



Living Walking Serving

FAITH AND GRACE CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY NOTE ON

THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER – THE HOLY SPIRIT (Joel 2:28-32, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5, 2:1-4, 2:16-21)

STUDY 19-15: THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS & SELF - CONTROL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Gal.5:22, Phil.2:13, Heb. 11, Mark 6:1-6, 2Cor.5:7, Rom.1:17, 6:1, Isa. 55:9, 2 Tim. 2:24-25, Matt.18:23-35, Phil.1:15-18, John 3:30, Gal.5:1, 6:1, Matt.11:29, 21:5,

INTRODUCTION

The fruit of the Spirit is the change in our character that comes about because of the Holy Spirit's work in us. We do not become a Christian on our own, and we cannot grow on our own. Philippians 2:13 says that "it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Every good thing we do is the fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives.

The last of the trios of the fruit of the Spirit is focused on Man's relationship with himself: faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

A. THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness, the seventh of the fruit of the Spirit, means steadfastness, constancy, or allegiance; it is carefulness in keeping what we are entrusted with; it is the conviction that the Scriptures accurately reflect reality. Biblical faithfulness requires belief in what the Bible says about God—His existence, His works, and His character.

Hebrews 11 gives a long list of faithful men and women in the Old Testament who trusted God. In that list is the example of Enoch, who "obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (vs. 5b-6). Faith, or a faithful commitment to who God says He is, is basic to walking with God. As Jesus traveled, He responded to people's faith and curtailed His involvement where there was no faith (Mark 6:1-6).

Enoch understood that God rewards those who seek Him and trust Him with all their hearts. We trust what God *does* because we trust *Him*, not the other way around. In other words, we trust God even when He is silent and we see no miracles. That is part of faithfulness. We know God is reliable, steadfast, and true.

In Heb. 3:5-6, we see the faithfulness of Jesus as a Son and that of Moses a servant of God. faithfulness is an attributed required of believer as stewards of God 1Cor.4:2.

Faithfulness is believing that God is Who He says He is and continuing in that belief despite the unpredictable changes of life. Functionally, that means we trust what God says in the Bible, and not necessarily what the world or our own eyes tell us 2Cor.5:7, Rom.1:17. We trust He will work out everything for good. We trust He will work His will in us. And we trust that our situation on earth is nothing compared to our future reward in heaven. The only way we can have such faith is by the Holy Spirit's influence. He testifies to the truth and impels us to seek God. The Spirit makes us faithful.

THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – GENTLENESS

Gentleness, also translated "meekness," does not mean weakness. Rather, it involves humility and thankfulness toward God, and polite, restrained behavior toward others. The opposites of gentleness are anger, a desire for revenge, and self-aggrandizement.

God wants us to give Him control of our lives. Human power under human control is like a half-

broken weapon in the hands of a child. But gentleness places our strength under God's guidance; it is a powerful tool for God's kingdom.

Every person is powerful. We can speak words that influence others; we can act in ways that help or hurt. Gentleness constrains and channels that power. To be gentle is to recognize that God's ways and thoughts are high above our own (Isaiah 55:9).

It is to our advantage to have a gentle attitude toward God because He is omniscient and we are not. God knows everything of the past, present, and future (1 John 3:20)

When we are filled with the Spirit's fruit of gentleness, we will correct others with easiness instead of arguing in resentment and anger, knowing that their salvation is far more important than our pride (2 Timothy 2:24-25). We will forgive readily, because any offense toward us is nothing compared to our offenses against God—offenses He's already forgiven (Matthew 18:23-35).

Competition and sectarianism will disappear, as the goal becomes less about ourselves and more about preaching the gospel (Philippians 1:15-18). John the Baptist was a fiery preacher, yet he evinced true gentleness when he said, "[Jesus] must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30).

To live in a spirit of gentleness toward God is to accept His judgment on people and issues. We tend to think it is gentle to go easy on people and try to justify actions that God has called sin. Or to let someone continue in sin without speaking the truth. But Paul says, "If anyone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1). This doesn't mean to be so soft that the sinner doesn't realize he's sinned. It means to confront the brother in a manner that is in line with Scripture—to be mild, loving, encouraging, and clear about the holiness that God calls us to.

Jesus our master is gentle (Matthew 11:29, 21:5), and now He offers us His gentleness as a gift. If we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, we will be filled with fruit of gentleness.

C. THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – SELF-CONTROL

The last characteristic listed in Galatians 5:22-23 as a fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

Self-control ("temperance" in the KJV) is, of course, the ability to control oneself. It involves moderation, constraint, and the ability to say "no" to our baser desires and fleshly lusts.

One of the proofs of God's working in our lives is the ability to control our own thoughts, words, and actions. It's not that we are naturally weak-willed. But our fallen nature is under the influence of sin. The Bible calls it being a "slave to sin" (Romans 6:6).

When we are saved by Christ's sacrifice, we are free (Galatians 5:1). That liberty includes, among other things, freedom from sin. "Our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Romans 6:6). Now, as the Spirit gives us self-control, we can refuse sin.

In summary, if we let the Holy Spirit control our lives, our relationship with God will be filled with **love, joy** and **peace**. Our relationship with others will be an exemplary relationship controlled by **longsuffering, kindness** and **goodness**. Also, our relationship with ourselves will be brimming with the confidence of **faith, gentleness** and **self-control**. How blessed is the man who gives the Holy Spirit the chance to possess his heart and reign over his life in order to bear such great fruit!

NEXT: THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EARLY CHURCH (A BOOK STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES)