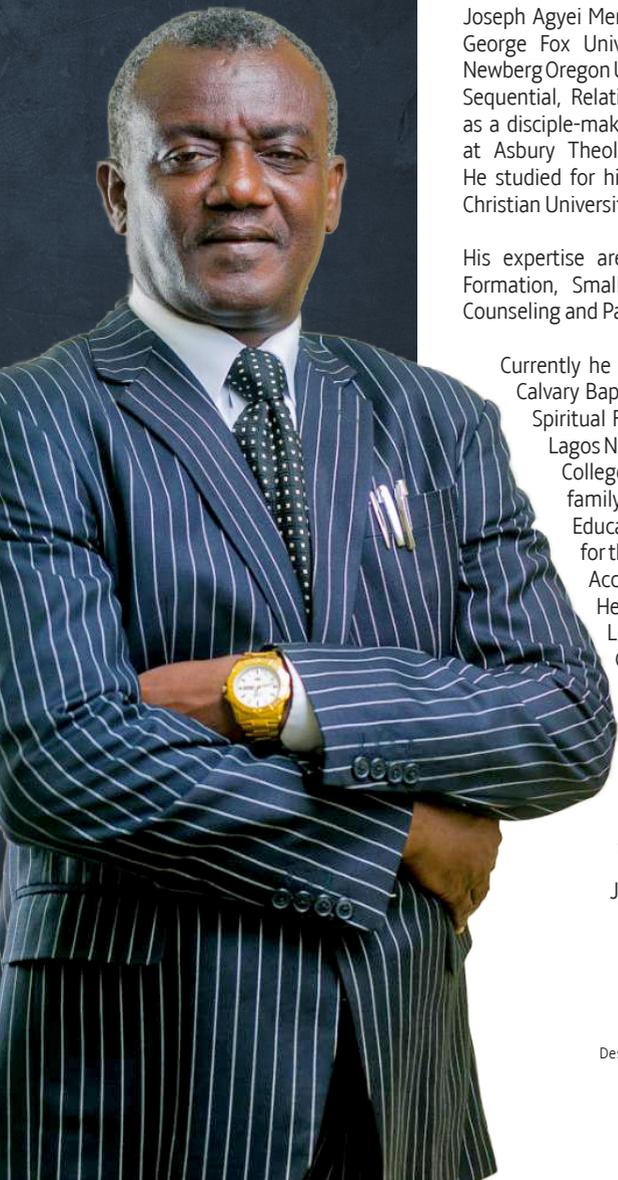
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A PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE



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