

The enemy will remind you of your condition. A still small voice will remind you of your calling. If you listen to the enemy, instead of the still small voice, you will quit.

Ricky Johnson

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Prayer Study # 304

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

First Love Ministries of Perry, Georgia

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 King James Version

But the Spirit produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong.

Galatians 5:22-23 New Century Version

Jesus made it very clear in Matthew 7 that we shall know prophetic people by their fruit: *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You shall know them by their fruits...*(Matthew 7:15-16a) and again in Matthew 7:20: *Wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them.* The Greek scholar Rick Renner in *Sparkling Gems from the Greek* explains these verses this way:

“The word ‘fruit’ is the Greek word *karpos*-the Greek word that describes *the physical fruit of plants or trees*. However, the word *karpos* is also used to depict *the fruit borne by a person's life*. This fruit might include *a person's deeds, actions, moral character, and behavior, or the output of the person's work*. In essence, Jesus used the

word *karpos* to tell us that the various by-products of a person's life ultimately reveal what is *inside* that person. Jesus taught that we can ascertain much about a person by looking at the fruit in his life. In fact, Jesus said it is possible to 'know' people by their fruit. The word 'know' is the Greek word *epignosis*, a compound of the words *epi* and *gnosis*. The word *epi* means *upon*; the word *gnosis* means *to know* and is the Greek word for *knowledge*. When you compound these two words together, they form the word that means *to come upon or to happen upon some kind of knowledge* and carries the idea of *making a discovery*."

All fruit comes from seed. The kind of seed sown tells us what kind of fruit we should expect. When we become Christians, God sows His seed in our spirits. The fruit of the seed of God is more of God, which means that our character should be more and more like God. Indeed, 1st Peter 1:23 tell us: *For you have been born again. Your new life did not come from your earthly parents because the life they gave you will end in death. But this new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.*

It has been my own experience that gifts often do not have anything to do with maturity, commitment, or character of a believer. I have seen some walk in what appeared to be counterfeit gifts, later to be exposed and fall, bringing reproach upon the name of Christ. I have seen others who seem to have legitimate giftings but who did not show the character of Christ in their lives. Observing the fruit tells us who a person *really* is, and those who are really baptized in the Holy Spirit will show forth all of

these nine fruit in their lives. I personally had much rather be known for godly fruit of the Spirit in my life than for spiritual gifts.

As we judge the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of others, we must remember that He calls us to examine our own hearts (*Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know you not yourselves how Jesus Christ is in you, unless your are discredited? But I trust that you shall know that we are not discredited-* 2nd Corinthians 13:5-6).

LOVE

When the New Testament was written, it was written in Greek, which at that time was the universal language, much as English is today. This was an excellent choice because Greek is much more specific than English. When we say love, for example, we might be talking about any number of things all the way from having an affinity for something or liking it, such as ice cream, to engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior. Instead of one word for love, Greek had four words for love, and each one had a specific meaning. The first one we will discuss is *eros*, which is sexual love. Rick Renner describes this as “a carnal, raw, base, low-level craving, yearning, ache, or appetite for sexual fulfillment. The New Testament writers never used this word even in the context of sex in marriage, even once in the New Testament. Clearly *eros* is not the kind of love that believers, even in a marriage relationship, should aspire to because it is a completely selfish kind of love.

The second word for love is *stergo*. Renner tells us that this is the “love that exists between parents and children or

the love that exists between members of a family, the love of a nation for its ruler, or the love of a dog for its master.” This type of love can best be described in English as *devotion*.

The third word of love is *phileo*. Renner says that this love is “affection-such as that between a boyfriend and girlfriend of the affability shared between two friends.” *Phileo* has a lot to do with friendship and is sometimes translated as brotherly love.

The final word for love has so much deep emotion and meaning that it is very difficult to translate into English. That word is the highest form of love, or *agape*, and is the love of God. We know that *God so agaped the world, that He gave His only begotten Son* (John 3:16). This is how Renner painstakingly defines the Greek word *agape* into the English language: “*Agape occurs when an individual sees, recognizes, understands, or appreciates the value of an object or a person, causing the viewer to behold this object or person in great esteem, awe, admiration, wonder, and sincere appreciation. Such great respect is awakened in the heart of the observer for the object or person he is beholding that he is compelled to love it. In fact, his love for the person or object is so strong it is irresistible. Agape is a love that loves so profoundly that it knows no limits or boundaries in how far, wide, high, and deep it will go to show that love to its recipient. If necessary, agape love will even sacrifice itself for the sake of that object or person it so deeply cherishes. Agape is a love that has no strings attached. It isn't looking for what it can get, but for what it can give. Its awe of the one who is loved is so deep that it is compelled to shower love upon that object or person*

regardless of the response. This is the profound love God has for the human race, for He loved man when he was still lost in sin with no ability to love Him back. God simply loved mankind without any thought or expectation of receiving love in return. When agape is at work, it is a force so strong that it demonstrates itself with deeds and actions. This is not an empty love that talks but does nothing.” This is the kind of love that God has for you and me.

Matthew 5:43-45a: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall agape your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, agape your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those you spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven...”*

Matthew 22:37: *Jesus said to him, “You shall agape the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”*

John 13:35: *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have agape for one another.”*

Romans 5:5: *Now hope does not disappoint, because the agape of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Romans 8:28: *And we know that all things work together for good to those who agape God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Romans 8:38-39: *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the agape of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1st Corinthians 2:9: *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who agape Him."*

Galatians 5:6: *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through agape.*

Galatians 5:22a: *But the fruit of the Spirit is agape...*

Ephesians 3:17-19: *...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in agape, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-to know the agape of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

2nd Timothy 1:7: *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of agape and of a sound mind.*

Hebrews 6:10: *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of agape which you have shown toward His*

name, in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister.

James 1:12: *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who agape Him.*

1st John 2:3-5: *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the agape of God is perfected in him. But this we know that we are in Him.*

1st John 3:1-3: *BEHOLD what manner of agape the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

1st John 4:7-8: *Beloved, let us agape one another, for agape is of God; and everyone who agapes is born of God and knows God. He who does not agape does not know God, for God is agape.*

1st John 4:16-19: *And we have known and believed the agape that God has for us. God is agape, and he who*

abides in agape abides in God and God in him. Agape has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in agape; but perfect agape casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in agape. We agape Him because He first agaped us.

JOY

Someone once said that joy was the most infallible witness to the presence of Jesus in a person's life. Demas Shakarian, a California dairy farmer, now with the Lord, and the founder of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, a charismatic ministry that had chapters all over the world, wrote a book, *The Happiest People on the Earth*, in which he said that Christians should be the most joyful people on the earth. Yet many Christians in our churches and ministries have not notified their faces that having Christ in our hearts is joyful!

A few years ago I did a study on all the scriptural ways we could obtain joy. The Lord has given us so many activities that open our hearts to joy from bringing people into relationship with Jesus to smashing the works of Satan. I am going to list just a few of the "joy" scriptures.

Nehemiah 8:9-10: *And Nehemiah, who was the governor; Ezra, the priest and scribe; and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet,*

and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to the Lord. Do not sorrow for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Psalm 16:11: *You will show me the path of life. In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Psalm 32:11: *Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, your righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

1st Peter 1:8-9: *[Jesus Christ] whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith-the salvation of your souls.*

Isaiah 51:3: *For the LORD will comfort Zion. He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.*

Jeremiah 15:16: *Your words were found, and I ate them. And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.*

Luke 6:22-23: ***Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in***

heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

Luke 10:17: *Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”*

John 16:24: *Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive that your joy may be full.*

Acts 8:5-8: *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.*

John 15:10-11: *“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”*

Acts 13:52: *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

1st Thessalonians 2:19-20: *For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

Philemon 7: *For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.*

James 1:2: *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.*

3rd John 4: *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

PEACE

In the days ahead one characteristic that will separate genuine believers in Christ Jesus from carnal believers and nonbelievers will be the presence of peace in our lives. In fact, we will have a *peace beyond understanding*, which will be so attractive to the world that they will come to ask the source of that peace. A real key to obtaining this peace will be living a righteous life.

Psalms 119: 165: *Great peace have they who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.*

Proverbs 3:1-2: *My son, do not forget my law. But let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.*

Proverbs 12:20b: *But counselors of peace have joy.*

Proverbs 16:7: *When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

Isaiah 9:6: *For unto us a Child is born. Unto us a Son is given: And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 26:3: *You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

Isaiah 32:17: *The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.*

Isaiah 48:18: *Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.*

John 16:33: *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.”*

Romans 5:1: *THEREFORE, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Romans 14:17: *For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Philippians 4:6-7: *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of*

God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Revelation 6:3-4: *When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.*

PATIENCE

We are often told not to pray for patience unless we want the Lord to send impossible situations and irritating people into our lives to build and test patience in us. Yet James (not the brother of John but the James who led the Jerusalem Church and is thought by many to be the Lord's half brother) tells us: *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.* This obviously is not the reaction of most of us to trials and testings of our faith, but we soon learn that these times of stress give us patience and make us understand that these trials help teach us to trust the Lord in all things.

Romans 12:12: *...rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer...*

2nd Thessalonians 3:5: *Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.*

James 5:7-8: *Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

1st Peter 2:20: *For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*

KINDNESS

One of the most beautiful characteristics of any man, woman and child is kindness. William Penn, the great Pennsylvanian Quaker leader, said, "I expect to pass through life but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow-being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again." Perhaps, other than the Lord Jesus and the acts of the Father and Holy Spirit, the greatest example of kindness in scripture is the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

Nehemiah 9:17: *They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them.*

Psalm 117:1-2: *PRAISE the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!*

Proverbs 19:22a: *What is desired in a man is kindness....*

Proverbs 31:26: *She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.*

Joel 2:13: *So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.*

2nd Peter 1:5-9: *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*

GOODNESS

Jesus makes a rather strange statement in Matthew 19:16-17: *Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good?" No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."* Yet in Galatians 5:22-23 Paul tells us that one of the fruit of the Spirit is goodness. The way out of this dilemma is simple: We are not good, but the seed of the Holy Spirit planted in us only

after we have been cleansed and are continuously cleansed by the blood of Jesus, reproduces in the fertile soil of our spirits the goodness of God. Through the Blood of Jesus, we are redeemed out of the hand of the enemy (Psalm 107:2), have all of our sins forgiven (Ephesians 1:7), are continuously cleansed from all sin (1st John 1:7), are justified just as if we had never sinned (Romans 5:9), are sanctified or set apart to God (Hebrews 13:12), and become a temple of the Holy Spirit (1st Corinthians 6:19-20). His Blood and the filling of the Spirit are the very essences of *our* goodness.

Exodus 34:5-9: *Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."*

Psalm 23:6: *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.*

Psalm 107:9: *For He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.*

FAITHFULNESS

Like Hosea's Gomer, we as a nation have not walked in faithfulness. In fact, it is difficult to find faithful men in this generation, but nevertheless there are those who have stood for Jesus no matter what the cost.

Psalm 36:5: *Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.*

Psalm 119:90: *Your faithfulness endures to all generations.*

Lamentations 3:22-23: *Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: Great is your faithfulness.*

3rd John 5-7: *Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles.*

GENTLENESS

Unfortunately, in our generation, we see gentleness, especially in a man, as weakness. This ought not to be for gentleness is one of the fruit of the Spirit. Charles

Simmons says that *we are indebted to Christianity for gentleness, especially toward women*, and indeed we know that women were raised from second class status to first class status by Jesus, and men were told to love their wives like Christ loved the Church, which is characterized by gentleness. In King James English gentleness is often referred to as meekness. The greatest examples of gentleness and meekness in the Word of God are Moses and Jesus.

2nd Corinthians 10:1: *NOW I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.*

Numbers 12:3: *(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.)*

2nd Timothy 2:24-25: *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.*

James 3:17: *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

Ephesians 4:1-3: *THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with*

longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

SELF-CONTROL

The last of the nine fruit of the Spirit is self-control. No man is truly free who does not have self-control, and our prisons are full of men and women who lack this fruit. In King James English this is called temperance.

2nd Peter 1:5-7: *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*

Proverbs 16:32: *He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*

1st Corinthians 9:27: *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

1st Peter 2:11: *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul....*

Psalms 30:1: *I SAID, "I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me."*

1st Thessalonians 4:3-6: *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.*

Proverbs 25:28: *Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.*

Take My Hand, Precious Lord
Rev. Thomas Dorsey (1899-1993)

(This song was written by Dorsey when his wife and the baby died in childbirth.)

Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on,
Let me stand
I'm tired, I am weak, I am worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near
When my life is almost gone
Hear my cry,
Hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When the darkness appears and the night draws near
And the day is past and gone
At the river I stand
Guide my feet,
Hold my hand
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home

Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on,
Let me stand
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light

Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.