

Galatians

Chapter 5:22-26

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"But if spiritual men are known by their works, what judgment, it will be asked, shall we form of wicked men and idolaters, who exhibited an illustrious resemblance of all the virtues? I reply, as all the works of the flesh do not appear openly in a carnal man, but his carnality is discovered by one or another vice, so a single virtue will not entitle us to conclude that a man is spiritual."

John Calvin

Having delivered a lengthy discussion of the fruits or works of the flesh, Paul turns to describe the antithesis.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- The first thing to note is that this section details the fruit of the Spirit. In the English it is not easy to tell that the word in the Greek is singular. However, in the previous section the Greek word for "works" is plural. The point of this is that these attributes are not individual commodities they are pieces of a whole. Our lives should manifest all of them.
- Secondly, note that they are not the *gifts* of the Spirit. These are not to be confused with the gifts which are given to edify the body of Christ. These are the characteristics of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- In the book of Romans (Rom. 3:9-20), Paul declares that there are none who are naturally righteous before God. There is nothing inherently in us that produces good things. By ourselves we are incapable of producing righteousness. All of our attempts to do so are filthy rags. The fruit of the Spirit is not simply the behaviors of the spiritual, but these are the manifestations of the Spirit of God. These are the attributes which God purposes to produce in us. If He were not doing so we would be helpless in producing them.
- A sweet fruit tree will produce sweet fruit. We are able to identify the type of tree by evidence of its fruit. A sour fruit tree cannot produce sweet fruit. Nor can a fountain give forth both salt and fresh water. In order to accomplish this, God produced a complete change in our nature. We were converted from one who was by nature an object of wrath to one who is by nature an object of grace. These fruits which God produces in us is evidence of His grace.
- **Our Disposition Toward God and Man**
 - **Love** - 26 agape {ag-ah'-pay}

This love is one of sacrifice where we do right by our brothers. This kind of love sacrifices its own concerns for the concerns of others. The very essence of this word is hoping the best for others. This love is completely foreign to the flesh, for as one is indulging the flesh he is by definition incapable of this love.

- **Joy** - 5479 chara {khar-ah'}

This is not the warm feeling of benevolence or the bubbly, perky, always-up emotion that is frequently confused with joy. This is a gladness or a deep seated contentment. Joy and happiness are not the same thing. Someone could be experiencing a difficult trial yet is able to maintain joy throughout the trial. In addition, this joy in some cases is difficult if not impossible to express because it is centered in the glory of the salvation that we have received. cf. 1 Peter 1:8.

- **Peace** - 1515 eirene {i-ray'-nay}

There are many sides to this word but the best common thread is that this fruit is present where the flesh is dead. A lack of peace means the presence of wrangles, dissensions, contentions, selfishness and ambitions. There is peace where there is no war. This condition exists where there is a reconciliation.

- **Our Relationship to Other People**

- **Longsuffering** - 3115 makrothumia {mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah}

This refers to a gentleness of our mind, which disposes us to take everything in good part, and not to be easily offended. This fruit rushes to find the good not to find the opportunity for complaint or criticism. This is patience which is founded in compassion and slowness in avenging wrongs.

- **Kindness** - 5544 chrestotes {khray-stot'-ace}

This aspect of the fruit of the Spirit involves friendliness, charity, hospitality and integrity. It produces concern for others and longs to see others' needs met.

- **Goodness** - 19 agathosune {ag-ath-o-soo'-nay}

This refers to an upright heart that is quick to complete a thoughtful deed. Its motivations are pure.

- **Descriptions of Our Character**
 - **Faithfulness** - 4102 pistis {pis'-tis}

Primarily this refers to one who is characterized by Christian faith. This is a faith in God and His sovereignty. It also refers to one who is dependable, trustworthy and whose word is sure.

- **Gentleness** - 4236 praotes {prah-ot'-ace}

Disposition that flows from humility. This is not the opposite of boldness. This is not someone who is a pacifist or is unable to stand on conviction but rather is one who doesn't need harshness or fervent emotion to bolster his position.

- **Self-control** - 1466 egkrateia {eng-krat'-i-ah}

Interestingly, one who is self-controlled is one who is Spirit controlled. This is someone who is able to keep his temper, emotions and behavior under submission.

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

- At first glance this verse appears somewhat problematic in that Paul has said that the flesh and the Spirit war against each other. The concept of crucifixion is frequently used by Paul such as in Gal 2:20 and Romans 6:6. But, interestingly, in this verse alone the verb crucified is in the active voice rather than in the passive voice as in the other uses of the verb. The difference is that in the passive voice, the subject of the sentence is the recipient of the action and in the active voice the subject (those who are Christ's) is the doer of the action. Because of this and the other verses in the Scriptures that teach us the our sinful nature was put to death but our flesh was not, I believe that we are to understand Paul here to be saying that we are to consider ourselves dead to the sin of the flesh. We are to put to death the corruption of the members of our body as he teaches in Romans 8:13. How are we to do this? By means of the Spirit. We cannot do this on our own we must accomplish this my means of the Spirit of God.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (NKJV)

- This extremely pragmatic verse is similar in theme to the verses found in James chapter two where James states that faith is useless unless it is manifest in our actions. Here Paul says that if you have been made alive by means of the Spirit let your life be characterized by good works, knowing that the good works do not make us Christians but true Christians do manifest good works. Or another way, Paul is saying that your regeneration when God came down and imputed the righteousness of Christ to you was just the beginning. If God has done that in you, then don't think that that is the extent of God's intentions. God has foreordained before time began many good works for us to walk in; your conversion is not the end of the story.