

Review Questions (Lesson #18)

Answer T for true, F for false

1. We should strive for peace with God, with other people, and with ourselves.
2. You can have joy even when your circumstances include pain and suffering.
3. Loving one's enemies does not mean approving of their sinful behavior.
4. When God's Spirit lives within you, you will speak in tongues.
5. God is kind even to people who are unthankful and evil.

Give short answers:

1. Why should we be thankful that God is longsuffering? _____
2. Give an example from this lesson where joy focused on spiritual matters: _____
3. From a positive perspective, what does "peace" include? _____
4. What happens to a disciple who does not bear fruit? _____
5. Scripture uses the word "kind" most often to describe generous behavior toward what kind of people? _____

Fill in the blanks:

1. (Love) is based on _____, not _____. One loves because he _____ to, not because he _____ like it.
2. When we yield to the _____ of the _____, the "works of the _____" result; but when we yield to the _____ of God's _____ through His _____, we bring forth the _____ of the _____.
3. Kindness is _____, which is an outgrowth of _____.
4. "If it is _____, as much as _____ on you, live _____ with all men."
5. As _____ of God, we ought to strive to _____ His _____ by holding our _____ and keeping our _____.

Galatians: Guarding the Gospel of Grace
Lesson #18 The Fruit of the Spirit, (Galatians 5:22-26)

What occurs as a result of God's Spirit living within you? Many religious teachers claim that you will undergo some sort of spine-tingling, goose-bump-raising, emotional experience. Others expect that you will perform supernatural works. Their rendition of Galatians 5 might say, "The fruit of the Spirit is healing, tongue-speaking, prophesying, casting out demons, etc." But, although a select few Christians in the first century could work such miracles to confirm the New Testament message, that isn't what the Spirit does within us today. Paul taught that while Satan pulls at us through the lusts of the flesh, God's Spirit pulls at us through His inspired word, which tells us what God expects of us and motivates us to obey Him willingly from the heart. Our own spirit determines which direction we go. When we yield to the lusts of the flesh, the "works of the flesh" result (as discussed in the previous two lessons); but when we yield to the leading of God's Spirit through His word, we bring forth "the fruit of the Spirit" – not working miracles, but developing qualities within our lives that help us to be like Jesus and to keep His commandments because we desire to do so, not from grudging obligation.

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:1-2). Then He explained to His disciples and, by extension, to us: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing (15:5). Bearing fruit is not optional! It is expected and required. The alternative is to be "cast out as a branch . . . withered . . . and thrown into the fire" (15:6).

What, then, is the "fruit" we are to produce for the Lord? Certainly it would include, but not be limited to, the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Paul began that section with the word "but" (v. 22), indicating a contrast to the works of the flesh in the previous section. Since these elements of the fruit of the Spirit are the opposite of the works of the flesh, we will note the contrasts as we define and discuss them.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love . . ." (v. 22). The Greek language, in which Paul wrote, had several words for love. Here, it is the word *agape* (pronounced "ah-GAH-pay"). It may include emotional affection, but doesn't

always. It is based on commitment, not emotion. One loves because he decides to do so, not because he feels like it. Thus, a disciple of Jesus obeys His command to love even enemies (Matthew 5:44). Such love has nothing to do with approving of sinful behavior or ignoring it. Contrary to popular belief, it is not “hate” to rebuke sin! Love for others does what is in their best interest. Since it is in a sinner’s best interest to repent and be saved, love will rebuke the sinner and urge him to repent and obey the gospel. This love is the very opposite of hatred and enmity (works of the flesh).

Next is joy. Joy may be defined as gladness or delight, but not merely the superficial delight such as a child might have with an ice cream cone. Certainly one may be joyful over material good fortune (see Matthew 13:44), but joy is not dependent on external circumstances. The focus in Scripture is on spiritual matters, especially one’s relationship with God. For example, the angel who announced Jesus’ birth to the shepherds said, “I bring you good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10). When the wise men “saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy” (Matthew 2:10). The women at the tomb had “great joy” as they “ran to bring His disciples word” about the resurrection (Matthew 28:8). None of these examples pertain to earthly wealth, sensual pleasure, or other fleshly concerns. A Christian’s joy does away with both jealousy and envy (works of the flesh) because our focus is on our relationship with God, not on whether we have more (or less) money, fame, or power, than someone else.

Third on the list is peace. It is the opposite of divisions, factions, and heresies/parties (works of the flesh). Peace goes well beyond the mere absence of conflict. From a positive perspective, peace includes serenity, tranquility, concord, and harmony. With whom are we to be at peace? First and foremost is peace with God, which comes only through Jesus Christ to those who are justified by faith (Romans 5:1; see previous lessons where justification by faith has been discussed at length).

One who is at peace with God will naturally want to be at peace with other people. That will include peace with fellow-Christians (1 Thessalonians 5:13), as well as peace with everyone else wherever possible. Peace, however, requires two willing parties; it cannot exist when only one party desires it. Therefore, Paul told the Christians at Rome, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). Paul obviously recognized that peace isn’t always possible, and it doesn’t always depend on you alone.

Peace with God and peace with other people will help us to have peace within ourselves. Paul referred to this as “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). Jesus put it this way: “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you” (John 14:27).

Next is longsuffering (literally long-temperedness). W. E. Vine provides an outstanding definition of this word: “Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger and is associated with mercy” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol. 3, p. 12). We ought to be thankful for the longsuffering of God, for without it we would be punished for our sins immediately rather than having opportunities to repent and receive forgiveness. As Peter wrote, “the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation” (2 Peter 3:15). As children of God, we ought to strive to imitate His longsuffering by holding our tempers and keeping our cool. “Outbursts of wrath” are, after all, a work of the flesh.

This lesson will conclude by examining kindness. (The final four items will be covered in the next lesson). As we learn to think like Jesus, and thus to act like Jesus, we will become kind like He is. Kindness is graciousness which is an outgrowth of love. Scripture uses this word most often to describe an attitude and pattern of generous behavior toward those who don’t deserve it. For example, as Jesus taught His disciples to love even their enemies, He referred to the fact that God “is kind to the unthankful and evil” (Luke 6:35). Worldly, fleshly-minded people will be charitable to those who are charitable to them; but the Lord calls us to imitate His kindness regardless of how others treat us. Consider the kindness of Jesus toward us, though we have done nothing to deserve it. He graciously says, “take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is *easy*, and My burden is *light*” (Matthew 11:29-30). Note that “easy” is the same New Testament word as kind. Unless a yoke was properly made and fitted, it would gall and chafe the neck and shoulder of the ox. The yoke of Christ (i.e. serving Him) is not galling and chafing to us; His yoke is kind. In like manner, we should be kind; we should be diplomatic and do our best not to “rub people the wrong way.” That doesn’t mean we should ever compromise the truth; but we ought not to be needlessly offensive. Make certain that it is the truth the offends people, and not our abrasive, coarse manner!