

## *“Living By the Spirit” Pt 4*

**Christian Liberty**

Galatians 5:16-26

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**Bruce:** Men, thank you very much. You’re very gracious. This is going to bless many people, and most of all it’s going to honor the Lord. So thank you very much.

**Participant:** You’re a blessing to us.

**Bruce:** Well thank you, sir. I want to thank Bishop Rodgers and Sig for filling in for me. I trust the Lord was pleased to honor Himself and I know He was because of these great messages, and I’m very, very grateful that this is a team effort. You know, ministry is never one way. For someone who teaches there always has to be somebody who listens and learns. And so we’re very grateful for Bishop Rodgers and the other men who teach, and how thankful I am. Let’s just pray and ask the Lord to go before us. Don? *(Music)* Rejoice, rejoice, O Immanuel! Father, we thank You that You are with us. Thank You, Father, for Your mercy and Your grace. Father, with all the difficulties that are going on in this world, we know that You are the sovereign ruler of the universe. And so we entrust all the difficulties and the consternations we have to You. Father, we pray that You would once again be gracious to us today. Have Your Holy Spirit be our teacher. And may we open our eyes by Your grace, to see You more clearly for Jesus’ sake. Amen and Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Bruce:** I’m coming down with the flu or a cold or something like that. And so bear with me and my voice today.

I never got sick till I married a pediatrician. *(Laughter)* She brings all those childhood diseases home. And I get ‘em. *(Laughter)* She has an immune system that’s built up after forty years. But I get ‘em all the time. So I’m coming down with something. We’ll find out what it is.

Then I say, “Becky, can you take care of me?”

She says, “You’re too big of a baby to take care of.” *(Laughter.)* Go see an adult doctor. *(Laughter)* So bear with me today, men. My voice is going. Perhaps I can last it out a little bit.

Let’s turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of Galatians. What I’d like to do today, men, is to quickly review the fruit of the Spirit which we dealt with three weeks ago. And then I want to summarize and just give you some insight from what we’ve learned so far in the first five chapters of the book of Galatians, dealing with Christian freedom and the liberty we have in Christ—just some summary insights to give us a review of what we’ve learned so far.

One of the things that’s so important when we study the Scripture is the concept of repetition. You’ll notice the number of times that the Scriptures repeat the same thought with different packaging. But it’s always the same concept. And so what we need to do is just to remind ourselves of the repetition of some of the things that we’re learning, because remember this. As we’ve said before, learning should not stop at knowledge. Learning should lead to living. And living should lead to loving. So we need to repeat

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some things. We’re going to do a quick review. And then if we have time, we’ll give you some time to ask any questions you might have on what we’ve been learning about freedom in Christ. Then we’ll pick it up next week in our next time, following up on the message that Bishop Rodgers gave us on the first couple of verses of chapter six, and we’ll pick it up after that.

So let’s go and listen to the Word read for us from the English Standard Version. Galatians chapter five, beginning at verse 16 and reading through the 26<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter five.

*“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

*“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Bruce:** Amen and Amen. Paul is describing for us new life in Christ. Early in chapter five he described for us the old life of a nonbeliever. It’s basically described thusly. It is a self-absorbed life of greed, superstition and jealousy. It is marked by wrong sexual relationships, misguided religion, constant strife and destructive habits. These attitudes are so alien to Jesus that they will keep us from entering His kingdom.

Now that’s what he describes about the system of this world. The word *world* is translated many different ways in the Scripture, and its context is how you define it. The word *world* does not mean the people of this world, individuals. It’s talking about the system that is against God, a system that is anti-God, anti-Christ.

But Paul also tells us that there is a new life that awaits us in our salvation in Christ. And this is the life that the Holy Spirit produces and inspires. And Paul calls the qualities of this life that is led by the Spirit “the fruit of the Spirit.”

Now I want you to notice in verse 19 and verse 20, in that section I just read, that there’s a principle of singularity. Now notice. Now the fruit of the Spirit in verse 22 is singular, in contrast to the works of the flesh in verse 19 which are plural.

Now go back and look at verse 19. Now notice that in verse 19 there’s a little phrase which is oftentimes overlooked at the reading of all this. And notice verse 21. *“Envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like these.”*

Now I’m assuming that this little phrase “things like these” is not suggesting that this is a complete list. There are other things that can go on in this. He’s just describing an overview, a quick summary, of what the world is about. But he uses that phrase “and

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things like these.” We need to understand that this means that this is not a complete list. There are other things that the world will direct us into.

What he’s trying to teach us is this. The system of this world is going to move you in that direction of plurality, all the various things the system of the world thrusts upon us. And you’ll notice now when we get to the list of the fruit of the Spirit that he uses the same phrase. “Against such things there is no law.”

My assumption, then, is that this is also not a complete list. It’s a general list of the characteristics of Christ. The system of this world in its plurality always points us to the evil of the world. The fruit of the Spirit always points us to the character of Christ. “Against such things there is no law.”

So this is not a complete list of these nine issues, saying that if you master these nine things you’re copacetic. All your responsibilities are over. He’s basically saying that this is moving you in the direction of Christ.

In fact, once I did a study several years ago that Christ taught His disciples sixty-two different character qualities. Many of those are listed here, but some of them are not.

So this is not a complete list. It’s basically saying this. What is the direction of your life? Is it moving in the plurality of the sinful nature and the system of this world? Or is it moving in the singularity of moving into the fruit of the Spirit-led life?

Now this idea of *fruit* is a one-time thing. It does not mean that with these nine descriptions he has that you need to go out and make sure that you’re doing all nine of these. The word *fruit* is singular, which means that it’s collective. This is a typical description of a Christian who has these nine elements. But it’s one fruit manifested in nine different ways.

And that ought to give us some relief in the fact that I don’t have to go out and make sure that I master these nine things. It is produced by the Holy Spirit. And it’s evidenced and demonstrated in your life in nine different ways.

Now that ought to give us some great assurance. First of all, it’s an indication that God is at work in your life. When you begin to see the fruit which is manifested in these nine different expressions of character, when you begin to see that evidence in your life, it’s an indication that the Holy Spirit is resident and that you have true saving faith. So the first thing it indicates is that it gives us the assurance of our salvation, and I see evidence in my life that something’s happening.

Now remember that the assurance of salvation is always a present tense reality. The assurance of salvation is not past tense verbs. It’s not something I did twenty years ago that gives me my salvation. The evidence is that when I wake up today I see fruit. I see evidence of the salvation of Christ’s work in my life through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I see evidence of that. That gives me the assurance of my increased righteousness.

The other way in which we have the assurance of our salvation is *the Scripture promises*. If you repent and believe, you will be saved. We understand that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Scripture promises that we also have this assurance.

And the third assurance of our salvation is *the work of the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit works with your spirit . You just know because you know because you know.

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Now one of the evidences of the fruit of the Spirit is the assurance of your salvation. Do you see the movement of your life into the singular character of Christ, described by these nine different expressions? If you see that, that’s an indication that God is at work in your life. Yes, Ted?

**Ted:** Could I have you go through those three points again?

**Bruce:** Of the assurance of salvation? Sure. The assurance of salvation is described Scripturally by three descriptions. First of all, *Scripture promises*. The promises of Scripture are that if you repent and believe you are saved. Now that’s a Scripture promise. You can trust that promise.

It’s not something that you earn; it’s something that you trust. The word *believe* means to rely upon, depend upon, trust and adhere to. So the first evidence is the Scripture promises that say that you’re saved.

Now there is a movement of Christianity that basically says that this is the only assurance of salvation. It basically says, “Well, the Scripture says you are and you are.” And they eliminate the two other possibilities.

The second evidence of Scriptural assurance of salvation is *the work of the Holy Spirit working with your spirit*. You just know because you know, because the Holy Spirit is working with your spirit. Because of His regeneration in our lives He works with us, and you know because you know.

Now you may not be able to describe it. But you know because you know because the Spirit has given that. You have the willingness to will and the willingness to be obedient. That’s the work of the Holy Spirit. You see evidence of that. The Holy Spirit just convicts your own spirit that you are in Christ. That’s a present tense reality.

And the third one is *increased righteousness* evidenced by fruit, by the fruit of the Spirit. That’s what He’s producing in us. Just like the system of this world moves us into the many pluralities of the evil of this world, the Holy Spirit moves us into one direction, that is, to the character of Christ. He moves us in the direction of the character of Christ. And when you see that as evidenced by the fruit described by these nine different character qualities, when you begin to see that you have the realization that the Holy Spirit is at work in you.

So the first thing we see when we understand the whole concept of the fruit of the Spirit is the assurance of our salvation.

The second thing is this. *It identifies where God is*. Where the fruit is, God is, because the fruit is produced by God Himself. There’s evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. God is at work and you see that in your life. You and I go into the system of this world bearing fruit. And what we’re doing is that we’re giving people evidence of where God is because He is resident within us. We are now the temple of the Holy Spirit. With the entrance of the Holy Spirit in our lives He dwells in us. He is our God and we are His people. And as a result of that, it’s an indication of where God resides. He resides where?

**Participant:** In us.

**Bruce:** In us! Now that’s the understanding of the fruit, a general perspective. It gives us the assurance of our salvation. And it identifies to the world where God exists, where God is real, where God lives.

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So it's very important to understand the concept of plurality of the system of this world that moves us into the multiplicity of the things the world produces in us, and the concept of the singularity that moves us in the direction of the character of Christ.

Now let's just quickly review some of these nine evidences of the fruit. And remember, it's one single fruit. So we're not going out and saying, "Well, I need to go get this one. I need to go out and get that one." They're all together. It's an evidence of the expression of your life because it is the work of the Holy Spirit, evidence where God is at work in you. *"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, because God is at work in you."* When you see the fruit, it's evidence of the fact that God is at work in you. Let's quickly look at some of these.

Now first of all, the standard that Christ sets for us is such a high standard that it can only be produced by the Holy Spirit. Christ's standard is that if you do not exceed the work of the Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Only the Holy Spirit can produce the life that will match that high standard.

So let's take a look, first of all, at *love*. This is the supreme gift. The definition I gave you a couple of weeks ago is this. I'll just read it again. It's a strong nonsexual affection and regard for a person and his good, as understood by God's moral character. In other words, God's moral character defines what love is. We do not. It's a strong nonsexual affection and regard for a person and his good, as understood by God's moral character, especially characterized by a willing forfeiture of rights or privileges in another person's behalf.

Let me give you that last portion. As understood by God's moral character, especially characterized by a willing forfeiture of rights or privileges in another person's behalf. In other words, it means this. You're doing the right thing for the right reason for the person. We forfeit our own rights. We forfeit our own anticipations and expectations for the benefit of someone else.

Now isn't that exactly what Christ did for us? That's what love is. That's the supreme gift.

God always defines love in terms of self-sacrifice. Love is meeting the basic needs of others without motive or personal reward. Now men, how often can you do that? We can't ever do it apart from what? Being led by the Holy Spirit. It is a Spirit-led manifestation of the presence of God and the Spirit-led manifestation of your salvation assurance when you begin to love like that, because that is something that is not natural. It is not according to the system of this world. It is supernatural. It is produced by God alone. We cannot manufacture that. Yes, sir?

**Participant:** What's the difference between someone who doesn't know Christ or is in Christ in his ability to love another versus a Christian's ability to love for the reasons you just stated?

**Bruce:** A good question. I would summarize it by one of my Puritan favorites who makes this statement. "You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving." That's the difference. There are people in this world who can give, but they're not doing it out of love. They're doing it for ulterior motives. My definition here is that it is without ulterior motives and expectations of reward. They're doing it without motives or

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expectations of reward. The believer can give, but you’ll always be loving. The nonbeliever can give without loving, but a believer cannot love without giving. Yes, Don?

**Don:** I touched on this, Bruce, when I taught a little bit on the fruit of the Spirit about three or four weeks ago, something like that.

**Bruce:** Good.

**Don:** I guess the question I have is that there are people in this world who really seem to be just such nice, pleasant people to be around, who put me to shame I know, and put some other Christians to shame. How do we explain that. Maybe this is the same question that Sig is raising. What is the difference between that and the fruit of the Spirit?

**Bruce:** One is by choice. The other is produced by the Spirit.

**Don:** Okay.

**Bruce:** They choose to do that in their own resources of their own lives. But it doesn’t match the standard of what the Scripture says that love is. It doesn’t match the standard. Remember, it’s according to God’s moral character. They don’t have God’s moral character.

Now they can give, but they may not be loving. But a believer cannot love without giving because it is produced by the Spirit.

When I hear that question asked, the real question for me is that it ought to say this. Are the Christians really loving correctly with God’s moral character? You see, some of us don’t do that. Sometimes the world puts us to shame. And woe to us, men, if that’s the system of this world! The people who are not in Christ put us to shame by loving more effectively. They don’t meet the standard of God’s moral character. But that ought to put us to shame. We need to be the ones who are outloving them. And yet we see people who are not in Christ loving as the world would define it.

The critical issue for me is that love is an expression of God’s moral character, and the world does not have that. They might do something externally that’s an act of love as the world would define it, but it doesn’t meet with God’s moral character. Again, I just summarized it. Yes, Ted?

**Ted:** I think that when we ask that question, we’re focusing on the secondary manifestations.

**Bruce:** Right.

**Ted:** And there is no question that there are worldly people who do not have the Spirit and are not regenerated who actually manifest love better than we do. The difference between the two is that in the worldly person the origin of that love is not Christ.

**Bruce:** Correct.

**Ted:** When we love, it’s not us loving. It’s Christ loving through us. So the only love that counts in the end, the only action that ever counts in the end, is that which comes out of Christ Himself who lives within us.

**Bruce:** Amen.

**Ted:** To me, that’s the difference, because if you compare these secondary manifestations of that love, they often do a better job than we do.

**Bruce:** Yes. Amen. Well said, Ted. Thank you. Yes, please?

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**Participant:** Just one thing to add to that. Francis Schaeffer’s book, *The Mark of the Christian*, is an exposition of John 13:34-35.

**Bruce:** Correct.

**Participant:** He points out that Christian love is visible, which is very important. So it’s not just what you feel. It’s what you do.

**Bruce:** That’s right.

**Participant:** As I gave my definition, it’s a nonsexual affection. It’s something that is produced by Christ loving through us. And remember John 13:34-35. “*A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you.*” There’s the difference.

The person of the world does not understand “as I have loved you.” Our motivation is a gratitude and expression of obedience, a love response in obedience for the fact that we know how much God has loved us.

And so that would mean this. If you have a tough time loving somebody, what do you need to do?

**Participant:** Pray.

**Bruce:** Well certainly pray. But go back and look at how much Christ loves you.

**Participant:** Amen!

**Bruce:** That’s what you do, because the way we are to love is how Christ loved us. If I don’t understand how much Christ loves me, I have no hope of loving somebody. Carl?

**Carl:** And if you’ve got the love of Christ, that’s going to be the driving motivation.

**Bruce:** Amen.

**Carl:** And so you’ve got to ask yourself, “What is my motivation for doing this?” What love am I showing? Is it manipulation to get something back? Or is it motivated by the love of Christ in me?

**Bruce:** Amen. You see, that’s Holy Spirit produced! Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

**Bishop Rodgers:** I was just going to say that in one sense both the non-Christian’s act of love and the Christian’s act of love have to be justified. Neither are perfect.

**Bruce:** Correct.

**Bishop Rodgers:** So they still need to come to Christ for salvation.

**Bruce:** Correct.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Ours is based on gratitude. But even that is imperfect. However, our God is gracious enough to accept this.

**Bruce:** Amen. Men, the best days that we have, our love is tainted. It’s a tainted love because it’s coming from ourselves. And that’s why it’s important that we walk by the Holy Spirit. We need to be led by the Holy Spirit. The best thing I can do, the best love I can generate, is tainted. But Christ is merciful to forgive us of that.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** He’s the One who sets the standard.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** One of the things that you need to understand is this. When you study the book of 1 John, it’s important that we know this. Who do we love? 1 John teaches us three things.

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First of all, *you’re to love God*. You’re to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Can you do that? If we can’t do that every second, then we’re lost, and we need a Savior. The only One who can do that is Christ Himself. When we are led by the Spirit, we have the possibility of letting Christ love through us. So our first object is the love of God.

Secondly, it’s *the love of our brothers and sisters*. That’s the body of Christ. Do we really love the body of Christ? Do we really love our brothers and sisters? The evidence of that is going to be how we get along with each other in the church.

Take a look at the church. Do we really exhibit that love for one another? It’s a new commandment. “Love as I’ve loved you.” If we took that dimension and set “as I have loved you” as the qualifier, we would have no church issues. The problem is that we have church issues because we don’t go back and understand how Christ has loved me! Yes?

**Participant:** If you look at Philippians 2:3-4, it says, “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*” And then it goes on. “*Look not only to your own interests, but also the interests of others.*” If you look at the younger millennials coming up, they are into social entrepreneurship. They are giving. They are others motivated, like you pointed out, for the wrong reasons. But I would really challenge us to be more intentional. In fact, love is messy and love is not—what word am I looking for?—love is not easy. It takes work and effort. It’s not going to come easy. And I think we need to be so much more intentional in the church to find a neighbor or to find a special brother in the church and say, “How can I serve you?”, and live that out. If we’d do that, my goodness, the church would actually be the church!

**Bruce:** Amen. One of the things that you have to be careful of is this: how you define love. Scripture says that love is obedience. “If you love Me, you will be obedient.” That’s our definition of love.

It’s not the world’s. Their definition of love is that I’m going to love because I’ll get something in return. Maybe I’ll do it without getting something in return. But it’s not this. It’s not the desire to be obedient.

Love is defined by obedience. It’s not defined by open-mindedness. The world system says that you need to be open-minded. I get blasted a lot by my non-Christian friends who say, “Bruce, you’re not open-minded.”

And I said, “Yes, I am, but not at both ends.” (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** You see, love is defined by obedience. Where do we get how we need to love? The Scripture teaches us.

We need to love God. We need to love the body of Christ, our brothers and sisters. And the third element is this. *Do not love the world*. Two are positive, one is negative. Do not love the world system. John teaches us in 1 John not to love the system of this world.

Now here are the four reasons why we are not to love the world. Now here’s where the breakdown falls between a nonbeliever and a believer. A nonbeliever cannot do this.

First of all, the reason that we do not love the world system is because of *who we are*. We are the family of God. Therefore we do not love a system that is anti-family. It is not anti-god. It is not anti-Christ. How can you be a member of the family of God and love a



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system that is anti-God? The first reason that we do not love the system of this world is because of who we are! We’re the redeemed body of Christ, the regenerated men and women who make up the kingdom of God. That’s the first reason we don’t love the system of the world.

The second reason we don’t love the system of this world is because of *what the world is*. The world is an enemy of God, controlled by Satan.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** By the spirit of this world. We cannot love something that is anti-God. How can you love God and love something that is anti-God? You don’t love the system of this world.

Now this is difficult, men. That’s why you and I have got to be led by the Spirit. We cannot make this happen ourselves. That’s why you’re absolutely dependent upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit to prepare and study and other things, because we understand this. The system of the world is anti-everything that I say that I am. So we don’t love the world not only because of who we are, but also because of what the world is.

And thirdly, *because of what the world does*. We don’t love the system of this world because of what the world does. It stimulates us to sin. The world system stimulates us to sin, evidenced by three things—“the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.”

The lust of the eyes are those things which entice us to sin externally, things that we see that are going on. We see this stuff. It’s external sensuality that causes us to sin.

Second is the lust of the flesh, things that are internal. It’s the stimulation of internal things that’s the result of the flesh and my sinfulness, sin in my members, as Romans 6 teaches us. The lust of the eyes is external stimulation. The lust of the flesh is internal stimulation.

And the pride of life is personal stimulation. And so the reason we do not love the system of this world is because of those three things, because of the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. That’s what the world stimulates within us externally, internally and personally.

I’ll just give you a classic example. This may be trite, but it just reminded me of this. I was in the dentist’s office yesterday waiting for my turn to get my hygiene cleaning. And I read this little brochure on a new system of whitening your teeth.

I thought, “Oh, maybe I need to do that.” And then I asked myself, “Why do you need to do that at seventy-three?” (*Laughter*) I’m seventy-three years old. Why do I need to whiten my teeth? The conclusion: ego, vanity and pride.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** So I asked my dentist. I said, “Miriam, what’s this new system for whitening your teeth?” And she gave me this elaborate description. She said, “Do you want to do that?” (*Laughter*)

And I said, “Well, the question is why do I want to do it?”

**Participant:** Amen. Right.

And she said, “Why do you want to do it?”

I said, “Because of my pride, my ego and my vanity.” (*Laughter*)

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And she said, “You really know yourself, don’t you? *(Laughter)* So at seventy-three I don’t think I need to do it. *(Laughter)*

That’s the pride of life! You see, it’s something as simple as that. My first thought was, “Maybe this is going to improve my looks.” Why do I need to improve my looks? *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** Do it for Becky. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** That’s hopeless. *(Laughter)*

**Bruce:** But that’s the classic example, men—the pride of life! My first thought was about me! My first thought was, “What are people going to think about me?” That’s the pride of life. That’s what the world does. It does it in the dentist’s office. The system of this world stimulates us to sin through the lust of the eyes, the pride of life and the lust of the flesh.

And the fourth thing is this: *where the world is going*. We don’t love the world system because of where it is going. It is going to destroy itself. It has no end. It’s going to end itself. The world is going to stop. We in Christ will live eternally. But the world is just going to stop. The system of this world will end. It will end, and we have endless life in Christ, life that does not end.

And so the four reasons that we do not love the world system is because of who we are. We’re the body of Christ. Secondly, because of what the world is. It is anti-God. Thirdly, what the world does. It stimulates us through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. And fourthly, where the world is going, and it will stop. That’s the reason that we don’t love the system of this world. And men, we cannot do that, unless you’re what? Led by the Spirit.

You see, our natural inclination is not to want to not love the world. A double negative there, not to want to not. So it’s very important to understand that when we talk about love it defines God’s moral character, but also defines what we should not love. Yes, Brian?

**Brian:** At some point I’d love to hear you do a talk or suggestion. You see so many Christians, because they try not to be of the world, they come back and they don’t strive with excellence. They don’t do all that they can. And other worldly people are actually doing better than they are because they’re motivated by other things. But they’re actually doing them with more excellence. And we sometimes as Christians hold ourselves back from glorifying God with all that we’ve been gifted with because we don’t want to be in the world and we don’t want to be materialistic, rather than looking at the reward from that, to be able to be more of a blessing to others. It’s a huge challenge.

**Bruce:** Well that’s why the Scripture says this. *“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”* It’s not going to be easy.

One of the things that Paul taught us in the book of Galatians in chapter five is this. There’s a conflict. Notice in chapter 5, beginning at verse 16. I remind you of this.

*“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”*

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Friends, we need to understand this. We’re talking about warfare! We’re talking about spiritual warfare!

Biblically, three words describe the body of Christ, from Genesis all the way to Revelation. *Remnant*—it’s not everybody. Secondly, *persecution*. Paul writes to timothy that if you desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, you will suffer persecution. The second thing that describes the church is persecution. The third word is *spiritual warfare*. We are in spiritual warfare. That describes who we are as the body of Christ. It’s a remnant. It’s a persecuted group. And we’re involved in spiritual warfare. And if we don’t wake up, we’re just going to be inundated by the system of this world because we don’t engage ourselves in spiritual warfare.

That’s why it’s so important, friends, that you work out your salvation with fear and trembling. I can’t tell you how to do that. But all I know is this. God is at work in you to complete what He is going to do. That means that I have to have absolute trust in Him and not the things that I can do myself. That’s a battle.

Now let me just give you an illustration. I don’t know how it is for you. But do you know that the times when I am most under spiritual warfare? It’s when I study the Scripture.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Now I was gone for five days visiting my grandkids in California, who are one and three. Quite honestly, I didn’t have a devotional every day. I didn’t have a quiet time every day. I looked at my Grace Gems and did a two- or three-minute quiet devotional. It got my mind on Christ. But I was not studying the Scripture like I do to be prepared for you men.

It was an easy week. Nothing came at my mind. My mind was not filled with rotten thoughts. But I studied for this study today. And last night I woke up three times because there were such rotten thoughts in my mind.

And I had to say, “Lord, remove those thoughts, because if You don’t do that, it will be a disaster.” And then I started quoting Scripture.

It’s a battle, men. And what I’m finding is that the more I’m in the Scripture, the more Satan comes after me.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Because he wants to diffuse what I’m learning. It’s a battle. There’s a conflict. The desires of the flesh in its multiplicity is against the desires of the Spirit in its singularity. One leads us to the evils of this world in all of its multiplicities, but the other leads us to the character of Christ. And men, it’s going to be a battle.

That’s why we are absolutely dependent upon each other. We need each other.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** We need each other. That’s the body of Christ. It’s a wonderful gift, the body of Christ, the fellowship that we have.

And men, this is not an easy thing. That’s why Paul says that you’ve got to be led by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit. Get in line. Follow the Spirit.

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And how do you do that on an individual basis? We can give you some suggestions, but personally you have to work that out yourself, through your own efforts and your own fear and trembling. But remember this. It is God who is at work in you.

And how do you have the assurance that God is working in you? You see fruit. You bear fruit. And you know that God is working in you.

It gives you hope. One of the definitions of an unbeliever according to Ephesians 2 is that he is hopeless. They're without God. You see, when you have fruit being evidenced in your life by increased righteousness, you have hope because you have God.

So the primary quality of fruit is the whole concept of love.

*Joy* is the next one. Pessimism is a grave fault. We can define joy as the emotion of great happiness and pleasure regardless of outside circumstances. I'm quickly going to go through these because I want to summarize some things at the end.

The next thing is *peace*. Peace would be the harmonious relations and freedom from disputes. When you and I realize that everything in your life God uses for good, you and I have peace. When you and I have the God of peace, we're going to have the peace of God. When we have in our lives the God of peace, we're going to have the peace of God.

Next would be *patience*. I define that as the patient endurance of pain or unhappiness, being slow to wrath. *Long-suffering* is another definition your Bible might use. The mind holds out long before giving in. Long-suffering does not mean enduring pain for a long period of time. It means being patient.

Next would be *kindness* or *gentleness*. This word literally means *tenderness*. It's a characteristic of God and does not mean weakness. Kindness does not mean weakness.

Look at what David says in 2 Samuel 22 verse 36. *“You have given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your gentleness made me great.”*

You see, you can be great in your gentleness. It's not a sign of weakness. God gives you the gentleness that is led by the Spirit and you become great. It's part of the shield of our salvation, as David says. It's not weakness.

Next is *goodness*. It's a quality of moral excellence. It's a quality that is not stagnant, but active in the bestowal on others of what is good and beneficial.

Next is *faithfulness*. Faithfulness means trustworthiness, loyalty or steadfastness. Notice Lamentations 3:22-23. *“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness!”*

Why is it that you and I can be faithful? Because He is faithful to us.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** And His mercies are new every morning. But one thing that you and I never run out of is God's mercies, because the mercies that you got today will not be the mercies you get tomorrow. The ones you get tomorrow are fresh. They're new. They're of new origin. And the ones you have today are not the ones you got yesterday, because the ones yesterday are not fresh. The ones you get today are fresh. You never run out of that. And we can be faithful because God is faithful to us through His mercy. We become mission-minded members of a movement motivated by mercy for ministry in the marketplace—m-8s.

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They are fresh every day. And the marketplace is where? It’s wherever you are. Wherever you are is the marketplace. Faithfulness—a sense of loyalty.

#8 would be *gentleness* or *meekness*—acting in a manner that is gentle, mild and even-tempered. It is power under control.

In the New Testament meekness—power under control—is described by two major concepts. The first one is *submission to the will of God*. James 1:21.

**Transcriber’s Note:** James 1:21. “*Therefore, put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*”

**Bruce:** And secondly, it’s *consideration*. To be meek, you give consideration to God’s glory and the benefit of others. That would be 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 15.

**Transcriber’s Note:** 1 Peter 3:15. “*But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect.*”

**Bruce:** Meekness is not weakness. It’s power under control.

Lastly, *self-control*, the trait of resolutely controlling one’s desires, especially those that lead to action. It means holding all of our passions and desires in check.

Now I want you to notice the last three words of the expressions of the fruit—faithfulness, meekness and self-control. Faithfulness refers to God and to His word and to His will. We’re faithful to God. We’re faithful to His word. And we’re faithful to His will.

Meekness refers to the world of men. We are meek as a means of gaining power under control as it benefits the world. Meekness refers to the world of men.

Self-control refers to our own selves. “*For God has not given us the spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-control.*”

Now in verse 24 I want you to see the purposes of the fruit of the Spirit. First of all, God’s purpose is this. “*And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*” Galatians 5:24. That’s what God does. He crucifies our passions and our desires in our regeneration. If you are in Christ, your flesh was crucified the moment you believed in Christ Jesus. That’s what God does. He crucifies your desires in the flesh.

It is a daily issue. The old life is gone. Don’t resurrect it. God crucified your sinful desires, your sinful nature with its passions at the cross. Don’t go and try to resurrect it. It’s a dead issue. You do not have to live like you used to anymore, because you’ve crucified that. That’s what God does for us.

The word *crucified* is important for us to understand, because it recalls the cross and the crucifixion of Christ. Here’s how it works out.

In conversion we accept the crucified Christ at the cross, in order, ever after that, to glorify only in the cross and our deliverance. Then and there our flesh is nailed to the divine cross, to let it hang there forever. Don’t try to resurrect it.

And what is man’s part. Verse 25: “*If we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*” The word *keep in step* is to keep in line, to march in rank and file. In other words, line up with the rest of the body of Christ. Be in marching order and stand in line and walk by the Spirit. That’s our responsibility. Our responsibility is to operate with the

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willingness with which God gave us the will to walk in line. So let us keep marching in rank and file, led by the Spirit all the time.

Bishop Rodgers gave me something that was very insightful. I want to close with this. We'll do the summary the next time we're together, because I have a whole list of things and I want us to summarize what we've learned so far. We'll do that next time and I'll give you a new outline.

**Participant:** Next time means next Friday, right?

**Bruce:** That's what I understand.

**Participant:** Okay.

**Bruce:** Thank you, sir.

**Participant:** Thank you.

**Bruce:** Did you have another choice? *(Laughter)* Okay, thank you for the reminder. *(Laughter)*

This is from Donald Gray Barnhouse, one of the great theologians of our time. He's talking about the fruit of the Spirit. "Love is the key." And here is a wonderful summary. "Joy is love singing. Peace is love resting. Long-suffering is love enduring. Kindness is love's touch. Goodness is love's character. Faithfulness is love's habit. Gentleness is love's self-forgetfulness. Self-control is love holding the reins."

Let me give you that again. Sig, I'm going to give you this and you can put it on the web page for us. Would you do that?

**Sig:** Yes.

**Transcriber's Note:** Bruce repeats the quote from Dr. Barnhouse.

**Bruce:** Faith, hope and love. The greatest of these is love. That's why it's listed first. You see, all of the other expressions are of one thing—joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control is an expression of love. The greatest of these is love.

May God give us the grace, men, to take it into a world that is against everything that we stand for. And may we love them in spite of the world system teaching us otherwise. May it be so for Christ's sake.

Let's pray. Father, You've given us a task that is absolutely impossible apart from Your grace and mercy. It's just exactly what we need to hear. We cannot achieve and do this ourselves. We can only receive it through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Father, let us get in rank order. May we fall in line and may we walk by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, that we will see evidence of our salvation because the fruit is made evident. And we will demonstrate to the world the residency where God is located, because He will be in us by the evidence of our fruit. May it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen!" *(Applause)*