

Do I Walk in the Spirit or the Lusts of My Human Nature? (Part IV)

Galatians 5:16: (NASB) *But I say, walk by the spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*



Every Christian wants to know what is most important in our battle to be faithful to God through Jesus. In this fourth part of our series, we find ourselves right in the middle of those “most important things” called the “fruit of the spirit.” Though this fruit sounds simple, they are profound and life-changing. When the Apostle Paul listed the fruit of the spirit in the 5 chapter of Galatians, he placed it right after a nasty list recounting 15 deeds of the flesh. The list of fruit was positioned as a remedy for all Christians who might struggle with any of those earthly issues. In Parts I and II of this series, we examined the depths of sin in that “earthly deeds” list. In Part III, we introduced the remedy - the fruit of the spirit - and began with love, joy and peace. While these

three things seem basic to any Christian, they have deep roots in Jesus’ teachings and example. As we continue with Part IV, we address the next three fruits on the list: patience, kindness and goodness. We cannot let the simplicity of these fool us, as they each have the ability to profoundly change our lives!

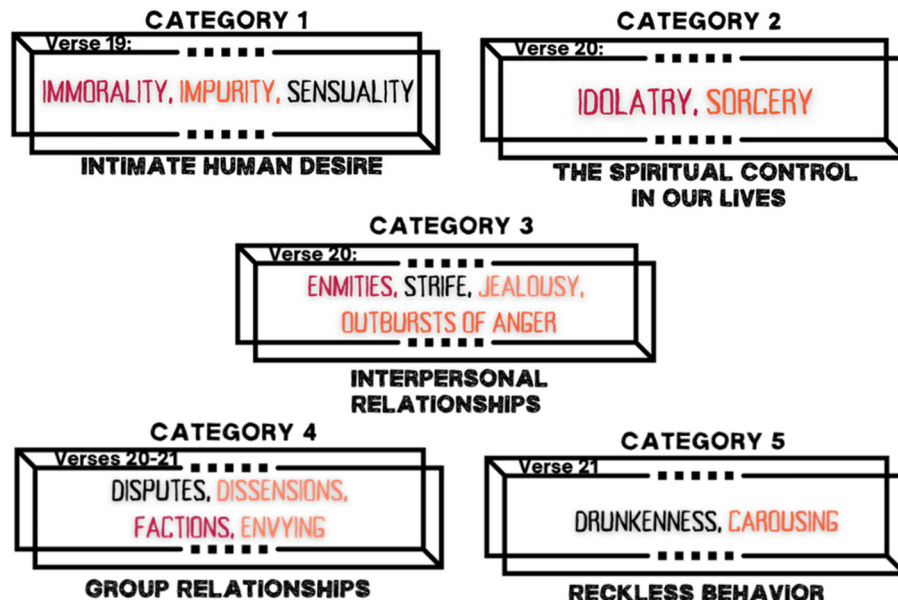
recap
recap

Let’s begin by recapping the Apostle Paul’s lesson:

Galatians 5:16-17: (NASB) *¹⁶But I say, walk by the spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*

THERE ARE FIFTEEN SPECIFIC **DEEDS OF THE FLESH** SET UP IN FIVE CATEGORIES:

¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are:





After the above behaviors, Paul covers anything he may have missed by saying: ...and things like these, of which I forewarn you...that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

With this powerfully negative and revealing list in hand, Paul immediately moves on to a list of powerfully positive and life-changing characteristics of true Christians.

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control



Galatians 5:22-25: (NASB) ²²But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Paul's point with this stark contrast is obvious:

²⁴Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the spirit, let us also walk by the spirit.

What we truly live by dictates how we walk through life!

If our lives do not operate on a spiritual level, it should be a warning about what we live by.



Galatians 5:22: (NASB) But the fruit <2590> of the spirit is...

Fruit: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2590 karpos; fruit (as plucked), literally or figuratively: fruit

This word for fruit is a general word that has both a literal and figurative meaning. The figurative meaning is used many times throughout the New Testament. The simpleness of the meaning allows us to see the focus.

The fruit of the spirit = The fruitage of God's power and influence working within us!



This is not the "fruit of Jonathan" or the "fruit of Rick." It is the fruit of God's power and influence working within Jonathan and Rick, and in all who are true Christians seeking to follow Jesus.

EP. #1256 LOVE The outgrowth of selfless love → joy, peace

Focusing on FRUIT



the foundation for all that is to follow

Selfless love rises to the height of giving that does not need or seek reciprocation.

This is how God loves us, how Jesus loves us and how Jesus taught us to love one another:

John 15:12: (NASB) *This is my commandment, that you **love <25>** one another, just as I have **loved <25>** you.*

Love: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #25 *agapao*; perhaps from *agan* (much) to love (in a social or moral sense)

#26 *agape*; from 25; love, i.e., affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast

The way Jesus loved is sacrificial - he gave his life for us and encourages us to have that same level of love for each other. *Love one another, just as I have loved you.*

A life of benevolent love modeled after God and our Lord Jesus is a life with has a solid foundation for walking in the spirit. Without this foundation, the other fruit of the spirit would never fully mature. Strive to learn, feel, express and live God's love. By so doing, open the door for true spiritual growth. Love as our spiritual fruitage is the foundation for everything else.



*a newly-produced gladness
based on selfless love and spiritual things*

Joy means cheerfulness or calm delight. Unfortunately, true and lasting joy is a rare experience in our world.

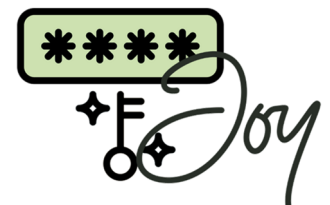
The idea of joy being a fruit of God's spirit implies that this joy should be always accessible and ever-inspiring:

John 15:11: (NASB) *These things I have spoken to you so that my **joy <5479>** may be in you, and that your **joy <5479>** may be made full.*

Joy: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5479 *chará*; calm delight: gladness

Here, Jesus taught his disciples about joy the night before his crucifixion. He says, *that my joy may be in you.* Yet, at that point he was not outwardly joyful. He had the steady joy of God within him that drove him to accept and work through the tremendous stress, trauma and trial he was about to face. Joy is not just an outward emotion; it is something inward that sustains us.

As a fruit of the spirit, joy is unlocked when we embrace the love of God as a basis for our lives and dwell in the magnitude of His plan.



Joy is a natural byproduct of the spirit, as there can be no other response to such a wise, just and loving plan. If it does not produce joy in us, we do not have its proper understanding. In our daily Christian experiences, we need to allow the joy of God's plan to live, breathe and grow, even when our trials are raging.



*a newly-produced harmony
based on selfless love and spiritual things*

Peace means peace (literally or figuratively), harmony, security and prosperity.

*On the night before his crucifixion,
Jesus comforted his disciples in four ways:*

- 1** He promised **God's spirit** would guide them
- 2** He encouraged them to **love** one another as he loved them
- 3** He gave them his **joy** by teaching them
- 4** He gave them his **peace**

John 14:27: (NASB) **Peace <1515>** I leave with you; my **peace <1515>** I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Peace: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1515 *eirene*; peace (literally or figuratively); by implication, prosperity: one, peace, quietness, rest

Love, joy and peace begin the list of the fruit of the spirit. That night, on the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus' focus was to teach them about the holy spirit and love, joy and peace. The Apostle Paul recognized this focus and wrote about it so that we could read, understand and appreciate these teachings.

Love is such a strong foundation with joy growing out of it because we understand God's plan and His love for us.

Joy is not just an emotional, short-term reaction; it is an internal contentedness that brings a peace that few can comprehend:

Philippians 4:7: (NASB) *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

The fruit of the spirit will *guard your hearts and minds*. It is the fruit of God's spirit within us, and it takes work to get ourselves out of the way so that the fruit of God's spirit has a place to grow.

We are thankful to see these lessons Jesus so lovingly gave to his disciples. Then to have Paul write about them is such a blessing for us!

EP. #1257  **Developed based upon selfless love** → *patience, kindness, goodness*

As we move forward to the next batch of fruit, we can stand firmly and eagerly on the foundation of love, joy and peace.

**The next fruit of the spirit is patience.
Didn't Jesus tell us, "In your patience, possess ye your souls"?**

While Jesus did tell us that in Luke 21:19, it is important to realize that the patience or endurance Jesus spoke of there was different than the patience or longsuffering that Paul spoke about as a fruit of the spirit. The patience referred to in the fruit of the spirit is not as commonly spoken about and has as much to do with restraint as it does waiting. This is not how we normally think of patience.

Focusing on FRUIT



a newly-developed discipline based on selfless love and spiritual things

Patience: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3115 *makrothumia*; (objectively) forbearance or (subjectively) fortitude

Patience: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3116 *makrothumos*; with long (enduring) temper, i.e. leniently



Example of forbearance: When a loan is in forbearance it means either you will either not have to make payments, or you can temporarily make smaller payments. The loan holds back on its required payment schedule. Taking advantage of this is convenient but it certainly does not help you pay back what you owe. During COVID, in the United States, all student loan payments were suspended. They were in forbearance.

Patient: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3114 *makrothumeo*; to be long-spirited, i.e. (objectively) forbearing or (subjectively) patient



Matthew 18:26: (KJV) *The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have **patience** <3114> with me, and I will pay thee all.*

We often read this verse and think it says, "Lord, please go easy on me." The word for *patience* here more properly means to have restraint, do not be angry, have *forbearance*.

In the following parable, Jesus was teaching us about a king who was settling debts, and a servant owed him a great deal.

Why was the servant asking for this? In those days, if you did not pay what you owed, you went straight to prison. There was no negotiation, no leniency - straight to jail. How someone was to pay their bills from jail is a mystery. Forbearance is restraint - holding back on a reaction, rather than holding up under difficult circumstances, which is the more common way we think of patience.

Patience or *longsuffering* here is being defined as a willingness to be non-reactive and appropriate. It also tells us to be willing to wait for a situation to completely unfold, to be disciplined in holding back. This *patience* - this *forbearance*, gives the benefit of the doubt and can only truly be displayed by mankind through a humble spirit.



God's forbearance - His patience - is our primary example: Romans 1 was all about blatant idolatry and sensuality. This is not a fun chapter to read!

In the second chapter, Paul urges Christians to - with "long-enduring tempers" - refrain from judgment without proper cause and place:

Romans 2:1-2,4: (NASB) ¹Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ²And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

It is too easy to just judge! Why hold back? We have several examples of forbearance:



The forbearance of God. We are to forbear because God in His spiritual wisdom forbears. If God shows restraint, we certainly need to learn this:

⁴Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and *patience* <3115>, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?



For God's spirit to produce peace within us, we must be disciplined to rise above our fleshly desires and deeds with a long-tempered approach, to best manage the inconsistencies we see before us.

If anyone can see our inconsistencies, it is God. He sees them in us and can project where they will lead us. When we realize that God has forbearance with us, it is an inspiration for us to develop that kind of restraint.




The forbearance of the prophets. The Hebrew Christians were exhorted to have the forbearance of the prophets in their experiences:

Hebrews 6:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. ¹¹And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹²so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and *patience* <3115> inherit the promises.

Noah is a good example of forbearance. It took Noah and his sons 120 years to build the ark. It is interesting that at the time God gave him the instruction to build the ark with his sons and their wives, he had no children! From this, he knew it would be a long-term endeavor. He was living in a world that had completely gone sour. (We can feel his pain!) We have each other to support us in our time, but Noah did not have anyone. He is told by God he is to build this enormous, unwieldy boat which will float him, his wife, his sons and their wives to safety. But he does not have any family other than his wife at this time.



This is really a good example of restraint, waiting and fortitude. Genesis 6:5 tells us that the sin in that world had come to its full amount, with *every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time*. It would take another 120 years for God to act on it. We certainly see God's forbearance here.

 How often did the prophets have to wait for God's instruction when all seemed so chaotic?



The prophets were always in the midst of some trouble. God always came through, but in His own blessed time, in His restrained way.



The forbearance of the teachers and pastors. Those who are tasked with guiding the Christian flock are especially instructed to have forbearance:

2 Timothy 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great **patience <3115>** and instruction.



I mentioned a few episodes ago that when I'm really focused, I am in what I call a "work mode." Recently, while swimming my laps, I was in a lap pool that was supposed to be for adults only. There were kids with their parents playing in the middle of the lanes not moving or paying attention. Instead of telling them in my usual work mode voice they should not be in the pool, I practiced forbearance by swimming around them time and again.

Rick: Jonathan, it is hard to imagine you doing this! Your laps are important to you, and to be disciplined enough to swim around them (with nobody getting the idea that they should not be in the middle of the lap lanes!) shows a lot of restraint. It was disruptive, yet you held back your anger and frustration. This is a really good example for those of us that hear about this experience later.



Our forbearance. Our forbearance also has to do with waiting for the unfolding of God's plans and prophecies. Such waiting must be with a steady heart and mind:

James 5:7-11: (NASB) ⁷Therefore be **patient <3114>**, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being **patient <3114>** about it, until it gets the early and late rains. ⁸You too be **patient <3114>**; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the judge is standing right at the door.



The farmer had to wait for the process to be accomplished, first with the early rains, and second with the latter rains. Only then could he harvest. The challenge came when the latter rains arrived late. “Well, what if... maybe I should just...” The farmer must have restraint. The crop is there, “Maybe I could harvest,” but he was not supposed to yet.

James is giving us a strong admonition here - to have that same kind of restraint. Waiting for God’s plan to unfold can make us impatient with one another. If we have this lack of forbearance between us, **let us take it as a serious warning sign.**



Again, the prophets are an example:

¹⁰As an example, brethren, of suffering and **patience <3115>**, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹We count those blessed who **endured <5278>**. You have heard of the **endurance <5281>** of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

Endured: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #5278 hypomeno to undergo, bear trials

Endurance: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #5281 hypomone; constancy, patience

Job had lost so much in his life and was miserable when covered in boils. His wife told him to *curse God and die*, but he waited patiently on the LORD. This is a combination of both kinds of patience.

In Verse 10, James speaks of the brethren who have *suffering and patience*. This is the self-restraint, the forbearance we have been discussing. Then he talks about the prophets *who endured*, the other word used for *patience*. This is the patience we usually think of - someone who endured, who held up under the load. This endurance applied to Job. He had restraint as well. He held up under the load and had restraint for his own emotions. And we can see his restraint and his holding up under trial. Both are shown, but the restraint part is that word **patience <3115>** used for the fruit of God’s spirit of patience in us.

Forbearance and *endurance*, both parts of *patience*, go hand-in-hand. All of our examples of patience come back to restraint. God’s example of restraint, the prophets’ restraint, the restraint of those guiding the Christian flock, and our restraint - we need to develop restraint as a fruit of God’s spirit in us.

Rising to a Spiritual Life



As a fruit, patience (proceeding with a long temper) is far more than waiting for a challenge to end. It is a developed discipline. It is watching and waiting with a spiritually-based perspective and responding with a godly response. It is restraining our fleshly reactions and responding with grace and wisdom. No wonder forbearance follows peace as a fruit of the spirit!

If we have the peace of God, it is much easier to be restrained in how we deal with others and with our circumstances. We see the interconnectedness of what the spirit can produce in us if we are willing to allow it to happen.

This kind of restraint gives a different meaning to patience. Such restraint, along with fortitude, is necessary for all of us.

With a healthy dose of major self-restraint in place, what is the next fruitage of God's spirit in our lives?

From love, joy, peace and forbearance the Apostle Paul next brings us to kindness. When we think of something as simple as kindness, we might wonder why it would be listed as fruitage of God's spirit. As with everything else we have discussed, kindness certainly exists within the world. We all likely know people we think are kind, so what is the difference with spiritually-driven kindness? What sets it apart from the simple kindness we see around us?

Next on the list is *kindness* or *gentleness* or *graciousness* (depending on the translation). This aspect of the fruit is right in the middle of the list.



a newly-developed discipline based on selfless love and spiritual things

Kindness: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5544; *chrestotes*; usefulness, i.e. moral excellence (in character or demeanor)

Greek-English Lexicon: 1) moral goodness, integrity 2) benignity, kindness

Root word of Kindness: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5543 *chrestos*; employed, i.e. (by implication) useful (in manner or morals)

Right away we can see a difference from what we would normally expect for *kindness*. Usefulness, moral goodness, moral excellence and integrity keep popping up. The word "integrity" in the *Oxford Languages Dictionary* is defined as honest, whole and undivided.

Strong's Concordance & Greek-English Lexicon	Merriam Webster Online dictionary
Kindness: moral excellence, integrity	Kind: to be of a sympathetic or helpful nature
The added dimension here is simple. It is not only about sympathy and helpfulness, but also about morality and integrity.	

This is kindness with a profound depth that drives it and means much more than being nice.

First, let's realize that the only appropriate example of true moral integrity comes from above:

Romans 3:9-12: (NASB) ⁹What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰as it is written, There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; ¹²all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does **good <5544>** (this is the same word as “kindness”), there is not even one.

Romans 3:23: (NASB) *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*



For God's spirit to produce kindness or moral integrity within us, we must model ourselves after God and Jesus, which means having a higher example than anyone or anything earthly.

Nobody does *good* except God Himself and Jesus. Jesus, as a perfect man and as a spirit being, did good, because he was always doing the will of God. They set a very high standard. It is a standard of integrity and moral excellence that does not waver. This is what we need to aspire to by letting the fruit of God's spirit grow in us.



How do we do this?



It takes frequent assessments of how we are doing. Asking ourselves: “How am I doing in moral integrity?” Is the answer: “Well, pretty good.”

That is not good enough with moral integrity. Either we are on target, or we miss the mark.



We have to let God's spirit guide us to higher levels of moral integrity. To purify metals like gold, they are heated until the dross or impurities rise to the top. These are dipped out, over and over, until the liquid metal is clear. We need to use the same method to purify our actions, frequently reassessing our motives and our integrity. This is the process of getting ourselves out and letting God's spirit come in.

In Paul's letter to Titus, he gives us a lesson in identifying the kind of moral integrity we should have:

Titus 3:1-7: (NLT) ¹Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. ²They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.

This true humility is setting the groundwork of integrity. We cannot have godly integrity without true humility. We need to have humility to invite this kindness into our lives.



The attitude Paul has described is one of forbearance - having moral restraint - to find the good in whatever circumstance we are in. This, in turn, opens the door to this level of moral excellence and goodness.

Paul reminds us of what and where we came from:

³Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other.

He is saying: “This is where we were.” The Apostle Paul knew this because he had been there as well! He is writing this with authority.

As unrighteous and immoral as any of us may have been, God’s own moral integrity changed it:



⁴But—when God our Savior revealed His **kindness <5544>** (moral integrity) and love, ⁵He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the holy spirit. ⁶He generously poured out the spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our savior. ⁷Because of His grace He declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.

See how God reveals His kindness, His moral excellence, His integrity and love to save us - not because we were good, *but because of His mercy.*



How did God do this?

He did it two ways:

-  Through Jesus Christ our Savior - that opened the door.
-  He generously poured out His spirit - which develops our integrity if we let it.

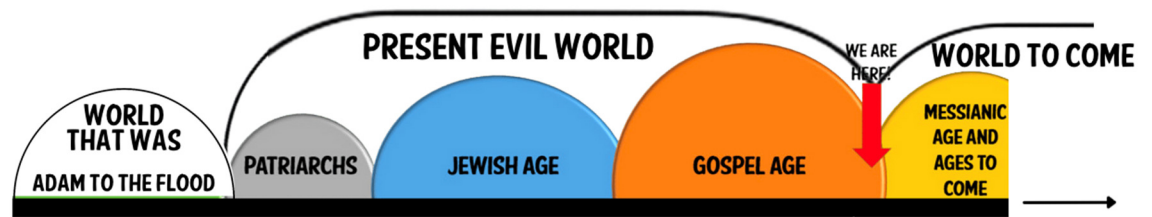
We must realize that we can either get IN the way, stopping God’s progress in our life, or we can get OUT of the way so His progress can overtake our life. Which way should we pick? Too often we get stuck because we do not have true humility.

God’s integrity is not only a model for us now, but will shine out even more later:

Ephesians 2:5-7: (NASB) ⁵even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in **kindness <5544>** (moral integrity) toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ages to come - this is something that is difficult to comprehend. We live in a small, finite amount of time. We live during the age of the Gospel message going forth, for about the last 2,000 years. Before that was the age of Israel’s favor. Prior to that was the age of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), and prior to that was the time before the Flood.

These time periods represent over 6,000 years of human history. Over *ages to come*, thousands and thousands of years, we will see God's kindness and experience, His moral excellence and integrity.



Our moral excellence and integrity is not a stand-alone fruit of the spirit.

- It is a developed discipline of spirituality that only comes as a result of God's influence and power.
- It needs a foundation of selfless love, which focuses us on others and not ourselves.
- It needs forbearance and restraint so we can respond spiritually and not react in a fleshly manner.



These are all other aspects of fruit of the spirit. There is the spirit of God which produces the fruit. It is easy to spend five episodes on these fruit because there is such a depth and connectedness to so many aspects of our characters. For instance, kindness is not just simple kindness, but includes moral excellence and integrity. It is life-changing! How do we place these in the front of our lives instead of somewhere in the background?

Moral excellence and integrity are necessary as we represent the sacredness of the gospel to all:

2 Corinthians 6:3-10: (NASB) ³giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

We need to understand how big this is and be sure we do not ever discredit what we are tasked to represent in Christ.

⁴but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

Paul speaks of never discrediting the beauty of the gospel by our character. Our character has to enhance, not discredit. Paul lists these incomprehensible hardships he endured that we can barely understand, but he lived through!

Paul has just listed the hardships of his life and now lists the ways he conquered them:

⁶in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in **kindness <5544>** (moral integrity), in the holy spirit, in genuine love, ⁷in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,

We have that moral integrity right in the middle of this list. This is what Paul stood for. By standing for the highest things, we do not corrupt the goodness of God's plan and the gospel.

He now lists the seeming contradictions in life. These contradictions need integrity to keep them in balance:

⁸by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; ⁹as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, ¹⁰as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

In every one of these, Paul applies the integrity of God - taking something that looks bad but making it good. That is what the fruit of God's spirit did working in Paul's life.

Rising to a Spiritual Life



As a fruit, kindness holds a deep and powerful meaning. It is clearly based upon the moral excellence that came from God and was exemplified in Jesus' daily human life. This level of excellence is not a human trait but is a discipline developed through living in selfless love and applying the previous fruit of long-tempered forbearance. God is glorified when we strive for such excellence!

We never would have thought that *kindness* could have such a profoundly spiritual meaning. This is something to strive for.

**Moral excellency and integrity pave the way for many things.
What is the next fruit of God's spirit?**

Living with integrity and moral excellence changes everything. When we are dealing with someone who has no integrity, we have no barometer to measure that person's thoughts and reactions. This results in the reaping of doubt and suspicion. However, when we are dealing with someone who has a clear integrity about them, we immediately reap confidence and trust. Why? Because **integrity provokes goodness**. This happens from the person with the integrity, but it frequently provokes goodness from those around that person because of their clear, pure example.

Focusing on FRUIT



a newly-developed discipline based
on selfless love and spiritual things

Goodness: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #19 *agathosune*; goodness,
i.e. virtue or beneficence

Greek-English Lexicon: 1. uprightness of heart and life, goodness, kindness

Good: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #18 *agathos*; a primary word; "good"
(in any sense, often as noun):--benefit, good(-s, things), well

Virtue

/ˈvɜːtʃuː/

noun:

a conformity to a standard of right

Beneficent

/bəˈnefəsənt/

adjective:

doing or producing good to others
with generosity

Virtue and beneficence are not possible without integrity - **kindness <5544>**.

Goodness needs moral excellence and kindness. The root word is general but is sometimes used with a spiritual meaning.

God brings good:

Romans 8:28: (NASB) *And we know that God causes all things to work together for **good <18>** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

We are to bring good to all:

Galatians 6:9-10: (NASB) *⁹Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity, let us do **good <18>** to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

*We know that God causes all things to work together for **good** to those who love God. Such simplicity brings such a powerful meaning! We also are to do good to all people. Just like the word fruit, "good" is a simple word, but it sums up our life - this is where we are supposed to be. We are supposed to be like God. It is the fruit of His spirit growing in our lives.*



For God's spirit to produce goodness within us, we must be in tune with what God through Jesus defines as goodness and strive to bring nothing less than His standard. It all starts with selfless love.

It always begins with selfless love because God IS love! The fruit of the spirit are aspects of our heavenly Father's character reflected in us.



Goodness comes when we allow ourselves to be filled by God through His spirit with joy and peace:

Romans 15:13-14: (NASB) ¹³Now may the God of hope fill you with all **joy <5479>** and **peace <1515>** in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the holy spirit.

Paul now adds one of the fruits that we must develop, based on joy and peace:

¹⁴And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of **goodness <19>**, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

On the surface it seems like this is saying: “You are such good people. Just so nice!” However, there is so much more to goodness - it is uprightness of heart and life. Virtue that conforms to the standard of right. Beneficence that is doing and producing good with generosity. This is much more than just being nice. It is the evidence of God’s spirit in our lives. It pushes us to action.

God’s goodness is a template for what true goodness stands for - it is the highest standard for which we can strive:

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12: (KJV) ¹¹Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his **goodness <19>**, and the work of faith with power: ¹²That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God’s integrity to us is expressed by our privilege to fulfill the *good pleasure of His goodness*, of His virtue, of His beneficence, of His uprightness in heart and life.

We see our part:

Philippians 2:12-13: (NASB) ¹²So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

God is at work in you - by giving us His spirit.



WHAT IS HIS SPIRIT?

HIS POWER AND INFLUENCE.

He is giving us this part of Him so we can work His good pleasure. As incredible as this may seem, it is what He gives us the opportunity to do!

Luke 12:32: (KJV) Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Who could possibly be more blessed than those given the fruit of God’s spirit to develop their character? *It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* God’s goodness clearly shines in His joy over His plan for humanity. It is in God’s character to take more satisfaction over the giving of the gift of His plan than over the receiving of any gift from us.



This is the good pleasure of our goodness:

Ephesians 5:8-13: (NASB) ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all **goodness <19>** and righteousness and truth),

We were once in darkness, now we are children of light, and the fruit of the light... is goodness and righteousness and truth.

¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

This is why Paul gave us the two lists in Galatians 5. He understood the human condition. This shows us how God's character is its remedy, and we must apply His spirit and allow it to grow in us.

¹²for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

We have to stay sound and clear and focused on goodness.

To develop the discipline of a life lived in spiritual goodness:

- 💡 Realize that you are now a child of light
- 💡 Know what God expects of those who are children of light
- 💡 Expose darkness through God's light

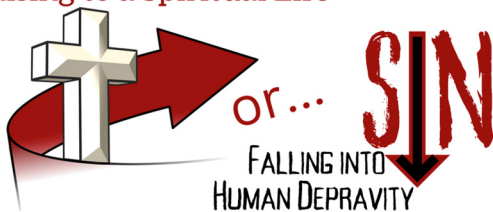


It is appropriate to discuss the contrast of light with dark deeds along with the fruit of goodness. Goodness is the application of integrity and is about being a child of light. We are not children of light because we, of ourselves, are so good or virtuous with a nice character. It is because we are dwelling in the righteousness Jesus bought for us and have God's spirit working within us.

Romans 2:6-7: (NASB) ⁶(God)...will render to each person according to his deeds: ⁷to those who by perseverance in doing **good <18>** seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

What does *doing good* bring? Glory and honor and immortality. There is no better gift offered to any being, human or spirit! There is no higher plane of existence. God's character has to be able to shine through us. Our goodness is an important reflection of Him.

Rising to a Spiritual Life



As a fruit of the spirit, goodness stands upon the development of the long temper of patience and growing the moral excellence of kindness. This virtue, this uprightness of heart and life, is the outward expression of forbearance and integrity. It cannot exist without patience and kindness. All three of these fruits could not be functional without selfless love as a foundation. We are tasked with learning and applying patience, kindness and goodness from the inside out. That is what Jesus did.



We keep going back to the character of God, and we should. The life of Jesus was built around accomplishing the will of God. Therefore, he was the shining example of the character of God. Goodness is right in the middle of all of this!

Galatians 5:22-23: (NASB) ²²*But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³*gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**



In the Episode 1258, the final one in this series, we examine faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. They are the final result of selfless love...and a maturing Christian life.



While these three pieces will complete the Apostle Paul's list, they also represent the beginning of our journey to a fuller Christian life!

This episode has been about patience, kindness and goodness - understanding self-restraint and moral excellency, as well as the virtue that stands on moral excellency is the character of God. Christians have the opportunity to let God's character shine through our lives. What are we doing about that?

*So, do I walk in the spirit of the lusts of my human nature?
For Jonathan and Rick, and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on December 5, 2022

Ep. 1258: Do I Walk in the Spirit or the Lust
of My Human Nature? (Part V)

Bonus Material and Study Questions



Will someone else's life be brighter tomorrow because of what you have done today? – William Arthur Ward

An example of goodness or virtue performed by the Apostle Paul and goodness anticipated:

Philemon 1:17-22: (NASB) ¹⁷If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. ¹⁸But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account; ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well). ²⁰Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say. ²²At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

Virtue begets virtue!

Here are a few more scriptures:

Philippians 1:9-11: (NASB) ⁹And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Romans 12:9-21: (NASB) ⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. ²⁰But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1257: Do I Walk in the Spirit or the Lusts of My Human Nature? (Part IV)

See:  CQRewind
SHOW NOTES

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1257-patience-kindness-goodness/>

All questions are based on the fruit of the spirit list of Galatians 5:16-23

1. What is the foundation for all the fruit of the spirit? Describe the type of love that God and Jesus have for us. Why is it important we also develop this love? (See John 15:12)
2. How is true joy different from the fleeting joy of emotion? What causes us to develop the type of joy that steadied Jesus during his terrible trials? How did Jesus comfort his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion? What brings you true joy? (See John 15:11, 14:27)
3. What does the internal contentment of joy bring us? What does it do for us? Can you draw the connection between love, joy and peace? Where are you content and discontent in your life? (See Philippians 4:7, John 14:27)
4. Explain the definitions of patience, longsuffering and forbearance. Why do we want to develop forbearance? (See Matthew 18:26, Romans 2:1-4)
5. Consider these further examples of patience or self-restraint: a. How did the prophets show patience or forbearance? Why did they need it? (See Hebrews 6:10-12) b. Why is it necessary for the pastors of the Christian flock to develop patience? (2 Timothy 4:1-2) c. To whom should we be careful to have patience? (See James 5:7-9) d. How does Job embody the other meaning of patience - “endurance”? Is this also an important trait for us to develop as Christians? Why? (See James 5:10-11)
6. How do the words “usefulness, moral goodness, moral excellence and integrity” deepen the meaning of simple kindness? How do we produce kindness or moral integrity within ourselves? Who must we emulate? What practices will help with this? (See Romans 3:9-12, 23, Titus 3:1-2) What do we need within ourselves in order to develop kindness? How does God change our unrighteousness and immorality? Why does He do this? How long will God “show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”? (See Titus 3:3-7, Ephesians 2:5-7)
7. Which three things help our development of moral excellence and integrity? Why are these important if we are Christians? How did Paul conquer the hardships he encountered? (2 Corinthians 6:3-10)
8. Integrity in our lives provokes what in ourselves and even in those around us? Define virtue and beneficence. In what ways is “good” associated with God? What does this mean for us? (See Romans 8:28, Galatians 6:9-10)
9. How does goodness connect with joy and peace? How do we fulfill the good pleasure of God? (See Romans 15:13-14, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, Philippians 2:12-13, Luke 12:32)
10. What is the good pleasure of our goodness? What are the admonitions of Ephesians 5:8-13? What does “doing good” bring to the Christian? Explain. (See Romans 2:6-7)
11. How does God’s character shine through your life? What can you work on within yourself to better reflect God?