



Living the Christian Life Bible Study

Lesson 12b (NIV)

Growing the Fruit of the Spirit (Part 2 of 2)

Student's Name _____ **Unit** _____

Instructor _____

Comments _____

10.0 Summary

In giving us His Holy Spirit, God has given us the power to overcome all the evil of our sinful nature. If we look at the acts of the sinful nature in Galatians 5:19-21, we find an antidote for each of them in the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22-23.

Where there was **hatred**, the Spirit brings **love** regardless of merit.

Where there was **jealousy**, the Spirit brings **joy** in accepting what we have.

Where there were **discord, dissensions, and factions**, the Spirit brings **peace** independent of the circumstances.

Where there was **selfish ambition**, the Spirit brings **patience** to allow God to bring advancement in His time and direction.

Where there was **envy** of another person, the Spirit brings **kindness** toward that person.

Where there was **impurity**, the Spirit brings **goodness**.

Where there were **idolatry and witchcraft**, the Spirit brings **faithfulness** to God.

Where there were **fits of rage**, the Spirit brings **gentleness** in our relations with each other.

Where there were **sexual immorality, debauchery, drunkenness, and orgies**, the Spirit brings **self-control**.

9.0 Self-Control

Self control, or temperance in some translations, is the ability to control one's passions and desires so that they are not expressed in an extreme or ungodly way. When a person is self-controlled, his/her mind sets limits on the expression of his/her emotions and physical desires. When a person is drunk, or in a fit of temper, we say that he/she is out of control. A person is equally out of control when he/she uses drugs to escape from the reality of the world around him/her.

When a person is self-controlled, the mind and the emotions are balanced in controlling the will; the mind provides the direction, the emotions provide the power. When a person is out of control, the emotions and physical desires have taken over control of the will. That person's actions are no longer controlled by right thinking. Loss of self-control will inevitably lead to sin.

The extreme of loss of self-control is addiction; whether to alcohol, drugs, sex, money, food, or power. The desire for the addictive substance or gratification has taken over total control of the person's mind and will; nothing else matters but satisfying the craving. These are not diseases, but are the habitual the loss of self-control.

Paul describes this difference of control in Romans 8:5, *Those who live according to the _____ have their _____ set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the _____ have their minds set on what the _____ desires.*

Paul gives us the means of self-control in Romans 12:2, *Do not conform any longer to the _____ of this _____, but be _____ by the renewing of your _____. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Peter give us two motivations for self control: 1 Peter 4:7 *The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.*

Prayer is our greatest resource in any situation, and we need to be clear minded and self-controlled for that purpose. 1 Peter 5:8-9. *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

We must be self-controlled in order to resist the temptations of Satan. If we are out of control (drunk, high, in an uncontrolled rage) we can be easily led into sin.

7.0 Faithfulness

Faithfulness is remaining consistent in our commitment to God and in our relationships with other people in our lives. This is not the faith by which we are saved, but it is the faith by which we live. Faithfulness toward God is to walk consistently in His ways and to faithfully follow His direction in our lives. Faithfulness toward others is to be consistent in our relationships and to carry out the commitments we make to them. Faithfulness to God and man will interact when we obey the Lord's commands in ministry in a way that reflects the faithfulness of Christ to us.

Faithfulness is an attribute of God, as stated in Exodus 34:6 *And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. Throughout the Old Testament, God remained faithful to His promises to Israel, in spite of their repeated unfaithfulness to Him, often saying "because of the oath I swore to your forefathers ..."*

Jesus commends faithfulness in His followers in two parables about faithful servants. Read Matthew 24:45-51 and answer the following questions:

1. What was the servant put in charge of (v. 45)?

2. When the master returned and found him faithful, what did he put him in charge of (v. 47)?

Now read Matthew 25:14-30 and answer the following questions:

1. What did the master say about the servants who invested their talents of money wisely (v. 21 and 23)?
They were _____ and _____ servants.
2. Because they had been faithful in small things, what did he promise them (v. 21 and 23)?

3. What would happen to the servant who was unfaithful (v. 28-30)?

7.0 Faithfulness (cont'd)

4. In both of these stories, what is another word that describes the faithful servants? _____;
and the word for the unfaithful servants? _____
5. How else is the unfaithful servant described (v. 26)?

In both of these stories, the faithful servants carried out their master's instructions and were rewarded with commendation, greater responsibility and sharing in his joy. Certainly this is how we want to be received by our Lord Jesus Christ when we are faithful to Him.

1 Peter 4:10-11 says *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

What gifts has God given you to faithfully serve others?

8.0 Gentleness

Gentleness, or meekness in some translations, is defined as strength under the control of discipline. Gentleness is not weakness; on the contrary, it is a strength that is strong enough to not have to display itself in a domineering way. In the original Greek language, it is a word that would be used for a wild horse that has been tamed. The horse is no weaker, it is simply controlling its strength to put it to good use. True meekness points away from ourselves and toward the source of our strength; it comes from knowing that we are relying on God's strength in every situation.

The greatest example of this kind of meekness is seen in our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 53:7 says of Him *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.* In all His trials before Pilate and the Jews, He never complained nor threatened, yet he had the full power of God at His disposal.

Jesus encourages meekness in us when He says in Matthew 5:5 *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.* This is to say that our strength should be in Him, and He will reward us.

Read the story of Jesus' arrest in Matthew 26:47-75 and identify verses which show the following characteristics:

Jesus' true meekness _____

Jesus' real power _____

Peter's false strength _____

Peter's failure _____

This shows the difference between Jesus' meekness - power under the control of discipline - and false bravery and apparent strength which relied only on Peter's own strength and ultimately failed.

Paul shows us what true meekness should look like in our lives. Romans 12:3 and 10, *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more _____ than you ought, but rather think of yourself with _____, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor _____ above _____.*

In what areas of your life do you need to rely less on your own strength, be gentle instead of tough, and rely on God's strength?
