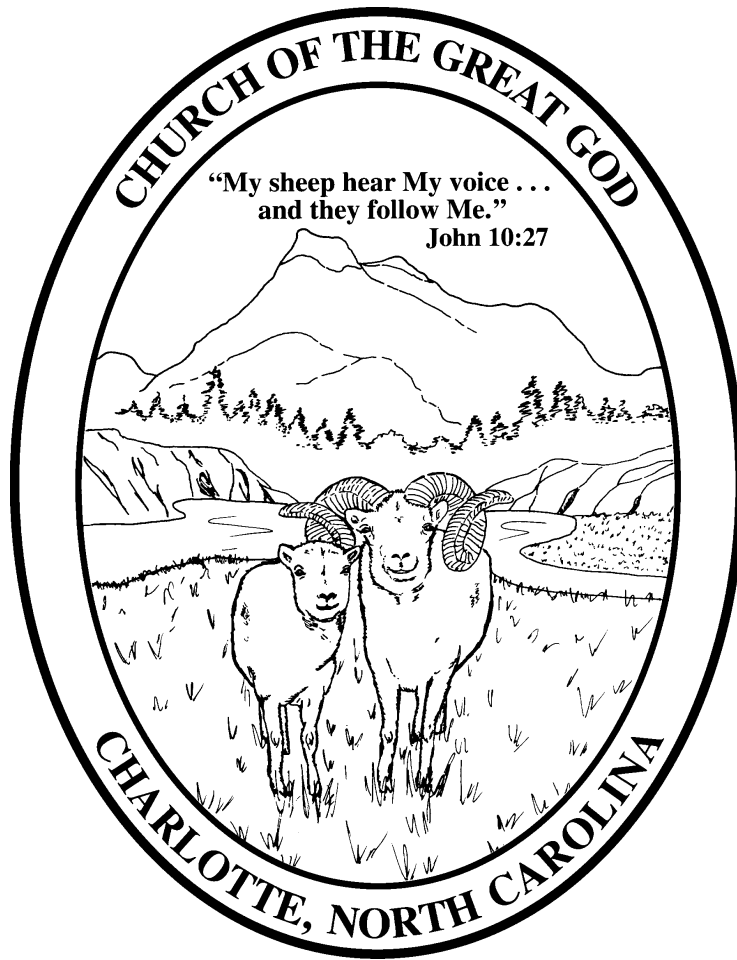




Forerunner
Bible Study Series

The Fruit of the Spirit

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Forerunner Bible Study Series

The Fruit of the Spirit

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Introduction

In the past half century, the church of God has had a productive history of using the question-and-answer format in its Bible study materials. Not only does this method spur our curiosity about biblical teachings, but it also **MAKES US** dig into God's Word to find the answers to the great—and the mundane—questions of life. We are pleased to continue this tradition in the *Forerunner Bible Study Series*.

These concise lessons, though primarily basic material, can be helpful to both beginners and veterans of Christianity. Beginners can learn the fundamentals of doctrine, prophecy and Christian living, while old-timers can quickly refresh their knowledge of these things. They can be a valuable resource.

The Bible studies will be more profitable if

you set aside a convenient block of undisturbed time in which to concentrate on them. Read the questions carefully, looking up—and even writing down—the verses that provide God's answers. You may wish to keep a notebook just for this purpose so your work will be accessible anytime you need to refer to it.

And do not forget the other tools of successful Bible study: prayer and meditation. Ask for God's help to open your mind to understand His teaching, and as He reveals it to you, think deeply about its meaning to you, your family, the nation and to all mankind. This will help it become a vital part of you in your walk toward God's Kingdom.

We hope these studies of God's Word profit you and enlighten your life!

The Holy Spirit

In all of theology, understanding what God's Holy Spirit may be the most crucial element, yet few outside of the church really know the truth. It is the Spirit of God within us that enables us to understand God's way of life and what it means to be a true Christian being transformed "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). In fact, it is the Spirit in us that makes us children of God and imparts to us eternal life (Romans 8:10, 14)!

When the Holy Spirit works within us, our lives produce what the Bible calls "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23), that is, elements of the very character of God. As we grow in them, we show both God and man that we are maturing into the image of Christ. Before we launch into these traits, we need to understand what motivates and produces them in us, the Holy Spirit itself.

"The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

1. Is the Holy Spirit a person or power? Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; Isaiah 32:15; John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-14; I Corinthians 2:9-16; 12:4-11; II Timothy 1:6-7; II Peter 1:2-4.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit is the power of God—not a personage, entity, consciousness or part of the Godhead or a trinity. The Bible speaks of the Spirit as the power or mind of God, the power of love and of a sound mind. It emanates from Him and thus can be said to be "poured out" (Titus 3:5-6), "breathed" (John 20:22) and used to "fill" (Acts 2:4) and "anoint" (Acts 10:38).

2. To whom does God give the Spirit? Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38; 5:32; Ephesians 1:13-14; I John 3:24.

COMMENT: Though Jesus says God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask, the Bible further qualifies this with conditions. God will give His Spirit only to those who have demonstrated in attitude and behavior that they have repented. Then they must be baptized and obey His commandments. No one who continues to live a lifestyle apart from God's law has received the Spirit of God or has the power of God working in him.

3. How does God call us to the knowledge of the truth? John 6:44-45, 63; 14:26; 16:13; I Corinthians 2:7-14.

COMMENT: No man—by scholarship, human reason or intelligence—can comprehend the whole truth of God apart from the Holy Spirit. Only by the intervention of the Spirit are we called to understand it. God, by divine revelation through the help of the Spirit, opens our minds to the "mysteries" of the truth, allowing us to discern what is truly vital to our salvation.

4. Does the Holy Spirit have other functions? Isaiah 11:2; John 14:26; Acts 9:31; Romans 8:26-27.

COMMENT: God's Spirit imparts wisdom and understanding. It teaches His way of life, comforts and helps us. Even when we cannot express ourselves in our prayers, the Spirit aids us in making our requests before God.

5. By what is a person known? Matthew 7:20; John 15:8, 16. What is God developing in His called-out children

through the Holy Spirit? Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:1-3, 13, 22-24.

COMMENT: A person is known by his fruits (actions, works), and a Christian is to bear much good fruit. By giving the Spirit to those He has called, God is creating and shaping traits in them that produce the fruit of the Spirit.

6. Will the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit and eternal life be given to everyone after Christ's second coming? Isaiah 11:9; Ezekiel 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; Zechariah 12:10.

COMMENT: Man can learn how to live under God's rule only if the Holy Spirit is given to him, but since Adam rejected God's offer in Eden, God has not offered salvation to humanity as a whole. When Christ established His church, God began offering His Spirit only to those He called to be firstfruits (John 7:39). In the World Tomorrow, God will give everyone this opportunity.

7. What does the Holy Spirit deliver us from and what gift comes from it? Romans 6:23; 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; I John 5:11.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit delivers us from death and leads us to the gift of eternal life. We inherit mortal life through Adam, but God gives His Spirit to endow eternal life on His faithful and obedient children. Since the Spirit is God's gift, neither are we born with it, nor can we earn it.

8. What evidence makes it apparent that the Holy Spirit is working in us? Matthew 7:16-20; John 15:1-8; Galatians 5:22-25; II Timothy 1:6-7.

COMMENT: Once begotten by the Holy Spirit from the Father, we must continually be led by it, bearing spiritual fruit throughout our lives. If we are producing the fruit of the Spirit, which exhibit a sound mind, we know it is working in us. The Spirit is the mind and essence of the divine nature, and through it God carries out His will. It empowers the mind to comprehend spiritual matters, producing conversion. It gives us the strength, will and faith to overcome our sins. Is there evidence of God's Spirit working within you?

Love

As Christians trying to overcome, we often think in terms of ridding ourselves of sin, which can be a discouraging and sometimes overwhelming experience. Nevertheless, it is only part of a Christian's life. It is just as important—if not more important—to concentrate on producing the fruit of the Spirit, the positive result of overcoming. Producing the fruit of the Spirit means—above and beyond “merely” obeying

the Ten Commandments—we begin to produce and grow in godly character. Building character requires sacrificing ourselves in service to God and our brethren (Romans 12:1-2). In this second Bible study on the fruit of the Spirit, we will focus on the first and most important fruit, love (Galatians 5:22). Love could be considered a vine as well as a fruit as it is the channel through which all of the fruits are borne.

1. What are we without love? I Corinthians 13:1-2. What does a life without love profit us? I Corinthians 13:3. Whom should we love? Deuteronomy 6:5; I John 2:10; 4:7, 11; Matthew 5:43-46; 22:36-39.

COMMENT: Man's natural state is to be God's enemy (Colossians 1:21) and to hate Him (John 15:18). The love of God is not naturally in man (John 5:42). Since carnal humans cannot love properly, they are of no lasting benefit to their fellow human beings. They rarely give anything of true value to others.

2. What is love? John 14:15, 21; Romans 13:10; I John 5:3; II John 6;. What must God give us so that we may have true love? Romans 5:5; I John 3:24; 4:12-13.

COMMENT: God's divine love is entirely different from the world's version of it. God imparts love to us by the Holy Spirit, and we express it by obeying His law as outgoing concern for others.

3. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments? Deuteronomy 5:33; 6:25; Matthew 22:36-39; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; I Timothy 1:5.

COMMENT: God's character is based on love, and He has given us His law to guide our character development. Love is and results from keeping God's law.

4. Do we have to show true love to know and understand God? I John 2:3-6; 4:7-8; 5:2. How has God shown His love toward us? John 3:16; Romans 5:8; I John 4:9-10. Why does a converted person love God? I John 4:19. What must we do to love God? I John 4:20-21; John 15:13.

COMMENT: We can see the Father's love for us in His offering of His Son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice for our sins. Christ demonstrated His love for us by giving His own life for us (Ephesians 5:2). We show our love for God in our adoration, worship and obedience, resulting in outgoing concern, compassion, kindness and service toward others (II Corinthians 5:14) and giving our lives as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

5. How does love relate to perfection? Colossians 3:12-14; I John 4:12. Why is love perfected in us? I John 4:17.

COMMENT: Love is the bond of perfection (I Corinthians 13), and God's love is perfected in us as we love each another. “Perfected” means complete or mature as God wants us. God is completing our character development by instilling in us His own character of love, seen in our love for one another.

6. How is love related to truth? I Peter 1:22; I John 3:18-19. How can we show love without hypocrisy? Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 6:1-4.

COMMENT: By obeying the truth with the help of the Holy Spirit, we understand love from a godly perspective. A humble attitude is paramount to showing genuine love toward others.

7. Is there a wrong type of love? I John 2:15-17; Proverbs 7:18-19; I Timothy 6:10. Can we fear if we have perfect love? I John 4:18.

COMMENT: Love of the world is forbidden by God, and conforming to it shows that a person loves it (Romans 12:2) and therefore hates God. Much of the time, the world equates lust with love, but nothing could be further from the truth. Lust is self-centered and destructive. The person who has God's love perfected in him cannot fear because he has no dread of punishment and no torment from sin.

8. What characteristics and fruit does love produce? I Corinthians 13:4-7; Proverbs 10:12.

COMMENT: The mutual love that issues from the unity of the Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:1-3) is a witness to the outside world of the reality of God's existence. The love of God is perfected in us if we keep God's commands and love one another, and this unifies us by one Spirit into one body, as Christ is one with the Father. God is developing a Family whose main characteristic is love, therefore, the Kingdom of God is also the kingdom of love. This fruit of the Spirit opens the way for the other spiritual fruit to be produced.

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide in faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (I Corinthians 13:12-13)

Joy

In our world of unprecedented prosperity and luxury—a world of boundless accomplishment and breathtaking advances—human reasoning tells us that there should be great joy throughout the world. On the contrary, however, depression, hopelessness, despair and suicide are commonplace. Materialism and man’s obsession with the accumulation of physical things has never led to anything but increased sorrow.

True, lasting joy is based neither on material accumulation nor in extraordinary physical accomplishments, but in the hope of salvation and the wonderful promises that God has set before us (Romans 15:13). Only by seeing beyond ourselves and our cares can we possess godly joy. In this third Bible study on the fruit of the Spirit, we will examine “joy”—gladness of heart (Galatians 5:22).

1. What is characteristic of worldly joy? Job 20:5; Luke 8:13; Proverbs 15:21; Hosea 9:1. When should joy be turned to gloom? James 4:8-10.

COMMENT: Carnal joy is temporary because it is based in self-centeredness. By the lifestyles of the average, unconverted person, we can easily see that they live their lives according to the saying, “Ignorance is bliss!” But God tells His people not to rejoice like the world. It is better to have sorrow in humility than joy in pride.

2. What are natural expressions of joy? I Samuel 18:6; I Chronicles 15:16; Ezra 3:12-13; Psalm 27:6; 32:10-11.

COMMENT: The ancient Israelites expressed joy by singing, dancing, playing musical instruments and shouting at victory celebrations, festivals, sacrifices and coronations. Gladness and joy are blessings from God. Gladness is the experience of pleasure, joy, or delight, resulting from happiness and joy. Joy is a quality, not simply an emotion, grounded upon God Himself and derived from Him. It should characterize our lives as Christians. Joy springs from the prospect of possessing our desires and can be temporary or long lasting.

3. Do angels express joy? Job 38:4, 7; Luke 2:10-14. What else causes joy in heaven? Job 33:26; Luke 15:7, 10.

COMMENT: The terms “morning stars” and “sons of God” are biblical names for angels, who express joy when events in God’s plan unfold. Not only God but also angels are thrilled when a sinner repents of his worldly ways. Prayer for forgiveness brings about joyous repentance and restoration of righteousness in a person’s life.

4. To whom does God grant joy? Nehemiah 8:9-12; Psalm 5:11; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Isaiah 29:19; Matthew 25:21, 23. Does God make people joyful? II Chronicles 20:27; Ezra 6:22; Nehemiah 12:43.

COMMENT: Joy strengthens us when it results from our relationship with our Creator, who gives it to us as a reward for repentance, humility, trust and faithfulness.

5. What does God promise His servants? Isaiah 65:13-14; Jeremiah 31:13; John 16:20-22. Is there joy in unity? Psalm 133:1; Acts 2:42-47; I Corinthians 12:26; Philippians 2:2.

COMMENT: Godly unity produces joy because it overcomes the sorrow of self-seeking and fulfills the true love of outgoing concern for others. Joy through unity comes when God’s people have all things in common—the same beliefs and desires working toward a common goal.

6. In what does God’s ministry find joy that differs from the rest of the saints? I Thessalonians 2:19-20; Philemon 7; III John 4.

COMMENT: A minister labors long to help lead others to repentance and to direct them toward the Kingdom of God. When he sees progress, his encouragement manifests itself as joy.

7. Can persevering through a trial be joyous? II Corinthians 8:2; Colossians 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 1:6; Hebrews 10:34; James 1:2; I Peter 4:12-13.

COMMENT: Our joy through trials is a result of suffering for Christ’s sake. Of the persecution we must endure, Jesus says, “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!” (Luke 6:23). Through the Holy Spirit, God gives us His gift of joy as part of the process of spiritual completion.

8. Is joy a characteristic of the Kingdom of God? Isaiah 35:10; 65:17-19; Matthew 13:44; 25:21; Romans 14:17.

COMMENT: Sorrow and sighing is of the world because of sin, but joy and gladness is of the Kingdom because it is holy and good. The Kingdom of God is joy in the Holy Spirit, producing eternal spiritual fruit.

9. Should the prospect of salvation and eternal life be joyous? Psalm 21:1; 51:12; 132:16; Isaiah 12:3; Habakkuk 3:18; I Peter 1:8-9; I John 1:1-4.

COMMENT: There will be everlasting joy when God’s Kingdom is established on earth. Joy and gladness is not only a deep inward feeling, but it is also expressed in visible celebration when God’s people gather together. Speaking of the future church, Isaiah 60:15 says, “Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through you, I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations.” In the meantime, the apostle Paul advises us to “rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)

**“ . . . I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy
in the God of my salvation.” (Habakkuk 3:18)**

Peace

In the center of Hiroshima, Japan, the twisted ruins of the former exhibition hall remain as a memorial to the death and horror of the atomic blast. On a standard outside, one word is inscribed in large, bold letters: *Peace*. Man has long desired peace, but found it to be elusive because he does not know how to acquire it. In the Old Testament peace indicated material prosperity or physical safety. But

for the New Testament church, peace means far more: spiritual well-being, completeness and stability of mind (II Corinthians 13:11). True, heartfelt peace is not merely the absence of or respite from conflict, but a positive, proactive, heartfelt peace of yielding to God and of good will toward all. This Bible study will explore “peace”—tranquillity of heart (Galatians 5:22).

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)

1. Can we trust just anyone who wants peace? Psalm 28:3; Ezekiel 13:10; Obadiah 7; Micah 3:5; I Thessalonians 5:3; James 2:16.

COMMENT: This Aesop’s fable depicts a false promise of peace: Once upon a time, the wolves sent an embassy to the sheep, desiring that there might be peace between them for the time to come. “Why,” said they, “should we be forever waging this deadly strife? Those wicked dogs are the cause of all; they are incessantly barking at us and provoking us. Send them away, and there will be no longer any obstacle to our eternal friendship and peace.” The silly sheep listened, the dogs were dismissed, and the flock, thus deprived of their best protectors, became an easy prey to their treacherous enemy.

2. Can the wicked have peace? Job 15:20; Isaiah 48:22; 57:19-21; 59:8.

COMMENT: The world does not recognize true peace. During man’s entire history, there have been only a very few years of global peace. The leaders and false prophets lie to the people, “saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11).

3. To what has God called His saints? Romans 12:18; I Corinthians 7:15; Colossians 3:15; Hebrews 12:14. How does peace relate to obedience? Psalm 119:165-166; Proverbs 3:1-2; Isaiah 48:18.

COMMENT: God has called us to peace. He expects us to keep His commandments, and in return He gives us peace of mind. “When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7). Sin separates man from God, causing a confrontational relationship with Him whereby man receives His wrath. This is anything but peaceful! Peace leads to more peace, washing away strife and fear as a river sweeps away debris.

4. Does God grant peace as a gift through Jesus Christ? Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:19-20; II Thessalonians 3:16.

COMMENT: We have “peace through the blood of His cross,” that is, through the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ in

life and death. It opened the way for peace between man and God and between man and man.

5. How is healing related to peace? Isaiah 53:5; Jeremiah 8:15; 14:19; 33:6. Do peace and unity promote each other? I Kings 5:12; Ephesians 2:14-18; 4:3.

COMMENT: Forgiveness of sin and healing bring us great peace of mind and body (James 5:14-16). Wisdom, the right use of knowledge, facilitates unity and peace.

6. What kind of heart is needed to have peace? Philippians 4:6-9; II Timothy 2:22-23.

COMMENT: God gives His peace to those of a pure or righteous heart and mind. The transition from Old to New Testament usage of “peace” strikingly illustrates its personal, internal application: Out of about 90 New Testament instances, 90% refer to *heartfelt peace*.

7. Is internalized, heartfelt peace unhindered by the world’s strife? John 14:27; 16:33; Romans 8:6-9.

COMMENT: God’s peace is a deep, spiritual stillness unaffected by tumult in the world. We can have this peace, if we truly trust in God’s redemptive plan for mankind, strive to produce His character and obey His Word.

8. Are peace and righteousness related? Psalm 37:37; 72:3, 7; 85:10; Romans 14:17. How? Isaiah 32:17; James 3:17-18.

COMMENT: Righteousness produces peace with its qualities of quietness and assurance, but at the same time, peace provides the proper environment for righteousness to grow. One builds upon the other. For instance, a home without peace hinders the development of righteousness. Thus, God allows a Christian to divorce an abusive, unconverted mate (I Corinthians 7:15).

9. Does peace require effort on our part? Psalm 34:14; Romans 2:10; 14:19; II Peter 3:14.

COMMENT: Making peace takes tremendous effort! Although a gift from God through Christ, peace must be sought (I Peter 3:11). The pursuit of peace is not merely eliminating discord, but peace is produced by conscious effort to overcome while asking God to grant it. By themselves, however, our efforts are not enough. Jesus Christ Himself will ultimately bring peace to all mankind (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Longsuffering

The heroes of today's culture, portrayed in the media as angry, aggressive defenders of democracy, destroy without patience or forethought all opposing forces regardless of their personal qualities. In our impatient, self-centered world, one quality of character has all but perished: longsuffering. Similar to patience and forbearance, longsuffering is the quality of self-restraint in the

face of provocation. A person who is longsuffering is not quick to retaliate or promptly punish someone who has insulted, offended or harmed him. The opposite of anger, it is intimately associated with mercy. Longsuffering is an attribute of God and thus a fruit of His Holy Spirit. In this Bible study on "the fruit of the Spirit," we will examine longsuffering.

1. What word most accurately describes this spiritual fruit? Galatians 5:22.

COMMENT: Various translations use "longsuffering," "patience" or "forbearance" to translate the Greek word *makrothumia*. This word combines the roots *makro*, meaning "long," and *thumos*, meaning "temper," so it literally means "to be long-tempered." It implies the opposite of "short temper," describing the mind holding back a long time before it expresses itself in action or passion. *Makrothumia* is rarely rendered as "patience" and never as "forbearance" in the New Testament, although both words are considered synonyms of "longsuffering."

2. Is God longsuffering? Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18, 27; Psalm 86:15; Jeremiah 15:15. What does God's longsuffering prove? Luke 18:7; Romans 2:4; II Peter 3:9, 15.

COMMENT: God *bears long* and is *slow to anger*. Longsuffering is proof of God's goodness, faithfulness and His desire to grant us salvation. Romans 2:4 describes God as forbearing and longsuffering. Forbearance is refraining from enforcing of something that is due like a debt, right, or obligation. Longsuffering differs slightly in that its emphasis is on temperament.

3. Does God's longsuffering delay His wrath? Joel 2:13; Romans 9:22-24; I Peter 3:18-20.

COMMENT: God relents from doing harm. His longsuffering is seen in His gracious restraint of His wrath towards those who deserve it. Despite the rebellious condition of the world, He waited patiently for 120 years while Noah built the ark and gathered the animals. God's longsuffering does not overlook anything. Unlike man, God has the end in view. With true insight, He knows what is best and is not swayed by human emotions.

4. How is longsuffering exemplified in Christ? Matthew 17:17; I Timothy 1:16; II Peter 3:14-15.

COMMENT: Christ's patient and enduring handling of

sinners demonstrates His longsuffering. God promises that He will be long-tempered with us as we repent and dedicate ourselves to the obedience and service of God. As in everything else, Jesus Christ sets the standard of longsuffering.

5. Are others used as an example of longsuffering? II Corinthians 6:4-6; Hebrews 6:12-15; James 5:8-10.

COMMENT: Many of God's servants develop the quality of longsuffering through their service and dedication to Him.

6. Should longsuffering be an integral quality of our character? Colossians 3:12-13; Ephesians 4:1-3; I Thessalonians 5:14; II Timothy 3:10-11; 4:2.

COMMENT: As the elect of God, we must put on or clothe ourselves with longsuffering. By doing this in unity as a church, we rid ourselves of, or at least dramatically reduce, friction. To be loving and effective, a minister must correct, rebuke and encourage with longsuffering.

7. Does longsuffering strengthen spiritually? Colossians 1:9-11. Does it show evidence of godly love? I Corinthians 13:4.

COMMENT: Paul tells the saints in Colosse that he prays they will possess the trait that is the opposite of wrath or revenge. He speaks of having an even temper, an attitude that in spite of injury or insult does not retaliate. We can develop longsuffering only as a fruit of the Spirit, not as an independent character trait. It grows from the common root of love and bears fruit only along with other spiritual fruit.

Love takes precedence in this list of gifts of the Spirit and carries the attribute that it suffers long. Longsuffering is extended and patient endurance of offense. Since patience is an aspect of longsuffering, they are very close in intent. Patience is cheerful or hopeful endurance, patient waiting. Therefore, longsuffering is the quality of patiently tolerating the actions of others against us, even when we are severely tried.

"Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Kindness

English author John Burbidge writes, “Angry looks can do no good, and blows are dealt in blindness./ Words are better understood if spoken but in kindness.” The world sees kindness on a very basic, limited plane. Although kind words are important, true kindness is a gift from God, produced in us by the Holy Spirit. The Bible sets the pattern for all kindness in the behavior of God the Father and Jesus Christ toward mankind. God gives sunshine and rain,

fruitful seasons and glad hearts, food and all that is good to the just and the unjust alike (Matthew 5:45). He manifests His ever-present mercy, love and grace through the life of Jesus Christ, who set an example for us in all virtues. God is reproducing this character attribute in those who are genuinely living His way of life. In this sixth Bible study on “the fruit of the Spirit,” we will explore the fruit of “kindness”—goodness of heart and love in tender action (Galatians 5:22).

“‘With a little wrath I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,’ says the LORD, your Redeemer.” (Isaiah 54:8)

1. What word is most accurate for the fifth fruit of the Spirit? Galatians 5:22.

COMMENT: The Greek word *chrestotes* is translated “kindness” in the NKJV and “gentleness” in the AV and RV. *Chrestotes* denotes goodness of heart, kindness, graciousness, and includes gentleness. Kindness has many synonyms: benevolence, generosity, mercy, charity, philanthropy, sympathy, compassion, tenderheartedness, friendliness, etc. Kindness is a major attribute of moral excellence and is intricately entwined with the other fruit of the Spirit. *Chrestotes* is translated as “goodness” in Romans 2:4 and 11:22 (3 times), so *chrestotes* is love in tender action, a quality of goodness, and certainly requires gentleness in word and action.

2. How did King David show kindness? I Samuel 18:1-3; 20:14-17; II Samuel 9:1-7. Does kindness reap rewards? II Samuel 2:5-6.

COMMENT: David showed kindness by being faithful to his covenant with Jonathan, Saul’s son. David often credited God for the kindness he showed to others. Most people usually accept kindness, but when it is refused, disastrous results may follow (II Samuel 10:1-6). Kindness is the full flow of natural affection supported by benevolent action, as seen between David and Jonathan.

3. What are the qualities of God’s kindness? Psalm 31:21; Isaiah 54:8, 10; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2. Is God kind to sinners? Nehemiah 9:17; Luke 6:35-36; Hebrews 13:16.

COMMENT: God’s marvelous kindness is great and abundant. To those who obey Him, God will have mercy with everlasting kindness. Mercy is the goodness and abundant grace of God to His own people, His free favor and faithfulness through His New Covenant with His spiritual church. We see the Father’s kindness in His sacrifice of His Son for our salvation.

4. What quality do we desire in each other? Proverbs 19:22. What does the virtuous woman have on her tongue? Proverbs 31:26.

COMMENT: In our human relationships, we want others

to sacrifice themselves for us, yet it seems so hard to reciprocate the same toward others on a continual basis. Nevertheless, self-sacrifice is the essence of true Christianity, and we can begin by the kind use of the tongue.

5. What Christian attributes help to build kindness? II Corinthians 6:3-6; Ephesians 4:30-32; II Peter 1:5-10.

COMMENT: The apostle Paul tells us to “be kind to one another.” Peter says to “add brotherly kindness” to the other godly virtues God is developing in us. Living according to God’s instruction, following the example of Christ and aided by the Holy Spirit, we produce the wonderful, spiritual fruit of kindness.

6. How can a Christian put on kindness? Proverbs 31:20; Zechariah 7:9-10; Romans 12:10; I Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 6:1-2, 10; Colossians 3:12-13.

COMMENT: We can express Christian kindness in mercy, compassion and love toward others. It also includes being zealously affectionate toward God and His church. Kindness is an action not a thought. As a farmer cannot sow and reap without action, neither can we merely “think” goodwill toward others.

7. How does God show His kindness? Acts 20:35; Ephesians 2:7; Titus 3:4-7. Is kindness required for entrance into the Kingdom of God? Matthew 25:34-40; II Peter 1:7, 10-11.

COMMENT: God shows the exceeding wealth of His grace in kindness toward us through the life, sacrifice and intercession of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-12). Jesus’ life epitomized kindness—love in tender action.

Kindness is goodness in action, goodness of heart expressing itself in deeds (I John 3:18). It is grace, tenderness, mercy, compassion—self-sacrificing tender action on behalf of others. We have very few opportunities to do “great” acts of kindness for others, but scarcely an hour passes that fails to present us a chance to perform some minor and unnoticed word or act of kindness.

Goodness

“The evil men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones.” This trite quotation enshrines a falsehood: Goodness does not die. It cannot be drowned in the depths of the ocean or consumed in the fires of a volcano. It cannot be buried under mountains of rock. Goodness does not die

because it is defined, not by what man is, but by what God is. It lives on eternally like a self-sowing seed, and one harvest follows another. God is scattering this seed with a careful hand to produce the sixth fruit of the Spirit, *goodness* (Galatians 5:22).

“Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads to repentance?” (Romans 2:4)

1. What are some characteristics of God’s goodness? Exodus 34:6; Psalm 31:19; 52:1; 65:4, 11; 86:5; 100:5; 145:8-9.

COMMENT: God *Himself* is good! “Good” in Scripture means primarily what God is, then what He does, creates, commands and gives, and finally what He wills in the lives of His creation. He is perfect and gloriously generous. His goodness is abundant and eternally satisfying. It is good to all, but great toward those who reverence and trust in Him. God’s goodness endures continually despite the efforts of evil men.

2. How is God’s goodness manifested? Psalm 119:39, 68; Matthew 5:45; 19:16-17; Acts 14:17.

COMMENT: Good is defined in terms of God, not vice-versa. God alone is good without qualification. He is the arbitrator and judge because He is the standard by which goodness is determined. Man and things are good only as they conform to the will of God. The whole material order is God’s handiwork and is good. Physical blessings like rain in due season reveal God’s goodness. Spiritual blessings, like understanding the truth and being forgiven of sin, are effects of obedience to God’s law.

3. Can God’s goodness be feared? Jeremiah 33:6-11; Hosea 3:5.

COMMENT: During the Millennium, Gentile nations will fear God’s goodness, realizing that His judgment falls upon all nations. After God judges Israel, resulting in terrible trials in the Tribulation and Day of the Lord, this fear of God’s goodness will help cause the repentance and submission of previously rebellious nations, and God will pour out lasting blessings upon them. Israel and Judah will be so glorious because of God’s goodness that the other nations will stand in awe of them and tremble at their greatness.

4. What should be our attitude toward God’s goodness? Exodus 18:9; Psalm 145:7; Jeremiah 31:14; Romans 11:22; 12:2.

COMMENT: The Hebrew word most often translated “good” is *tawb*, which means “pleasant,” “joyful,” “agreeable.” We should rejoice in God’s goodness and always eagerly

remember it in both good and bad times. If we are transformed by renewing our mind, we prove the good will of God and are satisfied with it because we know it always produces goodness.

5. Why are the *works* of God good? Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 66:3; 104:24, 28, 31; 111:3; 145:17. Why are the *gifts* of God good? Matthew 7:11; John 3:27; Ephesians 2:8-9; James 1:17-18.

COMMENT: God’s works are perfect and reveal his attributes of wisdom and power. They show His will. His gifts express His generosity and provide for our welfare and unity. All of God’s works and gifts are good both in intention and in effect. Everything that is good is God’s gift.

6. Why are the *commands* of God good? Psalm 19:7-11; Romans 7:12. Why is *obedience* to God good? Exodus 20:6; Leviticus 26:3-12; Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

COMMENT: God’s commands express the perfection of His character and show us how to please Him. When we obey His commands, God bestows upon us blessings while teaching us how to be good like Him.

7. Is it right to bemoan God’s goodness during tribulation and suffering? Numbers 23:19; Job 2:10. What type of attitude is good during times of trouble or need? Philippians 4:11; I Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5.

COMMENT: Job remarks that, as God’s creation and recipients of His benevolence, we have no right to complain when He allows us to endure afflictions or hardships. Even in these times, we still reap the benefits of His goodness because it is good for us to be afflicted, to receive correction, because these trials will eventually benefit us. The result will always show God’s goodness.

8. What promotes goodness? Colossians 1:9-10; I Timothy 2:1-3, 8; 5:4; Titus 3:8.

COMMENT: We please God when we are fruitful in good works because righteous action promotes God’s goodness. Prayer in a humble and meek attitude is good and acceptable, as is honor and respect of widows and parents. Good is what God is, and goodness is what He produces.

Faithfulness

Amidst all the upheavals of this unstable world and all the disunity of a distracted church, truth remains steadfast forever. Human reasoning constantly changes and the inventors of this world's systems pass away, but "the solid foundation of God stands" (II Timothy 2:19). God's truth,

Word, promises, and covenant are as sure as He is faithful. Similarly, a trustworthy and reliable person is faithful—someone others can depend upon. In this Bible study on "the fruit of the Spirit," we will explore the seventh fruit, faithfulness (Galatians 5:22).

1. Upon what is faithfulness built? Hebrews 11:1; Colossians 3:1-3; II Corinthians 4:18; 5:7.

COMMENT: Faith is the confidence we have in possessing the things we hope for because of the promises of God. Faithfulness is adhering unswervingly to God and His covenant. To be faithful we need to be *loyal* (steadfastly affectionate and allegiant to God), *conscientious* (scrupulous in doing God's will), *dedicated* (zealously devoted to God) and *truthful* (true to God's Word and standard of righteousness).

2. How does the Bible describe God's faithfulness? Psalm 36:5; 89:2, 8, 33; 119:90; Lamentations 3:23. How does God act toward us? I Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; I Thessalonians 5:24; II Thessalonians 3:3.

Comment: God's faithfulness is infinite, incomparable, unfailing, everlasting and great. Obviously, faithfulness is a character trait of both Christ, "the faithful witness" (Revelation 1:5; 3:14), and the Father, who is always faithful.

3. How does God show His faithfulness? Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 119:138; Isaiah 25:1; I John 1:9.

COMMENT: God shows His faithfulness in keeping His covenant with those who submit to His will and in forgiving the sins of those who genuinely repent. In addition, His Word is eternally reliable and true.

4. Is faithfulness only necessary in major situations? Matthew 25:23; Luke 16:10-11. Does a faithful church avoid suffering? Revelation 2:10.

COMMENT: Christ shows that if we are not faithful in trivial matters, we cannot expect to be faithful when confronted with weightier matters. God tests our faithfulness in our day-to-day activities, and it is in them that real Christianity emerges. The Laodicean attitude, one of indifference to the things God considers important, often reveals itself as faithlessness.

Christ's words to the church in Smyrna show that faithfulness does not guarantee a life free of persecution.

In fact, the more faithful we are, the more at odds with the world we become.

5. Can we please God without true faithfulness? Hebrews 11:6. How do we demonstrate it? Proverbs 11:13; 14:5; 25:13; Matthew 24:45-47; James 2:18-24.

COMMENT: We are faithful when we lovingly conceal the sins of others rather than gossip about them. Being truthful, doing God's work and being loyal are also faithful works. As Christians, we must make faith a living reality in our lives so that we can produce faithfulness.

6. Can we generate faithfulness ourselves? Romans 12:3; Ephesians 2:8-9. Whose faith is it? Ephesians 3:12; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 14:12.

COMMENT: The faith through which we please God and receive salvation is God's gift (I Corinthians 12:4, 9). Those in His true church have the faith of Jesus. It is not just our faith in Him, but His faith placed in us. Faithfulness, therefore, is a gift of God produced through the Holy Spirit.

7. What is the effect of Christ living in us? Acts 3:16; Romans 1:17; 8:9-10; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:5.

COMMENT: Paul says that Christ dwelled in Him through the Holy Spirit. This indwelling of God's Spirit enables us to be faithful. Christ's faithful mind is imparted to us and becomes part of our mind. If we provided the faith to obey God, it would be self-righteous. Our righteousness must come through the faith of Jesus Christ.

As mentioned earlier, faithfulness includes loyalty, conscientiousness, dedication and truthfulness. This not only refers to our feelings and actions toward God but also to the influences of the Holy Spirit in directing and controlling our behavior toward others. A Christian must always be faithful—as a child, spouse, parent, friend, neighbor, employee. He is faithful to his contracts and promises. Faithfulness is a character trait of one whom others confide in and trust.

**"Know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."
(Deuteronomy 7:9)**

Meekness

Meekness is an elusive virtue that few can accurately define. Most definitions are vague on its meaning, and many people equate it to weakness. God praises Moses for being the meekest man of his time (Numbers 12:3, KJV). Though one of the greatest leaders in human history, he thought of

himself as a servant in relationship to God, so he quietly and gently submitted to God's will. He refused to elevate his own importance over that of God, exercising his authority in humility. This Bible study on the "fruit of the Spirit" searches out the biblical meaning of the eighth fruit, "meekness."

1. Which word for this eighth fruit is most accurate? Galatians 5:23.

COMMENT: The NKJV translates the Greek word *prautes* as "gentleness," while the KJV uses "meekness." II Corinthians 10:1 refers to Christ's meekness (*prautes*) and gentleness (*epieikeia*) as separate virtues. *Prautes* describes a condition of mind and heart—an internal attitude—whereas gentleness (mildness combined with tenderness) refers to actions—an external behavior. Although English has no direct equivalent words to *prautes*, "meekness" comes closest. The drawback to this is that in modern English "meekness" carries the stigma of weakness and cowardliness. In contrast, the meekness manifested by God and given to the saints is the fruit of power. It is enduring injury with patience and without resentment.

2. What are the elect of God to seek, pursue and put on? Zephaniah 2:3 (KJV); I Timothy 6:11 (KJV); Colossians 3:12.

COMMENT: Meekness is rooted in God, and therefore we must pursue it. Because it is a quality of God's character, we must exert effort to make it part of our character. Although we may be experiencing adversity, as the meek we should still appreciate God's good and gracious will.

3. What is God's reaction to the meek? Psalm 25:9 (KJV); 147:6 (KJV); Isaiah 11:4.

COMMENT: The truly righteous are meek and receptive to the Word of God. God says that He will guide the patient of those who have been wronged and will decide fairly for them.

4. How important is producing the fruit of meekness? Psalm 37:11; 149:4 (KJV); Matthew 5:5; James 1:21; I Peter 3:3-4 (KJV).

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit enables us to produce meekness, a necessary attitude for understanding God's Word. An added benefit to the meek is that God promises them the enjoyment of peace. A meek and quiet spirit is so very precious to God that He calls it an imperishable ornament, and He rewards the meek with inheritance of the earth.

5. How did Jesus Christ set us an example of meekness? Isaiah 53:4, 7, 9; Matthew 11:25-29; 26:62-67; Mark 15:3-

5; II Corinthians 10:1; Philippians 2:5-8.

COMMENT: Jesus shows us that meekness is not a mere contemplative virtue; it is maintaining peace and patience in the midst of pelting provocations. In II Corinthians, Paul realizes that the meek and gentle approach can easily appear as weakness to those unfamiliar with Jesus' example, so he calls it "the meekness . . . of Christ." True meekness is always measured by Christ's meekness. His humility, patience and total submission of His own will to the will of the Father exemplifies meekness.

6. How does good conduct relate to meekness? James 3:13; I Peter 3:15-16.

COMMENT: Good conduct is not meekness, but we should show the attitude of meekness in good conduct, that is, in righteousness. Works done in righteousness are done with an attitude of meekness. Synonyms for meek are "gentle," "humble," "poor" and "lowly."

7. To whom should we show meekness? Galatians 6:1; II Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 3:1-2.

COMMENT: We should have a meek attitude to all others regardless of our relationship with them. Even when someone is antagonistic, meek correction and teaching will assist God in leading them to repentance. For *prautes*, the NKJV uses "gentleness" in Galatians and "humility" in II Timothy and Titus. Both of these are qualities of meekness. Meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest. It is evenness of mind—neither elated nor cast down—because a truly meek person is not occupied with self at all.

The focus of true meekness is not in our outward behavior only or in our relationships to other human beings. Neither is the focus on our natural disposition. Rather, it is an inwardly developed tender-heartedness, and the performing of it is first and chiefly toward God. It is the attitude in which we accept God's will toward us as good, and thus without disputing or resisting. Since true meekness is before God, we realize He permits and uses the insults and injuries that the world or others in the church may inflict for our chastening and purification.

"Do not let [your beauty] be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." (I Peter 3:3-4)

Self-Control

Men have debated the structure of government for millennia, but most have been unwilling to recognize that even the seemingly perfect structure cannot provide justice and peace without self-government. A leader, especially, must govern himself. If a person undertakes to lead a nation, what value is he to the people or to the government if he cannot control his own appetites, passions and desires?

Although we may be influenced by a leader's lack of responsibility, God holds us individually responsible for our own actions. It is foundationally important and an integral part of Christianity that an individual who is entrusted with the care of others be able to govern himself properly. In this Bible study on "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:23), we will analyze the final fruit, self-control.

"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." (Romans 13:14)

1. What is self-control? Proverbs 16:32; 25:28; I Corinthians 9:27; 13:4-7; II Corinthians 10:3-5; I Peter 2:11-12.

COMMENT: In the New Testament, the most common Greek word for self-control (temperance, KJV) is *enkrateia*. Its root meaning is "power over oneself" or "self-mastery." Self-control, in its widest sense, is mastery over our passions. It is the virtue that holds our appetites in check, controlling our rational will or regulating our conduct without being duly swayed by sensuous desires. Moderation is a key element in self-control.

2. What commonly shows a lack of self-control? Proverbs 23:19-21, 29-35; I Thessalonians 4:3-5; II Timothy 3:1-5.

COMMENT: Lust, greed, gluttony, alcoholism, conceit, sexual sins, gossiping, violent quarreling and false and reckless speech are just a few of the many sins that Satan can tempt us to commit if we allow him.

3. Is self-control for the benefit of self alone? Romans 12:18-21; 13:8-14; 14:7-10, 20-23.

COMMENT: Self-restraint and obedience to God's law is realized in outgoing concern for others that exceeds and rules over our own self-interest. Even lawful acts may on occasion cause other brethren to stumble or be made weak. Self-control provides the ability to resist what may cause pain to others. Thus, we exercise self-control for others, as well as for ourselves.

4. What elements are involved in producing self-control? Proverbs 25:16; Romans 12:1-3; 14:17-19; I Corinthians 9:25-27; I Timothy 3:2-3, 8; Titus 1:7-8; 2:1-3, 12.

COMMENT: Paul worked hard on self-discipline. As a minister, he had to discipline his body and bring it into subjection, or his credibility and effectiveness would have been severely affected. He could discuss self-control with Felix partly because of his own self-mastery (Acts 24:25). A lack of self-control shows short-sightedness because its damage is long-lasting, affecting our future both physically and spiritually.

5. What if someone cannot exercise self-control? I Corinthians 7:2-9; 10:13; I Timothy 5:11-14; Hebrews 4:15-16.

COMMENT: If self-control seems impossible, we must change the circumstances to avoid the temptation. For example, Paul instructs single people and young widows to marry if they cannot control their sexual urges.

6. What are some of the ways Christ set us an example of self-control? Isaiah 53:7-9; II Corinthians 8:9; I Peter 2:21-24; I John 2:3-6.

COMMENT: Jesus lived a life of self-control, mastering potentially lustful and destructive thoughts and actions. He had to overcome the human tendencies just as we do—resisting temptation and submitting to God's law.

7. What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to self-control? Ezekiel 11:19-20; Romans 8:1-14, 26-27; I Corinthians 2:10-14; Ephesians 4:30-32.

COMMENT: Self-control is the manifestation of God's work in man through the Holy Spirit. Paul elaborated in His teaching on self-control that Christian self-control results from the Holy Spirit's indwelling. It is the Spirit-controlled mind that is strengthened with power (Ephesians 3:16; 5:18) to control rebellious desires and to resist the allurements of tempting pleasures.

8. Is self-control required for entrance into the Kingdom of God? Romans 2:6-10; I Thessalonians 5:6-10; II Peter 1:5-6, 10-11.

COMMENT: Having knowledge of God without the practical experience of self-responsibility is not enough for entrance into the Kingdom. But with the help of God's divine power, self-mastery can be produced.

In Galatians 5:23, self-control closes the list of the fruit of the Spirit, just as drunkenness and reveling close the list of the works of the flesh (verse 21). The flesh and the Spirit are contrary to one another (verse 17). Self-control is not gained by just suppressing but by controlling the lusts of the flesh. Those who are "led by the Spirit" (verse 18), who "live in the Spirit" and "also walk in the Spirit" (verses 24-25) attain self-control and are on their way to fruitful growth in God's character.



The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 contains one of the most important lists in the Bible: the fruit of the Spirit. These nine characteristics recorded by the apostle Paul concisely spell out the foundational traits God desires His people to possess and practice in their lives.

What many people fail to recognize is that these character traits are a description of God's own character. By giving us His Holy Spirit, He enables us to build and demonstrate them ourselves. If we continue in them, we will grow into the very image of God!

After reviewing the Holy Spirit, these Bible studies will explain each virtue in the context of the entire Word of God. It is vitally important that we grasp the significance of these characteristics and strive to exhibit them daily in our lives.

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