



MAP ♦ P.O. Box 128 ♦ 575 U.S. Highway 250 ♦ Savannah, OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ September 2014

The Believer's Life and Walk: Free and Spiritual

Galatians 5:13-6:18

—*Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™*

1. The believer is to walk bearing God's nature

- a. How: By the Holy Spirit
- b. Purpose: To stand strong against fleshly, carnal acts, vv.19-20

2. The believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh

C. A Walk Bearing God's Nature: The Fruit of the Spirit, 5:22-26

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

or sinful nature

3. The believer is to walk consistently with his position in God's Spirit

4. The believer is to walk free from super-spirituality & envy

Section V

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK:

FREE AND SPIRITUAL

Galatians 5:13-6:18

Study 3: A WALK BEARING GOD'S NATURE: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Text: Galatians 5:22-26

Aim: To produce a life that is marked with the Fruit of the Spirit.

Memory Verse:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Ga.5:22-23).

INTRODUCTION:

When was the last time you took a bite from a beautiful orange only to be disappointed by its flavor? Instead of enjoying a sweet, juicy taste, you only tasted dry fruit. It looked like an

orange, smelled like an orange, and even felt like an orange. But it did not taste like an orange should taste: sweet and juicy. Instead, it was sour and dry. The Christian life can at times be likened to an orange that is sweet and juicy, producing as expected. However, many believers are offering a life that is the exact opposite: sour and dry.

The believer is to walk bearing God's nature: a life that is marked by the Fruit of the Spirit. A life that is sweet and juicy.

Note that the fruit which is produced in the believer is the fruit of the Spirit. God is in the business of producing top-quality fruit which is abundant and eternal. The believer has done nothing to deserve this kind of fruit. The Fruit of the Spirit is an act of the mercy and grace of a loving God.

A genuine believer stands before God approved and acceptable. He is embraced and loved by God, looked after and cared for by God. And he is the recipient of eternal life and of the absolute assurance of eternal life. The believer has been accepted by God because of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for man's transgressions of the law. He died to

free men from the law, from its judgment and condemnation. Therefore, standing before God, the believer is not there because he has kept laws and has earned the right to stand there. He is there because of his faith in Jesus Christ. His faith honors God's Son, and God loves His Son so much that He honors anyone who believes in His Son. Therefore, the man who believes that Jesus Christ makes him acceptable to God becomes acceptable to God.

The point is this: since the believer has to approach God through Jesus Christ and not through the law, he is freed from the law. He is under Jesus Christ, not under the law. Does this mean, then, that the believer has no restraint upon his life and behavior—that he is free to live like he wants? Is he free to follow the desires and lusts of his flesh—to seek the things of the world and give in to the urges to look, think, touch, taste, and do?

The answer is no! A thousand times no! For the believer has been given God's nature; he walks through life bearing God's nature (2 Pe.1:4; Ep.4:24; Col.3:10; 1 Co.6:19-20). God has absolutely nothing to do with sin, not within His nature. Therefore, the believer is not to cave in to the lusts of the flesh; he is to walk bearing the fruit of God's nature, that is, the fruit of God's Spirit.

OUTLINE:

1. The believer is to walk bearing God's nature (vv.22-23).
2. The believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh or sinful nature (v.24).
3. The believer is to walk consistently with his position in God's Spirit (v.25).
4. The believer is to walk free from super-spirituality and envy (v.26).

1. THE BELIEVER IS TO WALK BEARING GOD'S NATURE (vv.22-23).

Note that the word fruit is singular, not plural. The Holy Spirit has only one fruit. It is broken down into a list of traits in order to help us understand His nature. However, the Spirit has only one nature, one fruit. Therefore, when He lives within a person, all these traits are present. The genuine believer does not

experience and bear just some of them: the Spirit of God produces them all in the life of the believer. Whether or not a believer displays all the traits of the Holy Spirit depends on whether the believer suppresses the Holy Spirit or calls on Him to live actively through and in his life.

1. There is the fruit of love (agape). Agape love is the love of the mind, of the reason, of the will. It is the love that goes so far...
 - that it loves regardless of feelings—whether a person feels like loving or not
 - that it loves a person even if the person does not deserve to be loved
 - that it actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved

Note four significant points about agape love.

- a. Selfless or agape love is the love of God, the very love possessed by God Himself. It is the love demonstrated in the cross of Christ.

⇒ It is the love of God for the ungodly.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6).

⇒ It is the love of God for unworthy sinners.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

⇒ It is the love of God for undeserving enemies.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Romans 5:10).

- b. Selfless or agape love is a gift of God. It can be experienced only if a person knows God personally—only if a person has received the love of God, that is, Christ Jesus, into his heart and life. Agape love has to be shed abroad (poured out, flooded, spread about) by the Spirit of God within the heart of a person.

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“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).

c. Selfless or agape love is the greatest thing in all of life according to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mk.12:29-31).

d. Selfless or agape love is the greatest possession and gift in human life according to the Scripture (1 Co.13:1-13).

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Co.13:13).

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the “fruit of love?” Does this trait often express itself in your life? Why or why not?
2. What are the special aspects of agape love which makes it different from what the world calls “love?”

2. There is the fruit of joy: an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior.

3. There is the fruit of peace: it means to bind together, to join, to weave together. It means that a person is bound, woven and joined together with himself and with God and others.

The Hebrew word is shalom. It means freedom from trouble and much more. It means experiencing the highest good, enjoying the very best possible, possessing all the inner good possible. It means wholeness and soundness. It means prosperity in the widest sense, especially prosperity in the spiritual sense of having a soul that blossoms and flourishes.

- a. There is the peace of the world. This is a peace of escapism, of avoiding trouble, of refusing to face things, of unreality. It is a peace that is sought through pleasure, satisfaction, contentment, absence of trouble, positive thinking, or denial of problems.
- b. There is the peace of Christ and of God.

⇒ The peace of God is, first, a *bosom peace*, a peace deep within. It is a tranquility of mind, a composure, and a restfulness that is undisturbed by circumstances and situations. It is more than feelings—even more than attitude and thought.

⇒ The peace of God is, second, *the peace of conquest* (see John 16:33). It is the peace that is independent of conditions and environment; the peace which no sorrow, danger, suffering, or experience can take away.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

⇒ The peace of God is, third, the *peace of assurance* (see Romans 8:28). It is the peace of unquestionable confidence; the peace with a sure knowledge that one’s life is in the hands of God and that all things will work out for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

⇒ The peace of God is, fourth, the *peace of intimacy* with God (see Ph. 4:6-7). It is the peace of the highest good. It is the peace that settles the mind, strengthens the will, and establishes the heart.

c. There is the source of peace. Peace is always born out of reconciliation. Its source is found only in the reconciliation wrought by Jesus Christ. Peace always has to do with personal relationships: a man’s relationship to himself, to God, and to his fellow men.

⇒ A man must be bound, woven, and joined together with himself in order to have peace.

⇒ A man must be bound, woven, and joined together with God in order to have peace.

⇒ A man must be bound, woven, and joined together with his fellow man to have peace.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one [both Jew and Gentile, all men], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Ep.2:13-14).

QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways does “joy” affect how you live? If joy were not a part of your life, what would replace it?
2. What is the “fruit of peace”?
3. Why is the world unable to duplicate God’s peace?

4. There is the fruit of longsuffering: patience, bearing and suffering a long time, perseverance, being constant, steadfast, and enduring. Long-suffering never gives in; it is never broken no matter what attacks it.

- ⇒ Pressure and hard work may fall upon us, but the Spirit of God helps us suffer long under it all.
- ⇒ Disease or accident or old age may afflict us, but the Spirit of God helps us to suffer long under it.
- ⇒ Discouragement and disappointment may attack us, but the Spirit of God helps us to suffer long under it.
- ⇒ Men may do us wrong, abuse, slander, and injure us; but the Spirit of God helps us to suffer long under it all.

Two significant things need to be noted about longsuffering.

a. Longsuffering never strikes back. Common sense tells us that a person who is attacked by others could strike back and retaliate. But the Christian believer is given the power of longsuffering—the power to suffer the situation or person for a long, long time.

b. Longsuffering is one of the great traits of God. As pointed out in this verse, it is a fruit of God’s very own Spirit, a fruit that is to be in the life of the believer.

- ⇒ God and Christ are longsuffering toward sinners.

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Romans 2:4).

- ⇒ God saves believers so that they may be examples of longsuffering.

“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Ti.1:16).

- ⇒ God withholds His judgment from the world because He is longsuffering, waiting for more and more to be saved.

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you” (2 Pe. 3:9; see 1 Pe. 4:20).

William Barclay says that if God had been a man, He would have long ago wiped man off the face of the earth because of his terrible disobedience. But God loves and cares for man; therefore, God is longsuffering toward man. God is suffering a long, long time with man, allowing more and more men to be saved.

“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col. 1:11).

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes the fruit of longsuffering such an important possession for the believer?
2. Do you know anyone who has mastered longsuffering as a part of his or her nature? What kinds of things can you glean from his or her example?

5. There is the fruit of gentleness: it is being kind and good, useful and helpful, gentle and sweet, considerate and gracious through all situations no matter the circumstances. A person who is gentle does not act...

- hard
- indifferent
- harsh
- unconcerned
- too busy
- bitter

Gentleness cares for the feelings of others and feels with them. It experiences the full depth of sympathy and empathy. It shows care and gets right into the situation with a person. Gentleness suffers with those who suffer, and struggles with those who struggle, and works with those who work.

- ⇒ God is kind.

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Lk.6:35).

- ⇒ Believers are to be kind to one another.

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).

6. There is the fruit of goodness: it is being full of virtue and

excellence, kindness and helpfulness, peace and consideration. It means that a person is full of all good and he does all good. It means...

- that he has a good heart and good behavior
- that he is good and does good
- that he is a quality person

Note that a good person lives and treats everyone just as they should be treated. He does not take advantage of any person nor does he stand by and let others take advantage. He stands up and lives for what is right and good and just. This means that goodness involves discipline and rebuke, correction and instruction as well as love and care, peace and conciliation. A good person will not give license to evil, will not let evil run rampant. He will not allow evil to indulge itself and treat others unjustly. He will not allow others to suffer evil. Goodness steps forward and does what it can to stop and control evil.

⇒ God is full of goodness.

“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD” (Ps. 33:5).

⇒ Believers are to be full of all goodness.

“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (Ro. 15:14).

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do some people consider “gentleness” as a weakness of character? What makes “gentleness” a strength? Would you consider yourself to be gentle according to God’s definition? Why or why not?
2. What kind of impact does the “fruit of goodness” have in the world today? When “goodness” is absent, what are some of the consequences?

7. There is the fruit of faith or faithfulness: it means to be faithful and trustworthy, to be loyal and steadfast in devotion and allegiance. It means to be constant, staunch, and enduring. A faithful person denies and sacrifices himself—all he is and has—and trusts God. He believes God and knows that God will work all things out for good. Therefore, he casts himself totally upon God and becomes faithful to God.

⇒ Faithfulness does not doubt God—not His salvation, provision, or strength to help.

⇒ Faithfulness does not begin with God then back off and give up.

⇒ Faithfulness does not walk with God then give in to the lusts of the flesh.

Faithfulness begins with God and continues with God. Faithfulness continues on and on; it never slackens or surrenders.

⇒ God is faithful.

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor.1:9).

“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations” (Ps. 89:1).

⇒ Believers are to be faithful.

“Moreover it is required in stewards [believers], that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).

QUESTIONS:

1. What does faithfulness not do? According to this definition, are you being faithful?
2. In what ways can you cultivate faithfulness in your life?

8. There is the fruit of meekness: it means to be gentle, tender, humble, mild, considerate, but strongly so. Meekness has the strength to control and discipline, and it does so at the right time.

a. Meekness has a humble state of mind. But this does not mean the person is weak, cowardly, and bowing. The meek person simply loves people and loves peace; therefore, he walks humbly among men regardless of their status and circumstance in life. Associating with the poor and lowly of this earth does not bother the meek person. He desires to be a friend to all and to help all as much as possible.

b. Meekness has a strong state of mind. It looks at situations and wants justice and right to be done. It is not a weak mind that ignores and neglects evil and wrong-doing, abuse and suffering.

⇒ If someone is suffering, meekness steps in and does what it can to help.

⇒ If evil is being done, meekness does what it can to stop and correct it.

⇒ If evil is running rampant and indulging itself, meekness actually strikes out in anger. However, note a crucial point: the anger is always at the right time and against the right thing.

c. Meekness has strong self-control. The meek person controls his spirit and mind. He controls the lusts of his flesh. He does not give way to ill-temper, retaliation, passion, indulgence, or license. The meek person dies to himself, to what his flesh would like to do, and he does the right thing—exactly what God wants done.

In summary, the meek man walks in a humble, tender, but strong state of mind; he denies himself, giving utmost consideration to others. He shows a control and righteous anger against injustice and evil. A meek man forgets and lives for others because of what Christ has done for him.

⇒ God is meek.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Ga. 5:22-23).

⇒ Jesus Christ was meek.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Mt. 11:29).

⇒ Believers are to be meek.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Ga. 6:1).

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some specific qualities of the “fruit of meekness”?
2. What challenges do you face when you need to possess the fruit of meekness? In what ways can you overcome these challenges?

9. There is the fruit of temperance: to master and control the body or the flesh with all of its lusts. It means self-control, the master of desire, appetite and passion, especially sensual urges and cravings. It means to be strong and controlled and restrained. It means to stand against the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life (1 Jn.2:15-16).

⇒ Self-control is of God, a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Ga.5:22-23).

⇒ The believer is to proclaim self-control to the lost.

“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Ac.24:25).

⇒ The believer is to control his sexual desires.

“But if they cannot contain [control], let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn” (1 Co.7:9).

⇒ The believer is to strenuously exercise self-control, just as an athlete controls himself.

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Co.9:25).

⇒ The believer is to grow in self-control.

“And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness” (2 Pe.1:6).

⇒ The aged believer is especially to be on guard to control himself.

“That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience” (Tit.2:2).

In concluding our discussion, we should remember that the fruit of the Spirit is the very nature of God (Ga.2:20; Ep.5:18). The believer is to walk in the Spirit; that is, he is to walk in such a consciousness of God and in such open confession that he is kept constantly clean from sin. God keeps him clean and pure and acceptable as though he were perfect. As the believer so walks in such an awareness of God, he assimilates the very nature of God and the Holy Spirit’s fruit is produced. No law can stand against such things.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the secret to having temperance or self-control as a part of your character?
2. Which trait of the fruit of the Spirit would others say is the strongest in your life? Why?
3. Which trait of the fruit of the Spirit would others say is the least noticed in your life? What things can you do to improve this trait in your life?
4. Are you comfortable with the quality of fruit being produced in your life? Why or why not?
5. If the fruit which is being produced in your life were

displayed in a grocery store, where would it be located:

- In the fresh produce section.
- In the dated, soon to spoil section.
- In the frozen food section.
- In the garbage can—the fruit is spoiled.

6. Are you making any effort to improve the quality and production of fruit in your life?

2. THE BELIEVER IS TO WALK BEARING A CRUCIFIED FLESH OR SINFUL NATURE (v.24).

This is a striking verse. Note several points.

1. Note the words, “they that are Christ’s.” A person becomes the property and the possession of Christ when he first trusts Christ as his Savior. When a person comes to Jesus Christ to save him, he is coming because he wants to be delivered from the enslavement and bondage of sin, death, and judgment. He wants to live forever with God. He does not want to continue being the slave of the flesh, subjected to its lusts, death and sure judgment. He wants to be saved from the flesh of a corruptible world. Therefore, when a person comes to Christ, he is turning away from the flesh to God; he is turning his back upon the mastery of the flesh and all that it stands for. He is turning to Jesus Christ as his new master. Consequently...

- the believer no longer belongs to the flesh; he belongs to Jesus Christ
- the flesh no longer possesses the believer; Jesus Christ possesses him
- the believer no longer serves the flesh; he serves the Lord Jesus Christ

2. Note that the believer has crucified the flesh with the affections (passions) and lusts. How? By dying with Jesus Christ. How can a person die with Jesus Christ? By an act of God. Only God can count a person to have died with Jesus Christ and it be true, an actual occurrence. This is exactly what God does. When a person genuinely believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that person’s belief and counts it as his death with Jesus Christ. God honors his faith by identifying him with Christ. God counts and considers the person...

- to have died in Christ’s death
- to be placed into Christ’s death
- to be identified with Christ’s death
- to be a partaker of Christ’s death

- to be in union with Christ’s death
- to be bound in Christ’s death

Now, note the point: if the believer is counted by God as having been crucified with Christ, then the believer...

- has died to the flesh
- has died to the passions of the flesh
- has died to the lusts of the flesh
- is freed from the flesh
- is freed from the passions of the flesh
- is freed from the lusts of the flesh

Once a person has died, he is dead. The rule and reign and the habits and desires of the flesh no longer have control over him. The flesh ceases to have a place or a position in his life. He is free from the flesh, free from...

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| • fleshly habits | • fleshly enslavement |
| • fleshly control | • fleshly condemnation |
| • fleshly bondage | • fleshly death |
| • fleshly judgment | |

To be crucified with Christ means that we no longer live in the flesh, in the place and position of the flesh. We cannot live apart from the flesh, for we are in this body upon this earth. But we are free from living after the flesh. We no longer follow the passions and lusts of the flesh. We desire and follow righteousness, seeking to please God in all that we do.

“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Ro. 6:2).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Ga. 2:20).

ILLUSTRATION:

The Christian believer belongs to Jesus. When your flesh rises up and wants to rebel against Him, remember this soldier’s example:

At a dinner given by a Grand Army Post, a veteran soldier was introduced as one of the speakers. In making the introduction, the presiding officer referred to the fact that the man who was to speak had lost a leg in the war, and the veteran was greeted with loud cheering as he arose to make the address.

He began by disavowing the introduction. “No,” he said, “that is a mistake. I lost nothing in the war, for, when we went into the war, we gave our country all that

we had, and all we brought back was so much clear gain.

The closer that you walk with Jesus, the farther away you will be from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. What have you crucified lately...or is it crucifying you?

QUESTIONS:

1. What things do you need to crucify in your life? Why are these things such a struggle for you?
2. What are you told to do in this verse?
3. This verse says that you are to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. What will it take for you to obey God, to actually do this?

3. THE BELIEVER IS TO WALK CONSISTENTLY WITH HIS POSITION IN GOD'S SPIRIT (v.25).

To be in Christ is to be in God's Spirit. When the believer trusts Jesus Christ as his Savior, God places His Spirit in the heart of the believer. The Spirit is placed there to guide and direct the believer day by day. Therefore, the believer is to walk in the Spirit; he is to live just as the Spirit of God directs. This is the point of this verse. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. The Spirit gives us life, the life of God; therefore, let us walk and live out the life He gives us.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro. 6:4).

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to live in the Spirit?
2. What barriers do you have to overcome in order to consistently walk in the Spirit?
3. What kind of advice would you give a Christian who was trying to live a life out of and not in the Spirit? Would your life be an example for them to imitate? Why or why not?

4. THE BELIEVER IS TO WALK FREE FROM SUPER-SPIRITUALITY AND ENVY (v.26).

When believers are challenged to live spiritual lives, there is always the danger that some will become super-spiritual and others will begin to envy the spiritual gifts of those who are genuinely spiritual and greatly blessed by God.

1. There is the danger of super—spirituality. There is the temptation of pride and of showing superiority. It is the attitude that says, “I have it, and you don't.” This attitude, of course, irritates and provokes people. It causes division

within the church.

“Woe unto you that are full [who say they are full]! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep” (Lu.6:25).

2. There is the danger of envy.

ILLUSTRATION:

There is a fine line to walk between living in the Spirit and in the flesh. One of the things that will trip us up is pride. Pride comes when we forget the Cross. Listen to this practical illustration and see how you relate to its point:

The growth chart had slipped from the playroom wall because the tape on its corners had become dry and brittle. Five-year-old Jordan hung it up again, meticulously working to get it straight. Then he stood his sister against the wall to measure her height.

“Mommy! Mommy! Anneke is forty inches tall!” he shouted as he burst into the kitchen. “I measured her.”

His mom replied, “That’s impossible, Sweetheart. She’s only 3 years old. Let’s go see.” They walked back into the playroom, where the mother’s suspicions were confirmed. Despite his efforts to hang the chart straight, Jordan had failed to set it at the proper height. It was several inches low.

We easily make Jordan’s mistake in gauging our spiritual growth or importance. Compared to a shortened scale, we may appear better than we are. Only when we stand against the Cross, that “Great leveler of men’ as A. T. Robertson called it, can we not think of ourselves “...higher than we ought to think.” Christ, Himself, must be our standard.

QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways does spiritual pride cause you to stumble? What is your role in preventing pride from controlling your life?
2. What are some of the consequences of becoming “super-spiritual”? Do you know anyone like this? How do people respond to the person?
3. How can you become aware of pride in your life? Through others pointing it out? Through God’s Word? How?

SUMMARY:

How fruitful are you? God wants you to bear His fruit increasingly, growing in Him day by day. From this session, He has told you how it is to be done:

Continued...

1. The believer is to walk bearing God's nature.
2. The believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh or sinful nature.
3. The believer is to walk consistently with his position in God's Spirit.
4. The believer is to walk free from super-spirituality and envy.
5. It is harvest time. Do you have any fruit to offer to God and to others?

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES

(Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

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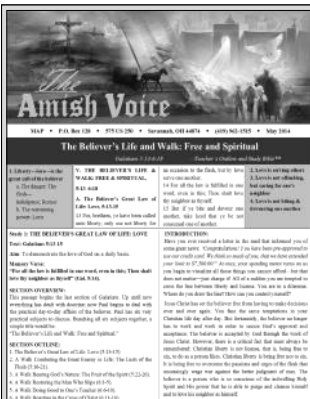
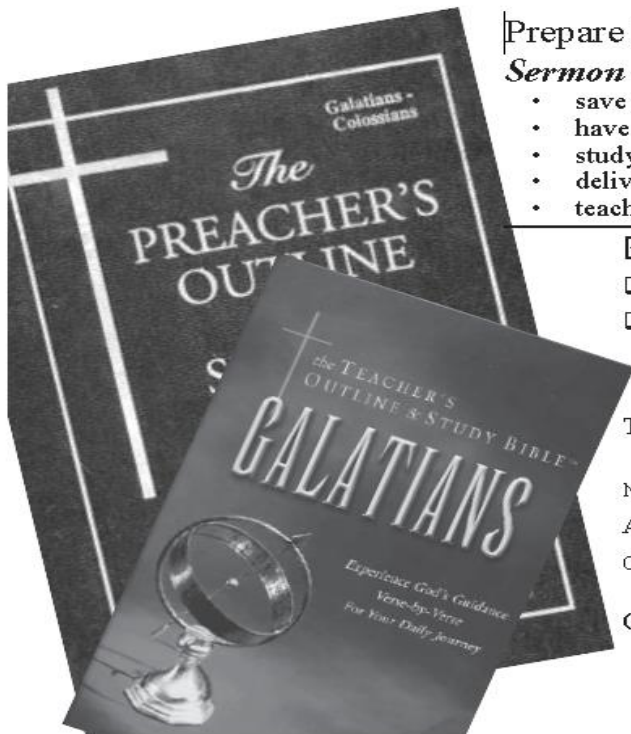
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the One who provides us with the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of everlasting life. This type of faith involves giving up on the idea that you can do anything on your own to earn your way into heaven. It is letting go of self, renouncing sin in your life, and turning your life completely over to Jesus Christ. It is not the same as believing in George Washington, in that it is beyond just head knowledge; it is believing with your heart. Consider the following scripture: *that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved* (Romans 10:9).

When your level of faith goes from the head to your heart, it means you believe with all your being that Jesus Christ and His grace alone can save you from sin and hell. You can add nothing! He paid it all! It is finished! When you, by faith, believe that, you are born again.

Four Levels of Faith

Believers can have:

No faith (Read Mark 4:35-41).

In this passage, we read about a storm that arose one evening as the disciples traveled on the sea. Jesus was sleeping in the stern of the ship, but the rain storm was so terrible that the disciples woke Jesus and cried, *“Master, carest thou not that we perish?”* (Mark 4:38).

The question revealed their lack of faith in God. Accordingly, Jesus responded, *“Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?”* (Mark 4:40).

It is important for us to understand the following two things about this occasion:

1.

Right before stepping into the ship that evening, Jesus had been teaching his disciples about the power of God. He had gone to great lengths to instruct them about

God’s Word being like a seed and to act on that Word; then He gave them a test to see if they had learned anything.

2.

Before they entered the ship, Jesus made it clear in verse 35: *“Let us pass over unto the other side.”* He didn’t tell them to drown halfway across. The Creator of the sea told them to go to the other side. If they had understood what He had been teaching them, they could have put faith in His Word and have gotten to the other side by placing their faith in His Word. They didn’t need to awaken Him.

Like them, whenever we begin to question whether or not God cares about us at all, we show our lack of faith.

Believers can have:

Little faith (Read Matthew 16:5-10).

The disciples, who had seen Jesus feed 5,000 people and then 4,000 more (Matthew 16:9-10), were still concerned about physical provision. Christ responded, *“O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?”* (Matthew 16:8).

Jesus was speaking of spiritual things and not carnal things. The disciples were carnal, not spiritual, and therefore missed His point (1 Corinthians 2:14). How do we become spiritual? In this verse, Jesus linked their hardened hearts to “little faith.” It is only through faith that we can become spiritually minded. How does faith come? Romans 10:17 shows that faith comes through hearing God’s Word.

Believers can have:

Great faith (Read Matthew 8:5-8).

When Jesus met the centurion, it was the perfect opportunity to teach the disciples about great faith. The centurion asked Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant, and he trusted Jesus’ word that it would be done. The centurion didn’t need signs or evidence of Jesus’ power. For that reason, Jesus said, *“Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel”* (Matthew

8:10).

Like the centurion, we exhibit great faith when we take Jesus at His word and trust Him so completely that we don’t require a sign that He will fulfill His promises to us.

Believers can have:

Failing faith (Read Luke 22:31-32).

Unfortunately, all of us falter at one point or another. Before it ever happened, Jesus predicted that even Simon Peter would experience a faith failure. In verses 31-32, the Lord said: *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”*

I need to remind each one of us that there are forces challenging our faith, and sometimes we will fail to trust God. Thank God that He is a God of second, third, and many more chances. Even when we fail and lose faith in His promises, we are always welcome to return to the Lord and seek His forgiveness. Our heavenly Father will even allow us to teach others about His unfailing faithfulness.

Why is Faith Necessary and Why Did God Make It a Christian Requirement?

The primary reason the Father wants us to have great faith is because we respond to Him in proportion to how much we trust Him. If we have great faith, He can entrust us with projects that will have a greater impact for His kingdom. Secondly, if the Christian faith did not require any faith at all, we would become stagnant in our walk with God and stop searching for a greater understanding of who He is.

Dear believer, always remember: *...we walk by faith, not by sight* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

We cannot even begin the journey God has in mind for us if we do not have saving faith. There is a terrible gap between intellectual faith and saving faith, and that gap can only be bridged by letting go of self righteousness and falling into God’s

Christianity: Faith or By Sight?
Continued from previous page

righteousness through Jesus Christ.

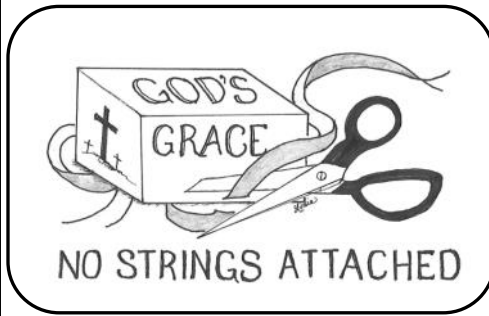
Before you place your faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, you do not have the Holy Spirit. When you are born again, from that moment on the Holy Spirit will direct and guide you in all truth (John 16:13).

Also, an individual does not display saving faith if he or she refuses to repent. If a person truly believes that Jesus is his or her Savior, he or she will want to turn away from anything that is contrary to Jesus' teaching.

In conclusion, let me remind us all that according to God's Word, salvation from our lost and sinful state does not come gradually over a long period of time, does not happen because you became such a good person that God decided to accept you into His beloved, does not happen because you got wet on baptism day, and does not happen because you became a member of a church, obeyed your parents, or were born into a certain Christian family or culture.

Salvation, or the new birth, happens the moment you let go of self, repent of your sins and self-righteousness, and place all your faith in Jesus Christ to give you everlasting life and total forgiveness of sins.

Ephesians 2:8-9: *For by [God's] grace are ye saved [from sin and hell] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the [free] gift of God: Not of [my own] works, lest any man should boast.*



Without faith, God's grace is wasted, and without grace, faith is powerless. Faith in God's grace has to be released to receive what God has provided through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:10).

God's grace is the same toward everyone. Titus 2:11 says, *For the grace of God that*

bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Therefore "all men" (mankind) have had salvation provided for them (1 John 2:2) and extended toward them by God's grace, but not all are saved. Why not? Not all people have combined faith with what God has done for them by grace.

Salvation is described as a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8). Like any other gift, it does not become yours until you reach out and accept it.

When someone gives you a present, you don't ask, "How much do I owe you?" Your only response should be, "Thank you very much." Many Christians, after receiving the gift of salvation, still think they must work to pay for their acceptance. The only acceptable response to salvation is gratitude and praise to God for His indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15).

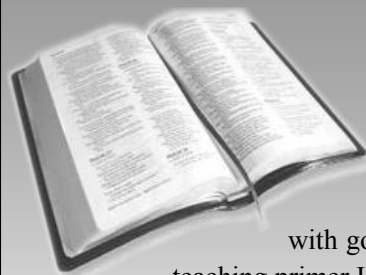
And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work (Romans 11:6).

The End

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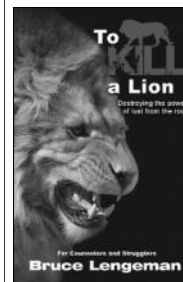
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Has there ever been anything as beautiful as a man and a woman walking in harmony? Coming together in marriage, harmonizing in music, yielding, giving, leading, following? King Solomon wrote of four things that were too wonderful for him to comprehend; one of the things was “the way of a man with a maid.” There is something amazing about the way a man and a woman interact with each other, especially when they are in God’s will.

I am concerned about how the world seems to be emasculating men by making women more like them. Don’t get me wrong; men and women are created equal. They are equal in value, equal in intelligence, and equal in importance. However, we are created different, too. Deliciously different! On purpose! The differences in our make-up, our talents, and our roles complement each other. These differences are necessary to bring balance in the relationship between a man and a woman. Each has something to offer that the other does not – a part of the beauty and glory of God unique to each one.

One of the reasons God created humans as male and female is because we each offer our own contribution to the glory of God when we are united as one. God is such an amazing deity with many facets to Himself, His wonder, and His glory. Men display some of those facets and women display others. The enemy’s agenda is to attack men and women, because he feels threatened by these things. Women offer beauty, sweetness, sensitivity, gentleness, and a nurturing heart that are not as strong in most men. Men exude strength, a raw, dangerous power, and a wild side that is not as evident in most women. Both sides display a part of God the other cannot.

The enemy has long attacked women and the beauty they have to offer, evidenced by certain cultures, especially the Muslim culture or Islamic religion.

Contrary to popular opinion, men are also under a grievous attack. However, most of us are totally blind to it, even within the

body of Christ. The naiveté of Christians today regarding this fact concerns me deeply.

I am referring to the natural design of God for men to be strong, protective leaders of their families, and the world’s rejection of this design. Since Lucifer’s fall, he has been intent on destroying the beautiful balance that God created in the world by making humankind both male and female. The enemy today attacks both sides, often by using one side to attack the other side they need so much, the side that complements them.

An example of this is how women have been degraded throughout the ages, even in Bible times. Women have been trampled on and viewed as having little more value than animals. They have been used by men, and have often been left unprotected and alone or in shame.

But the enemy has used women to steal from men as well. At one time women had almost no rights and were treated as lower class individuals. I believe that was wrong, but I also feel that the way women tried to rectify that was wrong. Women wanted to be treated fairly, but in the process they treated men so disrespectfully that they also lost the respect, cherishing, and protection they needed from them. Men were devalued and had their manhood robbed from them in many ways. Now we live in a world where women seem to have more rights than men. Men are quickly accused of abuse, but women can be abusive and get away with it. In GOD’S kingdom, His will is that we honor and respect each other for who we are. We need to acknowledge each other’s value and see our need of each other. In a culture of honor, God brings a balance that is very powerful, because it is an earthly picture of

a complete, perfect, and loving God. Because we struggle so much to find this honor and mutual respect for each other, those around us, including our children, cannot see God the way He intended they should. That is the purpose of marriage—to display in a sin-cursed earth that there is a wonderful, loving God, who can meet all our needs.

I want to encourage men everywhere to rise up to the challenge to be loving leaders and protectors. I commend those of you who have already been rising to that challenge, because I know it is not easy in today’s world where men have been emasculated until they are a mere whisper of what they were created to be. Lead with a compassionate, loving heart, but lead. A leader has the best interests of his family in mind. He puts them first, but he is not afraid to make choices for their benefit. He will communicate with them. He will at times need to make hard decisions, but they will be made after considering the needs and feelings of those for whom he cares.

As a wife, one of the greatest callings in my life is to build up and support my husband and empower him to be a godly leader, helping him see his hidden qualities. Instead, many times I find myself focusing on what I want, and without meaning to, I tear him down. Beside every strong man is a woman who believes in him and who is willing to put her own needs aside sometimes so that she can build him up. My husband is a very strong, godly leader, but it took him years to see it, because he was so used to being torn down and disrespected by the women in his life. For every negative word I spoke, I had to speak ten positive words to remove the negative ones from his mind.

I will tell you men a well-kept secret:



Continued on next page

Family Leadership, cont.

women want—no—NEED to feel cared for and protected. I am a very strong-natured gal. I know who I am and am not afraid to say what I think. I don't want to be suppressed or controlled, but because I am strong-natured, I need a very strong man with me to lead and protect me. This is not a weakness. It is a strength to understand that our men have something we need. They have something that complements us, something that fits us just right. I NEED to hit a brick wall sometimes. I NEED my husband to protect me and lead me. I need to know he is stronger than I am. All it takes to make me feel insecure is to know that I have a ton of control in our home, or that I am on my own in raising and leading the kids, or that I am not protected. I am not of any less value than my husband. I am just as important. I am just as intelligent (well, I will admit he has it on me in math); but I know that he finishes me; he completes

me. He offers what I lack, and I have much to offer him.

This piece was not written to tear men down, but rather to apologize, for I know we as women have aided the enemy

in his attack against you and who you have been created to be: a wild, dangerously-strong creature, made in the image of God, called to lead and protect, to subdue the earth, and to bring the kingdom of Heaven here.

I hope you read this with grace, because I know I don't have the whole picture yet. I am very passionate about this because of the havoc the enemy wreaked in my very own home, preventing my husband and me from being who we were created to be, and using us to fight each other and steal from each other.

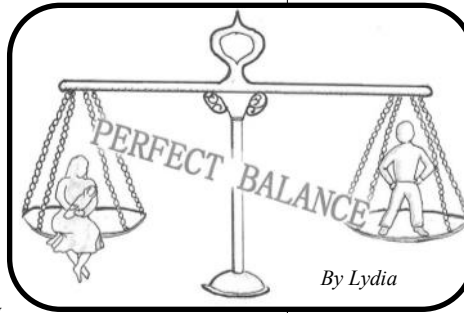
A word to the ladies now: please, if you

want your husband to love you, protect you, respect you, and empower you, then you must respect him and allow him to be a man. Allow him to make mistakes. He has strength you need. Don't cut him down; don't criticize him. Instead, let's encourage

our husbands and build them up. Let us be that one amazing woman in his life who is his greatest support and who has what it takes to complement him. As husband and wife we can be that model of balance in a team that God created.

Please don't think I am the perfect wife and have it all put together! My husband would laugh hard at that thought! I am just learning some things, and I want to share them as they are fresh on my heart, reminding myself that there is SO MUCH room for me to grow in this area.

The End



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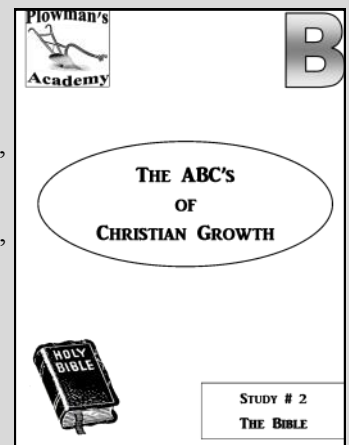
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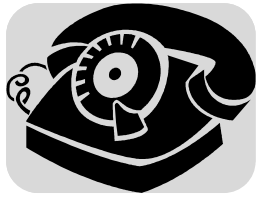
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1. September 07: Security of the Believer:

The Dance of Fear

We circle each other, skirting around,
Edging closer, then jumping out.
Slowly advancing, the swiftly retreating;
It's our little dance of fear.

We want to move in, but fear holds us back,
Hope draws us closer, then doubts pull us out.
Daring for a bit but unwilling to be hurt.
It's our little dance of fear.

Love is the answer, love is the key,
To keep moving forward when fears keep us cold.
One needs to go first, needs to take a risk
In the amazing dance of love.

By Lynn Miller

My Darling Daughter,

it is not My will that you go through this. My heart bleeds and cries with yours; but we won't let it go to waste, will we? Use this time to draw near to Me, with full assurance of faith, for I am faithful. You will not be in this place forever. I will not leave you comfortless. Listen for My soft voice in your ear as I lean over your shoulder in eagerness to share every moment with you, My love. You are not alone, in the good times or the bad times. I am just as present now, as when the sailing is smooth, even more so perhaps, because My heart throbs with yours

when you hurt. Your tears will not last forever. I will wipe them, and you will sing, laugh, and dance again. Rest assured in that fact. Hahahaha! Hahahaha! You will DANCE again, did you hear Me? Whoops, hollers, carrying on! Quiets down. Reach out in love, my dear. Be patient and choose love in each difficult moment. It will be worth it all.

For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning (Psalm 30:5).



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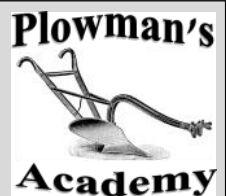
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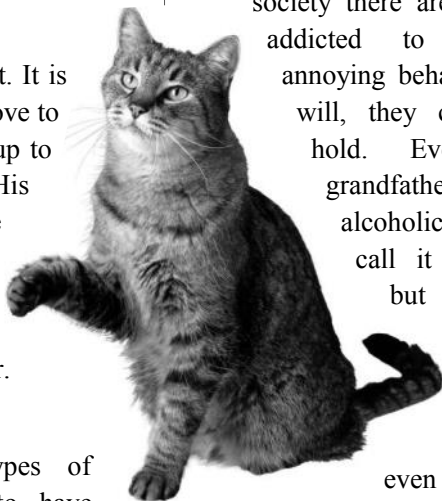
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The Bible says that we are sinners by nature. What does that mean? Could we stop sinning if we tried hard enough? Make the penalty very severe and people will not dare to break the law. Is that even possible?

A neighbor of ours has a cat. It is friendly and most of us all love to hear cats purr and snuggle up to you when you pet them. His fur is soft and smooth. The cat is very friendly and comes up to anyone. Everyone likes to pet him but he is by nature a hunter. That is a problem at times.



We also have many types of songbirds that we love to have around. We may put out birdseed and oranges to attract Orioles and Grosbeaks. Every so often, the cat, hunter that he is, catches and kills one. This makes his master very angry. I will only say that I would not like to be the cat when this occurs. If severe punishment could change his nature, he would never, never repeat his evil deeds; but he always does. No matter what you do, he repeats the crouching and the sneaking up on an unwary bird. It is safe to say that you cannot change his nature. So it is with people. What shall we do?

Luke 4:18-19 says: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

After Jesus quoted the above Scripture from Isaiah 61 of the deliverance of captives, it so enraged his audience that they tried to kill him right then by throwing him over a cliff. Read the story

for yourself.

What was He then talking about? You may say that you live in America and that you are free; but are you? In every society there are people who are addicted to destructive or annoying behavior. Try as they will, they cannot break the hold. Even my great-grandfather was an alcoholic. Today we might call it substance abuse, but he could not set himself free. No one can. Addiction is so powerful, that even if you know it will kill you, you cannot quit. It gets into your inner nature.

Sin is like that. Sin is not a substance, yet it can only be defeated through the deliverance of which Jesus spoke. Sin actually is part of our inborn nature. Without Jesus intervening, we remain captive until we are delivered. We cannot defeat sin and then become worthy of the kingdom of God. Oh, we could fool ourselves and think we can. We may even think we are doing pretty well, finding nothing in which to fault ourselves.

Therein lies the good news of the gospel. God knew how much trouble we were in. Mankind had to be more than just reformed; man had to be born anew. That is why Jesus came to earth. You can perhaps be trained to reform your ways, but peace with God will still be missing.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Romans 6: 5-6).

It now makes sense that the apostle Paul wrote, *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be* (Romans 8:7). Just as the cat cannot be trained to abstain from hunting, you and I cannot obey God without a new nature.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Ephesians 2:1-3).

That is why it was necessary for Jesus to offer the new birth. The inner man must die and a new man born. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John 3:3).

The End



Satan is not fighting churches; he is joining them. He does more harm by sowing tares than by pulling up wheat. He accomplishes more by imitation than by outright opposition.

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Current Resident



Christianity: Faith or By Sight?

—Joe Keim

Our God is a giving God and has given mankind many things in this life to use and enjoy. Among the many things He has given us, one shows up at the top of the list. Like all His gifts, this one cannot be bought with money; it is free, without strings attached. The gift I am going to discuss with you today is used continually throughout our lives, and the more we exercise it, the better and more powerful it becomes. It is named in the list of *fruit of the Spirit* in Galatians 5, and is illustrated for us throughout the entire Old and New Testaments. What is it? It is FAITH.

Faith, just like wisdom and many other gifts from heaven, is given to us in various proportions, or quantities. How do we know this? Because in Luke 17:5 we read: *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

We are not born knowing how to rely upon God, nor do we know the importance of depending upon His wisdom and strength. For that reason we must discover how to do so if we want to mature and grow in our walk with God.

Before we get started, let me say that the Bible speaks of three different types of

faith. There is intellectual faith, godly faith, and saving faith. Often we use these terms interchangeably, but they are not the same.

Three Types of Faith

Intellectual faith.

Intellectual faith—maybe the most difficult to explain—is a logical or knowledgeable faith. Both Christians and unbelievers can have intellectual faith. It is further defined as believing something to be true without having proof or making a commitment. For example, a person can intellectually believe that Jesus was a real person who walked the earth, helped others, and performed miracles, but come short of believing that He was God in human flesh.

Matthew 1:23: *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

See also John 1:1-3 and 14, John 20:28

A person with intellectual faith would, in a sense, believe the same way about Jesus as he or she believes about George Washington—a man described in our history books as being the first U.S. President.

Intellectual faith can be described as head knowledge, or in the case of George Washington, you know some things about him because of what you heard other people say, or read in history books, but you don't know him personally—you have never met him.

Godly faith.

Someone who has godly faith is fully confident that whatever the Lord has promised to do, He will absolutely fulfill. He has never failed to keep His word, and that will never change. Someone once said: God said it, I believe it, and that settles it. Truly, this is godly faith, and those who have been born of the Spirit should find themselves living with this kind of a mindset.

Before we look at the last type of faith, let me ask: Do you find it easier to place your faith in the fact that there is a heavenly city with golden streets than placing your faith in God for the things that are going on in your life from day to day?

Saving faith.

This is defined as trusting in Jesus Christ as