

## *More...Where our hunger meets His Promises*

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

### Faithfulness - Gentleness - Self-Control

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All of us need help right now. Many pastors in America are hurting and are ready to quit the ministry. Of those, some have even entertained thoughts of suicide. But we are all members of the Body of Christ - which means that we all have great value. Jesus valued us enough to give his *Life* for us - to shed his Blood for us - and he gave his Body for us. He values us and cares about us and loves us enough to say, "*You're so important. I'm laying down My Life, and when I'm raised up I'll give you new Life.*" We are all people who have been called by Jesus.

1 John 2:27 ESV

*"But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him."*

Things are written on our hearts - we have the Holy Spirit of God living *within* us. We have the Person of the Holy Spirit - the very same Presence of God that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1:1 - when the earth was formless - void - that same Spirit that brought Creation into existence - *lives in us. We are so blessed!* We all have received, not only the *Gifts* of the Holy Spirit, but we also get to bear - to hold - contain, carry, and exemplify the *Fruit* of the Holy Spirit.

We've talked about *Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, and Goodness* - and today we'll discuss *Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control*. Once again, we understand that these are not fruits of our flesh - of our just trying harder - but they're Fruits of the Holy Spirit. This is not a matter of us resolving to be better - to read the Bible more - pray more - try harder, cowboy-up, git-er-done, or pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps - do more - work harder - grit our teeth harder - and give it that good-old-atta-boy try.

The Truth is we need to *surrender*. We need to give up. Some of us are trying *too* hard, and it's *killing us!* We're trying so hard it's choking the *Life* out of us. We're holding on so tight because we don't want to lose it - so we hold on even tighter.

Some of us in our walk with Jesus have this mentality, that we just have to try harder because we want his approval - we want our *Papa* to feel good about us - make our Heavenly Father proud - and we can pursue what's a Good thing and turn it into a bad thing, by leaving God out of it, and replacing Him with trying harder in our own strength.

We need to surrender, and say, *"Holy Spirit, I can't do this, but I trust that You can - and because I know that You live inside of me, and You came upon me and whelmed me over - that I have what it takes to do what You called me to do!"* And we can't do it if we try in our own strength. We are utterly and absolutely dependent on the Holy Spirit - the Person, Presence, and Power of the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit that hovered over the earth that was void and without form is the same Holy Spirit that we have access to in this very nano-second - in this very moment.

The *Greater One* lives inside of us and he is here to *help* - and *Help is here right now*. The *Helper* - the Holy Spirit - is here for *you* - *you are not alone* - and on the day you feel *most* alone, understand and remember by faith that you are *not* alone - you are *never alone!* He has promised he will never leave me - he will never forsake me. He will never leave me to *"just figure it out."* He is here to *help*.

Galatians 5:22-23 NASB

*"But the Fruit [product, produce] of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*

Fruit - where you see the fruit of the Spirit at work in a person, you can rest assured that the Presence of the Holy Spirit, himself, is working in them and through them. When you engage in a scenario and there is *no* fruit - *no* product - *no* proof of the Spirit - because of what's coming out of an individual - we leak out what we're full of. If you're in a scenario where someone is berating you - abusing you - talking down to you - condemning you - condescending towards you - maligning you - slandering you - betraying you - rest assured there is *no* Presence of the Holy Spirit in that moment.

That can come from a born-again follower of Jesus. We can have a really bad day and be led by another spirit. But Jesus says there's now a *better* covenant - a *new* covenant - against which there is no law - that yoke of bondage has been *shattered*. That is really Good News for *us* - and that means we don't have to live under the *yoke* - the weight of the old covenant.

So, we're filling our buckets, which represent *us* - we're *containers* - we *contain* the Presence of God and the Holy Spirit - but we need to fill these buckets on an ongoing basis. Scripture says, *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled [continually or ever be filled] with the Spirit..."* (Ephesians 5:18 KJV) We're to stay full - but some of us are broken, *right*? Some have cracks - holes - but here's the Good News - when we leak out of our cracks and holes, the Holy Spirit continually fills our buckets on an ongoing basis. We are being filled with him - his Fruit - his Presence, Person, and Power.

## **Love**

1 Corinthians 13:13 ESV

*"So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love [the God-kind of Love]."*

## **Joy**

Nehemiah 8:10 ESV

*"Then he said to them, 'Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy [not just a feeling, but a state of being - a mindset - an attitude] of the LORD is your strength.'"*

## **Peace**

Romans 15:13 NIV

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow [everywhere we go - all working together to create overflow - spilling over - leaking out - creating beautiful messes] with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

The Presence of God in you - leaking out of you and overflowing from you, so that anyone who comes behind you or who gets in your vicinity gets splashed on - they get a mess made on them - and they don't even realize it.

## **Patience**

Romans 12:12 NIV

*"Be joyful in hope, patient [long-suffering - the ability to suffer long - to endure long] in affliction, faithful in prayer."*

## **Kindness**

Romans 2:4 NIV

*"Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance [and to change our minds about sin and the world]?"*

## **Goodness**

Matthew 12:34 NKJV

*"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks [a good tree produces good fruit]."*

## **Faithfulness**

Matthew 25:21 ESV

*"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful [trustworthy, stable, reliable, dependable] over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'"*

Always do the last thing Jesus said to do. God moves at three miles an hour - he's not running, racing, and is not in a hurry. - he's patient. Those who are faithful go back to the last thing he said to do, and they complete their assignment - and keep doing *that* until he gives them a *new* assignment. If we're stuck where we are, and not hearing God or making progress - go back to the last thing he said to do. If we'll be obedient in that *little* thing, the Bible says he can trust us with much.

Say, *"Lord Jesus, remind me of what I have run beyond, and what it is that You want me to do."*

1 Thessalonians 5:24 ESV

*"He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it [God is faithful, reliable, trustworthy, dependable, stable]."*

2 Thessalonians 3:3 ESV

*"But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one."*

God takes the virtue of faithfulness, and by the Holy Spirit, he places it *into* you and says, *"This is yours. I'm giving you the Fruit. I'm producing it, but I'm allowing you to carry it - faithfulness."* Imagine what it would be like if all of us this week simply made good on everything we said we would do. We might start a revolution!

## **Gentleness**

Matthew 11:29 ESV

*"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle [humble, meek] and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

Gentleness (humility, meekness - *not weakness* - power and strength under control - like a bullet - a lethal weapon - devoid of pride). It enables people to find rest in him and to encourage and strengthen others. The Holy Spirit - the Spirit of Jesus is *in* you.

1 Peter 3:15-16 NLT

*"Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ."*

God has not called us to confrontational evangelism, but to *share* the Gospel of Jesus Christ - *not cram* the Gospel down anyone's throat. - this isn't a mind-trip, but it's about the Spirit of God at work - where we enter in a gentle, humble, meek, respectful way and present Jesus - and then we leave that with another person. Cramming is not our job - and we can't transform a single person's heart. We can only offer what Jesus offers.

## **Self Control**

James 3:5-10 NIV

*"Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be."*

Self control is the ability to lead one's self *well* - *you* leading *you*. The fruit of that is *you* being able to lead *yourself* well. Jesus gives us the ability to govern our own bodies - our own activities - our own expressions. There's nothing *passive* about the Fruit of the Spirit.

## Prayer

*Father, thank You for the privilege of Your Word. Thank You that You teach us Love, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control, and the ability to lead ourselves. Lord, we thank You that this doesn't come by trying to be better - acting better - doing better. It comes by surrendering - by resting - by being in You and surrendering to You being in us and through us.*

*So, Father, today, we ask will You give us the Grace to surrender - the Grace to let go - the Grace to simply say, "Yes, Lord." Holy Spirit, show us how to apply this to our lives. How can we learn from this? What do You want us to know and to do?*

*Father, Thank You for the privilege of Love - the power of loving one another - the privilege of walking together - the privilege of being fused with You today - the privilege of being filled with the Holy Spirit*

*...our buckets leaking - overflowing - making beautiful messes everywhere we go.*

*In Jesus' name. Amen*