

Committed Christian Life

Spiritual Transformation



*But grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 3:18

8



CBLT

Contents

Spiritual Transformation	3
Introduction.....	5
I. The Meaning of the Term “Godliness”.....	6
II. Devotion to God.....	7
III. Godly Character.....	10
Conclusion.....	26
Appendix	29
The Fruit of the Spirit is Love.....	30
Impossible with Man, Possible with God.....	37

Spiritual Transformation

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What God desires and has promised is that He will transform us by the power of His Holy Spirit to become like Him. Many new believers experience great changes in their lives and life-styles at the beginning of their spiritual journey to the point that sometimes their previous associates and friends barely recognize their actions as being from the same person. And so God has begun a good work in the life of the new believer, but it is only the beginning. As long as we live on this earth He desires to continue to perfect and transform us, turning our hearts towards godliness. This lesson will begin to answer the following question: As a result of my walk with Christ, what changes in my character should be taking place?

This lesson is taken from the course *Committed Christian Life*. Other lessons in this course are:

- 1) “The Goal and Process of the Christian Life”
Do you know what the goal is? Are you struggling to be a “good” Christian? Learn what God wants to do in and through you in this supernatural life we are called to.
- 2) “The Power for the Spiritual Life”
Learn about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to unbelievers and believers and the three commands God’s Word gives us about the Holy Spirit.
- 3) “The War “
We are in a spiritual battle with a determined enemy. Learn about the evil one’s tactics and how to be victorious.
- 4) “Prayer: Worship and Praise”
Prayer is an expression of our relationship to God. Learn a fresh focus as you seek His face before you seek His hand.
- 5) “Prayer: Petition and Intercession”
Now with Almighty God in focus learn the joys of intercession. Included are the basic principles of prayer, hindrances to prayer and the importance of corporate prayer.
- 6) “Alive and Powerful — The Word Of God”
The Bible is our main source of communication from our Heavenly Father and the food of our spiritual lives. Learn how to make the most of this living, powerful resource.
- 7) “Walking By Faith”
The foundational principle of Kingdom living is faith. Learn how to deal with the challenges to faith as well as steps to knowing God’s will for your life.

- 9) “Understanding Suffering”
Learn the five purposes of suffering and how our response to suffering will make or break us. We alone decide whether suffering will drive us to bitterness, or to spiritual maturity.
- 10) “Fellowship in the Family”
Learn how to help build unity in the church, our “family”, how to deal with conflict and how to practice fellowship that honors Christ and brings joy to our hearts.
- 11) “Ministering To Your Fellowman”
This lesson which will challenge you as to examine how you can serve others. It will open your eyes to why God has given you gifts from His Holy Spirit, and how important it is for you to minister to those around you.
- 12) “Redeeming The Time”
What does the Bible say about work and how we should use our time? Do you know what your priorities are and do you set goals that reflect that? This lesson will help you redeem the time.
- 13) “Preparing for Revival”
There is much talk about revival, but little evidence of it. Take a look at the history of revivals and the principles we can use to bring revival now, here—in our own lives, in our church, in Ukraine.

Introduction

Transformation is a supernatural work of God. So, why have a lesson on spiritual transformation if it is something God does? Because even in this He does not work against our will. He wants us to desire Him, to desire more of Him, to desire what He desires, to desire to be like Him. Does He desire your life to be transformed? Of course He does. He desires your growth. And He wants you to desire it. The challenge is to deepen your commitment to Him, your love to Him. We hope this lesson will be another step up along your spiritual journey.

As you do this lesson, for the greatest benefit to your spiritual journey right now, we recommend three things:

- 1) Keep a spiritual journal, at least while you work your way through this lesson. This should include people and needs you are praying for, answers God gives and where you are reading in your Bible and what God is teaching you.
- 2) Make a goal to have a daily quiet time with the Lord. If you are in a leadership position we would challenge you to set aside an hour a day for one month. However if you do not already have a regular quiet time, start with a daily goal that you are willing to practice for one month.
- 3) Memorize 4 Bible verses. We suggest you choose 4 verses from Hebrews 11—the famous chapter on faith.

Throughout this lesson there are various questions, exercises and assignments that will help you interact with the material and apply it to your own life situation. Note that at the end of this lesson there is an answer key so that you may check your understanding of the material covered.

Use a notebook to write out your answers to the exercises. This is your “thinking” notebook so that you can put down your own answers and thoughts on what you are learning. Our learning is reinforced by writing it down so this is an excellent tool as you pursue growth in your personal life.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Meaning of the Term “Godliness”
- II. Devotion to God
 - A. Fear of God
 - B. Love of God
 - C. Desire for God
- III. Godly Character
 - A. Principles of Godly Character
 - B. Traits of Godly Character

Conclusion

LESSON OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson you should be able to:

1. Write a one-paragraph definition of the term “godliness” as used in the New Testament
2. Define each of the three elements of devotion to God
3. List and explain four principles of godly character
4. List and research thirteen Biblical character traits, and write a summary statement of the meaning of each one

5. Conduct an in-depth study of one of these characteristics in which you feel you are weak, listing areas of application in your own life, and develop a strategy for strengthening this area

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Review the Lesson Outline and study the objectives.
2. Read this lesson and do the questions and exercises, referring to the Bible and the assigned readings as requested.
3. Read the following assignments in the appendix:
“The Fruit of the Spirit is Love” Chapter 2 from *Absolute Surrender*
“Impossible with Man, Possible with God” Chapter 5 from *Absolute Surrender*
4. You may desire to concentrate on the character traits that you will be researching in this lesson during your Quiet Time. Just make sure that it is part of your seeking time with God and not the opportunity to get your work done.
5. Memorize four Bible verses while you study this lesson, preferably from Hebrews 11.
6. Do an in-depth application study of one character trait of godliness (Project).

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Godliness — Being so devoted to God that your life reflects His character and desires for you. Devotion to God that results in a life that is pleasing to Him.

I. The Meaning of the Term “Godliness”

If you were to ask several people to define or describe a godly man, you would no doubt get a variety of responses. Why? First, our thinking on the subject is prejudiced by our culture. In any given culture the Christian community has a pattern of behavior and practice that is accepted as the ideal expression of godly living. Second, we are influenced by our own personality. Those who are more pragmatic in nature tend to stress obedience and practical living, whereas the more emotional in nature tend to emphasize the inner experience of God. Third, most Christians have never done a serious study of the subject. Like far too much of our thinking, our concept of godly character comes more from our culture and personality than from the Bible.

In order to study godliness we need to have a clear understanding of its meaning. To put it briefly “godliness” describes our attitude of devotion to God.

We have an occurrence of this word in Acts 3:12. Peter was simply saying that the power to heal did not originate in their own “devotion to God” but, rather was due to the power of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the earlier epistles of Paul was to establish the gospel of grace, apart from any merit of our own. We do not see this word used in these earlier letters. Devotion to God, or godliness, is a characteristic reserved in his teaching for the letters to mature Christian leaders.

Because godliness has to do primarily with our devotion to God, it does not generally denote character; thus, it is presented as only one aspect of the Christian life. Yet, the general consensus of Biblical scholars historically is that this devotion to God **always leads** to a life that is worthy of the God to whom we are devoted. Thus, it is possible to speak of godly character. As Jerry Bridges states in his book *The Practice of Godliness*, that godliness is “devotion to God which results in a life that is pleasing to Him”¹

¹ Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1983), 20.



Exercise 1

Scriptural study of godliness. It is interesting how and where the word “godliness” is used in the New Testament. Below is a list of all of its occurrences, except the one in Acts we have already mentioned. Study each one and note in your notebook any information from the context that furthers your understanding.

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| a. 1 Timothy 2:2, 10 | e. 2 Timothy 3:5 |
| b. 1 Timothy 3:16 | f. Titus 1:1 |
| c. 1 Timothy 4:7, 8 | g. 2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7 |
| d. 1 Timothy 6:3, 5, 6, 11 | h. 2 Peter 3:11 |

From the information gathered in the study of the word “godliness”, now answer the following questions:



Exercise 2

Think about it. The apostle Paul uses the term “godliness” only in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Why do you think this is so?



Exercise 3

Decide if godliness is the whole or part of our character. Sometimes godliness is used to describe the whole of a person’s character. Why do you think that the word appears in a list with other character traits as if it were only one of many parts of a person’s character?



Exercise 4

Defining godliness. How would you define “godliness” on the basis of this brief study? Write a paragraph on this topic in your notebook for future reference.

II. Devotion to God

In *The Practice of Godliness* Bridges uses the example of Enoch as a picture of godliness. Read the brief history we have of Enoch in Genesis 5:18-24 and then Hebrews 11:5 now.

Enoch walked with God, and Enoch pleased God. His walk with God speaks of his relationship with God, or his devotion to God; his pleasing God speaks of the behavior that arose from that relationship. It is impossible to build a Christian behavior pattern without the foundation of a devotion to God. The practice of godliness is first of all the cultivation of a relationship with God, and from this the cultivation of a life that is pleasing to God. Our concept of God and our relationship with him determine our conduct.²



Question 1 Bridges refers to the two phrases that the Bible uses to describe Enoch—he “walked with” and “pleased” God. What relationship does he draw between the two?

² Bridges, 23.

This initial principle is vital in our understanding of Christian living. Our view of God and of how we relate to Him will determine the nature and quality of our living. Bridges calls this focus on God our devotion to God. By this he means making God the central point of our lives.

He mentions three elements which comprise our devotion to God: fear of God, love of God, and desire for God. The following diagram shows the relationship of these elements:³



Diagram 8

The fear of God is a foundational aspect of our devotion to God. It refers to our reverence and awe toward this holy God who has done so much for us, and yet is the Almighty, Eternal God. The other foundational aspect is our love for God which is commanded in the Scriptures. At the peak of the triangle is the desire for God which becomes stronger and stronger as our relationship with Him grows.

A. Fear of God

Let us consider a little further the fear of God. When we think of the word “fear” usually our thoughts are consumed with something that causes us anxiety. Words like “judgment” and “wrath”, make us tremble. But the other connotation of the word fear is one of reverent awe. Beholding something that is so great that we are overwhelmed with wonder.



Question 2 Which of the two is the primary meaning for the Christian?

The phrase “the fear of the Lord” is found often in Scripture as desirable, and the emphasis is on the concept of worship and reverence. We have already tried to emphasize in Lesson 4 the need to focus on God and how awesome and great He is during your quiet time

Bridges refers to the following three ingredients of the fear of God as given by Albert N. Martin.⁴

- (1) “correct concepts of the character of God”

One of our motivations for Bible study is to learn more about who God is. That is also why it is important to know the Old Testament as well as the New in order to get a more complete picture of His character.

- (2) “a pervasive sense of the presence of God”

“For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths.” Proverbs 5:21

³ Bridges, 24.

⁴ Bridges, 29.

“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.” Proverbs 15:3

“For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” 2 Chronicles 16:9

(3) “a constant awareness of our obligation to God.

We stand beholden to a mighty God Who has taken us from nothing to be saved by Him and cherished by Him.



Exercise 5

Personalize. Can you think of an example from your own experience where your fear or reverence for God affected an action or attitude? Describe it in your notebook.

B. Love of God

As important as the reverence for God is, it is only one aspect of true devotion to God. In order to have a balance in our devotion to God, we need to couple our fear of God with a proper understanding of the love of God.



Exercise 6

Fear and love. Bridges states that “only the God-fearing Christian can truly appreciate the love of God”⁵. Do you agree? Think it through and explain it.

All of us have experienced the love of God in His sacrifice of His Son to pay for our sins. We know the verse, “God so loved the world” and know that we are included in that. However God’s love is much more personal than that and a love that is hard for us to find words to describe. This love is so all-encompassing that Paul says, “I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

What is our response to that love? If we have any understanding of this magnificent and merciful love, we can only respond with love. Again we turn to the command from the Scriptures quoted by Jesus, “AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.” (Mark 12:30) That means total devotion to God, for a God who had the compassion to show His love even while we were still sinners. This love is something that we can never earn. We can only receive it and we can respond to it. The practical significance of the truth that God’s love is entirely of grace is that we do not have to earn it or fear losing it if we fail.



Question 3 What is our response when we grasp the wonder of the love of God?

C. Desire for God

What a marvelous motivation it is when we see God in both His majesty and His love. By maintaining this balanced view of our God, we are able to respond appropriately to Him. This response to God becomes our desire for God.

⁵ Bridges, p.30.

This is what we see in King David who expressed himself so passionately about God. He wrote, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalm 42:1-2) David was a man who saw God as the mighty Creator and expounded on His character. He was a man who loved God deeply and expressed it in obedience. And he was a man who was so devoted to God that he thirsted for more of Him. He longed to be with Him, rejoiced in being in God’s presence.

And what if we do not have this desire for God, this longing to be with Him, to have our soul’s thirst quenched by Him? Maybe we need to examine more closely what we really believe about God, how well we have really developed our relationship with Him. We know from the time of Adam that God wanted to have fellowship with man. We have already mentioned Enoch who walked with God. You can go on searching for Scripture and see the example of many men who walked closely with Him. You can only have this kind of fellowship if you really have a desire to be in His presence, to know Him better, to give Him your whole being—heart, soul, mind, strength.

III. Godly Character

Our devotion to God sets the tone for our Christian experience. This focus on God and on our relationship to Him is foundational in our progress toward maturity. This is not the whole picture, however. Devotion to God has a positive effect on who we are and what we do. In the remainder of this lesson we will concentrate on the character that springs forth from our relationship to God. Several general principles of godly character will be looked at; then we will study some specific character traits, their application, and their development.

A. Principles of Godly Character

There are a few principles that will help you in your quest for godliness.

1. Your love and desire for God will provide the right motivation to become godly

Picture a child in the presence of his father, who dotes on his father, who follows him wherever and whenever he can, who imitates his every action. What does a little boy want to be when he grows up? He wants to be just like his father. Any father who has the wisdom and love to give attention to his child will receive that same adoration. His father is his hero. As we come to our Father as His child it is that kind of relationship that drives us forward with a longing to grow up to be just like our Father.

2. No time with God; no godly character

This principle is closely related to the first. If you love God fully, you will desire to spend time with Him. As you spend time with Him you learn more of Who He is. As you see this demonstrated in Him, you can imitate it. But you cannot imitate someone with whom you are barely acquainted. It is a physical impossibility! God sent His son in human form so that we would have an exact model to follow. This is one of the reasons we have rather artificially set before you the opportunity to spend more time with God by requiring an hour a day of quiet time. It is your time to look up into the face of your Father and say, “I want to be just like you.”

3. To develop godliness we are dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives

There is no amount of self-effort in the world that will satisfy you if your desire is to be godly. It is the power of God within us that makes this possible.

Read Ephesians 3:16–21. This talks about the power to live the Christian life. Ephesians is a powerful resource on the Christian walk. When we want to know where we are headed, what is available to us, what our standing is with God, what He desires for us—this is a book with answers.



Question 4 What are some of the things Paul desires for these believers?

Our strength comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who can transform the inner man into what God desires to see. We also see here how knowing the love of Christ and responding to that helps us to be filled with the fullness of God. It is this relationship with Christ and this power provided through Him which takes the stress out of our development.



Take time now to read “Impossible with Man, Possible with God” in the appendix.



Question 5 What is Murray’s thesis in this chapter and how can we relate it to our spiritual transformation?

That does not mean that we do nothing and it just happens. It means that our desire is so great, our longing so deep, that God will make it happen through His power.

4. Godliness is a choice

Even though we can never become godly just through our own efforts, God definitely wants us to make the effort. He always gives us the choice of how much we want to grow, how far we want to go. That is why the Scripture very clearly tells us what we should not be doing and what we should be. As we make these day to day choices, knowing that we are still dependent on God’s power to perform it, He does. But only at our initiative. There is no place to not take responsibility or to just “wait” on God. Rather, He is waiting on us.

B. Traits of Godly Character

Let us review what we have learned so far. Devotion to God is the focus of the Christian life. There are three aspects to this. First, we must have a proper sense of the majesty of God. We call this fear or reverence. This is joined with a sense of the overwhelming love of God. The all-powerful, infinite, holy God of the universe loves us and paid the price for our sin that we might live in personal fellowship with Him. This leads to the third aspect, devotion. As we grasp the wonder of these truths, we are filled with the desire for God and for that fellowship. Far from being a legalistic religion majoring on rules and regulations, Christianity is at its core a vibrant, vital relationship with a personal God.

As this relationship grows and deepens, a life that is pleasing to God is the result. We begin to take on His character. We are individually responsible to develop this character, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to empower us to accomplish it. The positive development of our character will lead us to lay aside those things that are contrary to the nature of God. While our God-given personalities will make it easier to display certain character traits, we are responsible to be work-

ing on all areas. This process is a lifelong journey toward maturity, and thus we must ever look to strengthen every area of our character.

This is not to say that we will all be alike. God has given each one of us unique personalities and placed us in specific cultural settings. How this character is manifested in someone else's life will not necessarily be how it is manifested in yours. Each one of us is to have a vital, growing relationship with Christ that will produce certain character qualities that reflect the nature of God. We are to encourage one another in our walks with the Lord without demanding that everyone else be like we are and do like we do.

With this foundation established, we can now look at some specific character traits that are to be evident in our lives. The first question that arises is, What are the characteristics that I should display? We can begin with Galatians 5:22-23. This is not a complete list. All of these characteristics appear as commands with other traits in other places. Bible teachers have come up with various lists. One well-known teacher in the U.S. lists forty-nine desirable character traits for the believer. For this study we will limit it to thirteen. There is nothing sacred or definitive about this list. This is not to suggest that this is the sum total of Christian character. In fact, you are encouraged to add any others that you deem important.



PROJECT (Part 1): The Traits of a Godly Character

Our study of the traits of a godly man will be left to your own work. For each of the thirteen characteristics a guide is provided giving a short summary definition of the Biblical word and a list of references for you to study to broaden your understanding.

Of these thirteen characteristics you are to choose seven of them to work with. Study each of the verses. Read the context of each verse, and note any help this gives in understanding the concept. Some of the references are examples of the particular trait in God's character, and some are commands for us to obey. Note from each reference if any benefits are given to those who possess a certain trait or any warnings to those who are weak. Also, try to define what the opposite of each characteristic might be. You may also want to add references of your own that you have found helpful.

Then write out the benefits you have discovered from that trait and also what is the opposite of it. Often we see more clearly when we look at the negative side.

Finally, for each of the seven traits you have chosen write a summary of its meaning and its implications. If you have time, think through your own experience, and give one positive and one negative example. If there are any other comments that you would like to make concerning your study, write them in your notebook for future reference.

Set up a page in your notebook for each character trait as shown in the pages that follow. You will write all of your research in your notebook, not in this workbook. (You may want to leave space for all thirteen traits so that you can return to this in the future and study the other traits.)



Before you start on this project read "The Fruit of the Spirit is Love" in the appendix. This first trait is powerful—and too often neglected in the church overall.

1. Love

Definition: The willful choosing and doing of whatever is best for the one who is the object of your love.

References to research:

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- Colossians 3:14
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12
- 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10
- 1 Peter 1:22
- 1 Peter 4:8
- 1 John 3:16
- 1 John 4:7-11
- 1 John 4:20-21

Benefits of Love

Opposite of Love

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

2. Humility

Definition: Difficult to precisely define, humility has at its root the idea of a proper assessment of who a person is. It recognizes the fact that a person has or is a gift from the infinite God of the universe. It is the conscious effort not to draw attention to yourself either by boasting in any strength or by unduly elevating any weakness.

References to research:

- Proverbs 15:33
- Proverbs 18:12
- Proverbs 22:4
- Isaiah 57:15
- Isaiah 66:1-2
- Micah 6:8
- Zephaniah 2:3
- Matthew 18:2-4
- Luke 18:10-14
- Acts 20:19
- Ephesians 4:2
- Philippians 2:3
- Colossians 3:12
- James 4:6
- 1 Peter 5:5

Benefits of Humility

Opposite of Humility

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

3. Contentment

Definition: A steady restfulness of spirit, a freedom from care, based on satisfaction with one's situation. Twice, by Paul, it is used in the sense of sufficiency (2 Cor. 9:8; 2 Cor. 12:9).

References to research: Even though not all of these mention the word "contentment" or "contented" they all have something to say about it.

- Psalm 16:6
- Psalm 37:7
- Psalm 37:16
- Proverbs 14:14
- Proverbs 16:8
- Proverbs 17:1
- Proverbs 30:8
- Ecclesiastes 4:6
- Ecclesiastes 5:12
- Matthew 6:24-34
- Luke 3:14
- Philippians 4:11, 12
- 1 Timothy 6:6
- 1 Timothy 6:8
- Hebrews 13:5
- 2 Corinthians 9:8
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Benefits of contentment

Opposite of contentment

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

4. Thankfulness

Definition: Heartfelt gratitude to the One from whom we receive all things. An acknowledgment of the Source of all life.

References to research:

- Psalm 69:30
- Psalm 95:2
- Psalm 136:1-3
- Luke 17:11-19
- Romans 1:21
- Romans 14:6-7
- 1 Corinthians 1:4
- 1 Corinthians 15:57
- Ephesians 5:4
- Ephesians 5:20
- Philippians 1:3-5
- Philippians 4:6
- Colossians 2:7
- Colossians 3:15-17
- Colossians 4:2
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- 1 Timothy 4:4
- Revelation 7:12

Benefits of thankfulness

Opposite of thankfulness

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

5. Joy

Definition: Exultation of my soul arising from my relationship to God. Joy is not conditional on any circumstances.

References to research:

- Nehemiah 8:10
- Psalm 4:7
- Psalm 5:11
- Psalm 16:11
- Psalm 51:12
- Proverbs 17:22
- Ecclesiastes 2:26
- Isaiah 35:10
- Isaiah 61:3
- Jeremiah 15:16
- Luke 2:10
- John 15:11
- John 17:13
- Acts 5:41
- Acts 16:23-25
- Romans 14:17
- Romans 15:13
- Philippians 4:4
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- 1 Peter 1:6-8
- 1 Peter 4:13

Benefits of joy

Opposite of joy

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

6. Holiness

Definition: To be set apart. For the believer it means separation from sin and separation unto God. It has inherent in it the idea of moral purity—purity of life. Refer to Lesson 1 as needed.

References to research:

- Leviticus 20:7
- Job 31:1
- Psalm 24:3-4
- Romans 6:19
- Romans 12:1-2
- 1 Corinthians 3:17
- 2 Corinthians 7:1
- Ephesians 4:24
- Ephesians 5:3-5
- Ephesians 5:25-27
- Colossians 3:5,12
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:22
- 1 Timothy 2:8
- 2 Timothy 1:9
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Titus 2:11-12
- Hebrews 12:10
- Hebrews 13:18
- 1 Peter 1:15
- 1 Peter 2:11,12
- 2 Peter 3:11
- Revelation 22:11-12

Benefits of Holiness

Opposite of Holiness

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

7. Self-Control

Definition: Mastery of our emotions, desires, drives, and actions in the interest of higher ends and ideals.

References to research:

- Proverbs 16:32
- Proverbs 21:17
- Proverbs 23:1-2
- Proverbs 25:16
- Proverbs 25:28
- Acts 24:25
- Romans 6:12
- 1 Corinthians 7:9
- 1 Corinthians 9:25-27
- Galatians 5:23
- Titus 1:7-8
- Titus 2:12
- James 3:2
- 2 Peter 1:5-7

Benefits of Self-Control

Opposite of Self-Control

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

8. Faithfulness

Definition: Loyalty and dependability. Diligently doing anything you are called upon to do. Never forsaking the task or the one whom you are serving.

References to research:

- 2 Kings 12:15
- Psalm 101:6
- Proverbs 25:13
- Proverbs 28:20
- Matthew 24:45-46
- Matthew 25:21, 23
- Luke 12:42-48
- Luke 16:10-12
- 1 Corinthians 1:9
- 1 Corinthians 4:2
- Colossians 4:7-9
- 1 Timothy 3:11
- 2 Timothy 2:2
- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Hebrews 2:17
- Hebrews 3:2
- Revelation 1:5

Benefits of Faithfulness

Opposite of Faithfulness

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

9. Peace

Definition: A state of tranquility and quiet as a result of being in harmony with God and with our fellow man.

References to research:

- Matthew 11:28-30
- Mark 9:50
- John 14:27
- John 16:33
- Romans 5:1
- Romans 8:6
- Romans 12:18
- 2 Corinthians 13:11
- Ephesians 4:3
- Philippians 4:7
- Philippians 4:9
- Colossians 3:15
- 1 Thessalonians 5:13
- 2 Timothy 2:22
- 1 Peter 3:11

Benefits of Peace

Opposite of Peace

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

10. Patience

Definition: Endurance in present situations because of a higher goal and good. Facing delay without depression, oppression without retaliation, and suffering without relenting.

References to research:

- Romans 2:4
- Romans 9:22
- 1 Corinthians 13:4
- 2 Corinthians 6:6
- Ephesians 4:2
- Colossians 1:11
- Colossians 3:12
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14
- 1 Timothy 1:16
- 2 Timothy 2:24
- 2 Timothy 3:10
- 2 Timothy 4:2
- Hebrews 6:12
- James 5:7-8
- James 5:10-11
- 1 Peter 2:20

Benefits of Patience

Opposite of Patience

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

11. Kindness

Definition: The inner disposition of friendliness and generosity that truly seeks to meet the needs of others.

References to research:

- Proverbs 3:3
- Proverbs 19:22
- Hosea 10:12
- Micah 6:8
- Luke 6:35
- 1 Corinthians 13:4
- 2 Corinthians 6:6
- Ephesians 2:7
- Ephesians 4:32
- Colossians 3:12
- 1 Peter 2:3

Benefits of Kindness

Opposite of Kindness

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

12. Goodness

Definition: Activity calculated to meet the needs of others. It is the activity born out of kindness.

References to research:

- Matthew 25:31-46
- Luke 6:35
- Acts 9:36
- Acts 10:38
- Galatians 6:9-10
- 1 Timothy 5:9-10

Benefits of Goodness

Opposite of Goodness

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments

13. Meekness

Definition: Submission to God and to others of my personal rights. The control of my desire to assert myself. (This trait is strongly associated with gentleness in Scripture so we have chosen to limit our study to meekness.)

References to research:

- 1 Corinthians 4:21
- 2 Corinthians 10:1
- Galatians 6:1
- Ephesians 4:2
- Colossians 3:12
- 1 Timothy 6:11
- 2 Timothy 2:25
- Titus 3:2
- James 1:21
- James 3:13
- 1 Peter 3:15

Benefits of Meekness

Opposite of Meekness

Summary Definition

Positive Personal Example

Negative Personal Example

Additional Comments



PROJECT (Part 2): Application

You have now studied several characteristics of a godly man. Yet, it is not enough just to study and understand these traits. You must apply them. It is also true that to try to apply all of this material at one time would be overwhelming. So your assignment is to choose one of the areas in which you feel the weakest and work through a more detailed application study.

The goal of this assignment is for you to pinpoint sources that affect you negatively and develop a strategy for strengthening this particular area of your life. To do this, work through the following steps:

1. Review the research you have done on the trait you choose.
2. Make a list of the people that are affected by your display of, or your failure to display, this trait.
3. Make a list of every area in your life where this characteristic applies.
4. List as many things as you can think of that are detrimental to your displaying the trait.
5. Construct a strategy for strengthening this area. Finish the statement: "In order to accomplish this in my life, I will . . ." This could mean further Bible study or memorization of passages that deal with this area. It could mean establishing accountability with another person who will check you on your progress. It definitely means spending more time in prayer about it. Be creative. The important thing is to begin to do something to initiate progress.
6. Be prepared to share, in general terms, at your next group meeting how God is working in your life in the area that you chose.

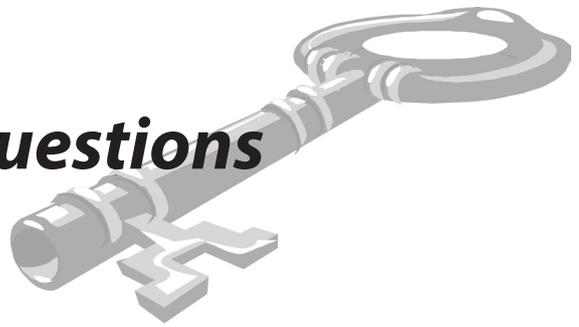
This assignment is the most important part of the lesson. Take the time that is necessary to think through these issues.

Conclusion

We are given the privilege in Christ to walk in fellowship with the God of the universe. To do anything less than make Him the focus of our lives is to miss the central reason for our salvation. This devotion to God is made up of a proper view of God, merging together a healthy understanding of both His majesty and His love. The more we focus our attention on Him and live in the intimate fellowship that He offers to us, the more we grow into His likeness. This godly character becomes the foundation for a life of obedience to Him. And from it pours our ministry to the heart and needs of others both within the body of Christ and without.

If you have enjoyed this lesson we would recommend that you would take more from the course *Committed Christian Life*. Also, please note that *Absolute Surrender* by Andrew Murray is available as a complete book. Ask your leader.

Answers to questions



Question 1

His walk refers to his devotion to God, whereas his pleasing God refers to his life behavior that came from that walk.

Question 2

Reverent awe is primary.

Question 3

We love Him.

Question 4

Your answer should contain at least the following two points:

1. to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man
2. to know the love of Christ so that they may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Question 5

Your answer should be similar to the following idea:

We can never live the Christian life in our own strength. It is impossible. But “with God” all things are possible and He provides the power for our spiritual transformation. We do not need to be wretched miserable strugglers! We can thank God in the joy of His Holy Spirit for what He is doing and will do!

Answers to exercises



Exercise 1

Your answer

Exercise 2

It is possible that he reserves the term for letters to mature leaders. His earlier epistles concentrated on the gospel of grace apart from anything we do.

Exercise 3

It specifically deals with our devotion to God and thus is one of many qualities to be pursued.

Exercise 4

Your answer should include the following:

- a. It primarily refers to our devotion to God
- b. It is a sign of maturity

Exercise 5

Your answer. If we have a right view of His person in all of His holiness, together with a sense that He is present and knows all our thoughts and actions, and finally understanding how much He has done and is doing for us, it must affect how we live.

Exercise 6

Your answer. We understand the love of God against the backdrop of the judgment of a holy God, whose judgment we deserve.

Appendix

This appendix includes two chapters from the book *Absolute Surrender* by Andrew Murray. If you have not been introduced to this book or this author you may want to get the whole book to read. It has been introduced in other lessons in this course.

Chapter 2, “The Fruit of the Spirit is Love”

Chapter 5, “Impossible with Man, Possible with God”

The Fruit of the Spirit is Love

I want to look at the fact of a life filled with the Holy Spirit more from the practical side, and to show how this life will show itself in our daily walk and conduct.

Under the Old Testament you know the Holy Spirit often came upon men as a divine Spirit of revelation to reveal the mysteries of God, or for power to do the work of God. But He did not then dwell in them. Now, many just want the Old Testament gift of power for work, but know very little of the New Testament gift of the indwelling Spirit, animating and renewing the whole life. When God gives the Holy Spirit, His great object is the formation of a holy character. It is a gift of a holy mind and spiritual disposition, and what we need above everything else, is to say: "I must have the Holy Spirit sanctifying my whole inner life if I am really to live for God's glory."

You might say that when Christ promised the Spirit to the disciples, He did so that they might have power to be witnesses. True, but then they received the Holy Spirit in such heavenly power and reality that He took possession of their whole being at once and so fitted them as holy men for doing the work with power as they had to do it. Christ spoke of power to the disciples, but it was the Spirit filling their whole being that worked the power.

I wish now to dwell upon the passage found in Galatians 5:22: "*The fruit of the Spirit is love.*"

We read that "*Love is the fulfilling of the law*" (Romans 13:10), and my desire is to speak on love as a fruit of the Spirit with a twofold object. One is that this word may be a searchlight in our hearts, and give us a test by which to try all our thoughts about the Holy Spirit and all our experience of the holy life. Let us try ourselves by this word. Has this been our daily habit, to seek the being filled with the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of love? "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Has it been our experience that the more we have of the Holy Spirit the more loving we become? In claiming the Holy Spirit we should make this the first object of our expectation. The Holy Spirit comes as a Spirit of love.

Oh, if this were true in the Church of Christ how different her state would be! May God help us to get hold of this simple, heavenly truth that the fruit of the Spirit is a love which appears in the life, and that just as the Holy Spirit gets real possession of the life, the heart will be filled with real, divine, universal love.

One of the great causes why God cannot bless His Church is *the want of love*. When the body is divided, there cannot be strength. In the time of their great religious wars, when Holland stood out so nobly against Spain, one of their mottoes was: "Unity gives strength." It is only when God's people stand as one body, one before God in the fellowship of love, one toward another in deep affection, one before the world in a love that the world can see—it is only then that they will have power to secure the blessing which they ask of God. Remember that if a vessel that ought to be one whole is cracked into many pieces, it cannot be filled. You can take a potsherd, one part of a vessel, and dip out a little water into that, but if you want the vessel full, the vessel must be whole. That is literally true of Christ's Church, and if there is one thing we must pray for still, it is this: Lord, melt us together into one by the power of the Holy Spirit; let the Holy Spirit, who at Pentecost made them all of one heart and one soul, do His blessed work among us. Praise God, we can love each other in a divine love, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love." Give yourselves up to love, and the Holy Spirit will come; receive the Spirit, and He will teach you to love more.

God Is Love

Now, why is it that the fruit of the Spirit is love? *Because God is love* (1 John 4:8).

And what does that mean?

It is the very nature and being of God to delight in communicating Himself. God has no selfishness, God keeps nothing to Himself. God's nature is to be always giving. In the sun and the moon

and the stars, in every flower you see it, in every bird in the air, in every fish in the sea. God communicates life to His creatures. And the angels around His throne, the seraphim and cherubim who are flames of fire—whence have they their glory? It is because God is love, and He imparts to them of His brightness and His blessedness. And we, His redeemed children—God delights to pour His love into us. And why? Because, as I said, God keeps nothing for Himself. From eternity God had His only begotten Son, and the Father gave Him all things, and nothing that God had was kept back. *“God is love.”*

One of the old Church fathers said that we cannot better understand the Trinity than as a revelation of divine love—the Father, the loving One, the Fountain of love; the Son, the beloved one, the Reservoir of love, in whom the love was poured out; and the Spirit, the living love that united both and then overflowed into this world. The Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son is love. And when the Holy Spirit comes to us and to other men, will He be less a Spirit of love than He is in God? It cannot be; He cannot change His nature. The Spirit of God is love, and “the fruit of the Spirit is love.”

Mankind Needs Love

Why is that so? That was the one great need of mankind, that was the thing which Christ’s redemption came to accomplish: *to restore love to this world.*

When man sinned, why was it that he sinned? Selfishness triumphed—he sought self instead of God. And just look! Adam at once begins to accuse the woman of having led him astray. Love to God had gone, love to man was lost. Look again: of the first two children of Adam the one becomes a murderer of his brother.

Does not that teach us that sin had robbed the world of love? Ah! what a proof the history of the world has been of love having been lost! There may have been beautiful examples of love even among the heathen, but only as a little remnant of what was lost. One of the worst things sin did for man was to make him selfish, for selfishness cannot love.

The Lord Jesus Christ came down from Heaven as the Son of God’s love. *“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son”* (John 3:16). God’s Son came to show what love is, and He lived a life of love here upon earth in fellowship with His disciples, in compassion over the poor and miserable, in love even to His enemies, and He died the death of love. And when He went to Heaven, whom did He send down? The Spirit of love, to come and banish selfishness and envy and pride, and bring the love of God into the hearts of men. *“The fruit of the Spirit is love.”*

And what was the preparation for the promise of the Holy Spirit? You know that promise as found in the fourteenth chapter of John’s Gospel. But remember what precedes in the thirteenth chapter. Before Christ promised the Holy Spirit, He gave a new commandment, and about that new commandment He said wonderful things. One thing was: *“Even as I have loved you, so love ye one another,”* To them His dying love was to be the only law of their conduct and intercourse with each other. What a message to those fishermen, to those men full of pride and selfishness! *“Learn to love each other,”* said Christ, *“as I have loved you.”* And by the grace of God they did it. When Pentecost came, they were of one heart and one soul. Christ did it for them.

And now He calls us to dwell and to walk in love. He demands that though a man hate you, still you love him. True love cannot be conquered by anything in Heaven or upon the earth. The more hatred there is, the more love triumphs through it all and shows its true nature. This is the love that Christ commanded His disciples to exercise.

What more did He say? *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (John 13:35).

You all know what it is to wear a badge. And Christ said to His disciples in effect: “I give you a badge, and that badge is love. That is to be your mark. It is the only thing in Heaven or on earth by which men can know me.”

Do we not begin to fear that love has fled from the earth? That if we were to ask the world: “Have you seen us wear the badge of love?” the world would say: “No; what we have heard of the Church of Christ is that there is not a place where there is no quarreling and separation.” Let us ask God with one heart that we may wear the badge of Jesus’ love. God is able to give it.

Love Conquers Selfishness

“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” Why? Because *nothing but love can expel and conquer our selfishness.*

Self is the great curse, whether in its relation to God, or to our fellow-men in general, or to fellow-Christians, thinking of ourselves and seeking our own. Self is our greatest curse. But, praise God, Christ came to redeem us from self. We sometimes talk about deliverance from the self-life—and thank God for every word that can be said about it to help us—but I am afraid some people think deliverance from the self-life means that now they are going to have no longer any trouble in serving God; and they forget that deliverance from self-life means to be a vessel overflowing with love to everybody all the day.

And there you have the reason why many people pray for the power of the Holy Spirit, and they get something, but oh, so little! because they prayed for power for work, and power for blessing, but they have not prayed for power for full deliverance from self. That means not only the righteous self in intercourse with God, but the unloving self in intercourse with men. And there is deliverance. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” I bring you the glorious promise of Christ that He is able to fill our hearts with love.

A great many of us try hard at times to love. We try to force ourselves to love, and I do not say that is wrong; it is better than nothing. But the end of it is always very sad. “I fail continually,” such a one must confess. And what is the reason? The reason is simply this: Because they have never learned to believe and accept the truth that the Holy Spirit can pour God’s love into their heart. That blessed text; often it has been limited! — “*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts*” (Romans 5:5). It has often been understood in this sense: It means the love of God *to me*. Oh, what a limitation! That is only the beginning. The love of God is always the love of God in its entirety, in its fullness as an indwelling power, a love of God to me that leaps back to Him in love, and overflows to my fellow-men in love—God’s love to me, and my love to God, and my love to my fellow-men. The three are one; you cannot separate them.

Do believe that the love of God can be shed abroad in your heart and mine so that we can love all the day.

“Ah!” you say, “how little I have understood that!”

Why is a lamb always gentle? Because that is its nature. Does it cost the lamb any trouble to be gentle? No. Why not? It is so beautiful and gentle. Has a lamb to study to be gentle? No. Why does that come so easy? It is its nature. And a wolf—why does it cost a wolf no trouble to be cruel, and to put its fangs into the poor lamb or sheep? Because that is its nature. It has not to summon up its courage; the wolf-nature is there.

And how can I learn to love? Never until the Spirit of God fills my heart with God’s love, and I begin to long for God’s love in a very different sense from which I have sought it so selfishly, as a comfort and a joy and a happiness and a pleasure to myself; never until I begin to learn that “God is love,” and to claim it, and receive it as an indwelling power for self-sacrifice; never until I begin to see that my glory, my blessedness, is to be like God and like Christ, in giving up everything in myself for my fellow-men. May God teach us that! Oh, the divine blessedness of the love with which the Holy Spirit can fill our hearts! “The fruit of the Spirit is love.”

Love Is God's Gift

Once again I ask, Why must this be so? And my answer is: *Without this we cannot live the daily life of love.*

How often, when we speak about the consecrated life, we have to speak about *temper*, and some people have sometimes said: "You make too much of temper."

I do not think we can make too much of it. Think for a moment of a clock and of what its hands mean. The hands tell me what is within the clock, and if I see that the hands stand still, or that the hands point wrong, or that the clock is slow or fast, I say that something inside the clock is not working properly. And temper is just like the revelation that the clock gives of what is within. Temper is a proof whether the love of Christ is filling the heart, or not. How many there are who find it easier in church, or in prayer-meeting, or in work for the Lord—diligent, earnest work—to be holy and happy than in the daily life with wife and children; easier to be holy and happy outside the home than in it! Where is the love of God? In Christ. God has prepared for us a wonderful redemption in Christ, and He longs to make something supernatural of us. Have we learned to long for it, and ask for it, and expect it in its fullness?

Then there is the *tongue!* We sometimes speak of the tongue when we talk of the better life, and the restful life, but just think what liberty many Christians give to their tongues. They say: "I have a right to think what I like."

When they speak about each other, when they speak about their neighbors, when they speak about other Christians, how often there are sharp remarks! God keep me from saying anything that would be unloving; God shut my mouth if I am not to speak in tender love. But what I am saying is a fact. How often there are found among Christians who are banded together in work, sharp criticism, sharp judgment, hasty opinion, unloving words, secret contempt of each other, secret condemnation of each other! Oh, just as a mother's love covers her children and delights in them and has the tenderest compassion with their foibles or failures, so there ought to be in the heart of every believer a motherly love toward every brother and sister in Christ. Have you aimed at that? Have you sought it? Have you ever pleaded for it? Jesus Christ said: "As I have loved you... love one another" (John 13:34). And He did not put that among the other commandments, but He said in effect:

"That is a new commandment, the one commandment: Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

It is in our daily life and conduct that the fruit of the Spirit is love. From that there comes all the graces and virtues in which love is manifested: joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness; no sharpness or hardness in your tone, no unkindness or selfishness; meekness before God and man. You see that all these are the gentler virtues. I have often thought as I read those words in Colossians, "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Colossians 3:12), that if we had written this, we should have put in the foreground the manly virtues, such as zeal, courage, and diligence; but we need to see how the gentler, the most womanly virtues are especially connected with dependence upon the Holy Spirit. These are indeed heavenly graces. They never were found in the heathen world. Christ was needed to come from Heaven to teach us. Your blessedness is longsuffering, meekness, kindness; your glory is humility before God. The fruit of the Spirit that He brought from Heaven out of the heart of the crucified Christ, and that He gives in our heart, is first and foremost—love.

You know what John says: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us" (1 John 4:12). That is, I cannot see God, but as a compensation I can see my brother, and if I love him, God dwells in me. Is that really true? That I cannot see God, but I must love my brother, and God will dwell in me? Loving my brother is the way to real fellowship with God. You know what John further says in that most solemn test, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother,

he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). There is a brother, a most unlovable man. He worries you every time you meet him. He is of the very opposite disposition to yours. You are a careful businessman, and you have to do with him in your business. He is most untidy, unbusiness-like. You say: "I cannot love him."

Oh, friend, you have not learned the lesson that Christ wanted to teach above everything. Let a man be what he will, you are to love him. Love is to be the fruit of the Spirit all the day and every day. Yes, listen! If a man loves not his brother whom he hath seen—if you don't love that unlovable man whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen? You can deceive yourself with beautiful thoughts about loving God. You must prove your love to God by your love to your brother; that is the one standard by which God will judge your love to Him. If the love of God is in your heart you will love your brother. The fruit of the Spirit is love.

And what is the reason that God's Holy Spirit cannot come in power? Is it not possible?

You remember the comparison I used in speaking of the vessel. I can dip a little water into a potsherd, a bit of a vessel; but if a vessel is to be full, it must be unbroken. And the children of God, wherever they come together, to whatever church or mission or society they belong, must love each other intensely, or the Spirit of God cannot do His work. We talk about grieving the Spirit of God by worldliness and ritualism and formality and error and indifference, but, I tell you, the one thing above everything that grieves God's Spirit is this lack of love. Let every heart search itself, and ask that God may search it.

Our Love Shows God's Power

Why are we taught that "the fruit of the Spirit is love"? *Because the Spirit of God has come to make our daily life an exhibition of divine power and a revelation of what God can do for His children.*

In the second and the fourth chapters of Acts we read that the disciples were of one heart and of one soul. During the three years they had walked with Christ they never had been in that spirit. All Christ's teaching could not make them of one heart and one soul. But the Holy Spirit came from Heaven and shed the love of God in their hearts, and they were of one heart and one soul. The same Holy Spirit that brought the love of Heaven into their hearts must fill us too. Nothing less will do. Even as Christ did, one might preach love for three years with the tongue of an angel, but that would not teach any man to love unless the power of the Holy Spirit should come upon him to bring the love of Heaven into his heart.

Think of the church at large. What divisions! Think of the different bodies. Take the question of holiness, take the question of the cleansing blood, take the question of the baptism of the Spirit—what differences are caused among dear believers by such questions! That there are differences of opinion does not trouble me. We do not have the same constitution and temperament and mind. But how often hate, bitterness, contempt, separation, unlovingness are caused by the holiest truths of God's Word! Our doctrines, our creeds, have been more important than love. We often think we are valiant for the truth and we forget God's command to speak the truth *in love*. And it was so in the time of the Reformation between the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. What bitterness there was then in regard to the Holy Supper, which was meant to be the bond of union among all believers! And so, down the ages, the very dearest truths of God have become mountains that have separated us.

If we want to pray in power, and if we want to expect the Holy Spirit to come down in power, and if we want indeed that God shall pour out His Spirit, we must enter into a covenant with God that we love one another with a heavenly love.

Are you ready for that? Only that is true love that is large enough to take in all God's children, the most unloving and unlovable, and unworthy, and unbearable, and trying. If my vow—absolute surrender to God—was true, then it must mean absolute surrender to the divine love to fill me; to be a servant of love to love every child of God around me. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.”

Oh, God did something wonderful when He gave Christ, at His right hand, the Holy Spirit to come down out of the heart of the Father and His everlasting love. And how we have degraded the Holy Spirit into a mere power by which we have to do our work! God forgive us! Oh, that the Holy Spirit might be held in honor as a power to fill us with the very life and nature of God and of Christ!

Christian Work Requires Love

“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” I ask once again, Why is it so? And the answer comes: *That is the only power in which Christians really can do their work.*

Yes, it is that we need. We want not only love that is to bind us to each other, but we want a divine love in our work for the lost around us. Oh, do we not often undertake a great deal of work, just as men undertake work of philanthropy, from a natural spirit of compassion for our fellow-men? Do we not often undertake Christian work because our minister or friend calls us to it? And do we not often perform Christian work with a certain zeal but without having had a baptism of love?

People often ask: “What is the baptism of fire?”

I have answered more than once: I know no fire like the fire of God, the fire of everlasting love that consumed the sacrifice on Calvary. The baptism of love is what the Church needs, and to get that we must begin at once to get down upon our faces before God in confession, and plead: “Lord, let love from Heaven flow down into my heart. I am giving up my life to pray and live as one who has given himself up for the everlasting love to dwell in and fill him.”

Ah, yes, if the love of God were in our hearts, what a difference it would make! There are hundreds of believers who say: “I work for Christ, and I feel I could work much harder, but I have not the gift. I do not know how or where to begin. I do not know what I can do.”

Brother, sister, ask God to baptize you with the Spirit of love, and love will find its way. Love is a fire that will burn through every difficulty. You may be a shy, hesitating man, who cannot speak well, but love can burn through everything. God fill us with love! We need it for our work.

You have read many a touching story of love expressed, and you have said, How beautiful! I heard one not long ago. A lady had been asked to speak at a Rescue Home where there were a number of poor women. As she arrived there and got to the window with the matron, she saw outside a wretched object sitting, and asked:

“Who is that?”

The matron answered: “She has been into the house thirty or forty times, and she has always gone away again. Nothing can be done with her, she is so low and hard.”

But the lady said: “She must come in.”

The matron then said: “We have been waiting for you, and the company is assembled, and you have only an hour for the address.”

The lady replied: “No, this is of more importance”; and she went outside where the woman was sitting and said:

“My sister, what is the matter?”

“I am not your sister,” was the reply.

Then the lady laid her hand on her, and said: “Yes, I am your sister, and I love you”; and so she spoke until the heart of the poor woman was touched.

The conversation lasted some time, and the company were waiting patiently. Ultimately the lady brought the woman into the room. There was the poor wretched, degraded creature, full of shame. She would not sit on a chair, but sat down on a stool beside the speaker’s seat, and she let her lean against her, with her arms around the poor woman’s neck, while she spoke to the assembled people. And that love touched the woman’s heart; she had found one who really loved her, and that love gave access to the love of Jesus.

Praise God! there is love upon earth in the hearts of God’s children; but oh, that there were more! O God, baptize our ministers with a tender love, and our missionaries, and our Bible-readers, and our workers, and our young men’s and young women’s associations. Oh, that God would begin with us now, and baptize us with heavenly love!

Love Inspires Intercession

Once again. *It is only love that can fit us for the work of intercession.*

I have said that love must fit us for our work. Do you know what the hardest and the most important work is that has to be done for this sinful world? It is the work of intercession, the work of going to God and taking time to lay hold on Him.

A man may be an earnest Christian, an earnest minister, and a man may do good, but alas! how often he has to confess that he knows but little of what it is to tarry with God. May God give us the great gift of an intercessory spirit, a spirit of prayer and supplication! Let me ask you in the name of Jesus not to let a day pass without praying for all saints, and for all God’s people.

I find there are Christians who think little of that. I find there are prayer unions where they pray for the members, and not for all believers. I pray you, take time to pray for the Church of Christ. It is right to pray for the heathen, as I have already said. God help us to pray more for them. It is right to pray for missionaries and for evangelistic work, and for the unconverted. But Paul did not tell people to pray for the heathen or the unconverted. Paul told them to pray for believers. Do make this your first prayer every day: “Lord, bless Thy saints everywhere.”

The state of Christ’s Church is indescribably low. Plead for God’s people that He would visit them, plead for each other, plead for all believers who are trying to work for God. Let love fill your heart. Ask Christ to pour it out afresh into you every day. Try to get it into you by the Holy Spirit of God: I am separated unto the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is love. God help us to understand it.

May God grant that we learn day by day to wait more quietly upon Him. Do not wait upon God only for ourselves, or the power to do so will soon be lost; but give ourselves up to the ministry and the love of intercession, and pray more for God’s people, for God’s people round about us, for the Spirit of love in ourselves and in them, and for the work of God we are connected with; and the answer will surely come, and our waiting upon God will be a source of untold blessing and power. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.”

Have you a lack of love to confess before God? Then make confession and say before Him, “O Lord, my lack of heart, my lack of love—I confess it.” And then, as you cast that lack at His feet, believe that the blood cleanses you, that Jesus comes in His mighty, cleansing, saving power to deliver you, and that He will give His Holy Spirit.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love.”

Impossible with Man, Possible with God

“And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:27).

Christ had said to the rich young ruler, “Sell all that thou hast... and come, follow me.” The young man went away sorrowful. Christ then turned to the disciples, and said: “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” The disciples, we read, were greatly astonished, and answered: “If it is so difficult to enter the kingdom, who, then, can be saved?” And Christ gave this blessed answer: “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

The text contains two thoughts—that *in religion, in the question of salvation and of following Christ by a holy life, it is impossible for man to do it.* And then alongside that is the thought—*What is impossible with man is possible with God.*

The two thoughts mark the two great lessons that man has to learn in the religious life. It often takes a long time to learn the first lesson, that in religion man can do nothing, that salvation is impossible to man. And often a man learns that, and yet he does not learn the second lesson—what has been impossible to him is possible with God. Blessed is the man who learns both lessons! The learning of them marks stages in the Christian’s life.

Man Cannot

The one stage is when a man is trying to do his utmost and fails, when a man tries to do better and fails again, when a man tries much more and always fails. And yet very often he does not even then learn the lesson: *With man it is impossible to serve God and Christ.* Peter spent three years in Christ’s school, and he never learned that, *It is impossible,* until he had denied his Lord and went out and wept bitterly. Then he learned it.

Just look for a moment at a man who is learning this lesson. At first he fights against it; then he submits to it, but reluctantly and in despair; at last he accepts it willingly and rejoices in it. At the beginning of the Christian life the young convert has no conception of this truth. He has been converted, he has the joy of the Lord in his heart, he begins to run the race and fight the battle; he is sure he can conquer, for he is earnest and honest, and God will help him. Yet, somehow, very soon he fails where he did not expect it, and sin gets the better of him. He is disappointed; but he thinks: “I was not watchful enough, I did not make my resolutions strong enough.” And again he vows, and again he prays, and yet he fails. He thought: “Am I not a regenerate man? Have I not the life of God within me?” And he thinks again: “Yes, and I have Christ to help me, I can live the holy life.”

At a later period he comes to another state of mind. He begins to see such a life is impossible, but he does not accept it. There are multitudes of Christians who come to this point: “I cannot”; and then think God never expected them to do what they cannot do. If you tell them that God does expect it, it appears to them a mystery. A good many Christians are living a low life, a life of failure and of sin, instead of rest and victory, because they began to see: “I cannot, it is impossible.” And yet they do not understand it fully, and so, under the impression, I cannot, they give way to despair. They will do their best, but they never expect to get on very far.

But God leads His children on to a third stage, when a man comes to take that, *It is impossible,* in its full truth, and yet at the same time says: “I must do it, and I will do it—it is impossible for man, and yet I must do it”; when the renewed will begins to exercise its whole power, and in intense longing and prayer begins to cry to God: “Lord, what is the meaning of this? — how am I to be freed from the power of sin?”

It is the state of the regenerate man in Romans 7. There you will find the Christian man trying his very utmost to live a holy life. God's law has been revealed to him as reaching down into the very depth of the desires of the heart, and the man can dare to say:

"I delight in the law of God after the inward man. To will what is good is present with me. My heart loves the law of God, and my will has chosen that law."

Can a man like that fail, with his heart full of delight in God's law and with his will determined to do what is right? Yes. That is what Romans 7 teaches us. There is something more needed. Not only must I delight in the law of God after the inward man, and will what God wills, but I need a divine omnipotence to work it in me. And that is what the apostle Paul teaches in Philippians 2:13:

"It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do."

Note the contrast. In Romans 7, the regenerate man says: "To will is present with me, but to do—I find I cannot do. I will, but I cannot perform." But in Philippians 2, you have a man who has been led on farther, a man who understands that when God has worked the renewed will, God will give the power to accomplish what that will desires. Let us receive this as the first great lesson in the spiritual life: "It is impossible for me, my God; let there be an end of the flesh and all its powers, an end of self, and let it be my glory to be helpless."

Praise God for the divine teaching that makes us helpless!

When you thought of absolute surrender to God were you not brought to an end of yourself, and to feel that you could see how you actually could live as a man absolutely surrendered to God every moment of the day—at your table, in your house, in your business, in the midst of trials and temptations? I pray you learn the lesson now. If you felt you could not do it, you are on the right road, if you let yourselves be led. Accept that position, and maintain it before God: "My heart's desire and delight, O God, is absolute surrender, but I cannot perform it. It is impossible for me to live that life. It is beyond me." Fall down and learn that when you are utterly helpless, God will come to work in you not only to will, but also to do.

God Can

Now comes the second lesson. "The things which *are impossible with men are possible with God.*"

I said a little while ago that there is many a man who has learned the lesson, *It is impossible with men*, and then he gives up in helpless despair, and lives a wretched Christian life, without joy, or strength, or victory. And why? Because he does not humble himself to learn that other lesson: *With God all things are possible.*

Your religious life is every day to be a proof that God works impossibilities; your religious life is to be a series of impossibilities made possible and actual by God's almighty power. That is what the Christian needs. He has an almighty God that he worships, and he must learn to understand that he does not need a little of God's power, but he needs—with reverence be it said—the whole of God's omnipotence to keep him right, and to live like a Christian.

The whole of Christianity is a work of God's omnipotence. Look at the birth of Christ Jesus. That was a miracle of divine power, and it was said to Mary: "With God nothing shall be impossible." It was the omnipotence of God. Look at Christ's resurrection. We are taught that it was according to the exceeding greatness of His mighty power that God raised Christ from the dead.

Every tree must grow on the root from which it springs. An oak tree three hundred years old rows all the time on the one root from which it had its beginning. Christianity had its beginning in the omnipotence of God, and in every soul it must have its continuance in that omnipotence. All the

possibilities of the higher Christian life have their origin in a new apprehension of Christ's power to work all God's will in us.

I want to call upon you now to come and worship an almighty God. Have you learned to do it? Have you learned to deal so closely with an almighty God that you know omnipotence is working in you? In outward appearance there is often so little sign of it. The apostle Paul said: "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and... my preaching was... in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." From the human side there was feebleness, from the divine side there was divine omnipotence. And that is true of every godly life; and if we would only learn that lesson better, and give a wholehearted, undivided surrender to it, we should learn what blessedness there is in dwelling every hour and every moment with an almighty God. Have you ever studied in the Bible the attribute of God's omnipotence? You know that it was God's omnipotence that created the world, and created light out of darkness, and created man. But have you studied God's omnipotence in the works of redemption?

Look at Abraham. When God called him to be the father of that people out of which Christ was to be born, God said to him: "I am God Almighty, walk before me and be thou perfect." And God trained Abraham to trust Him as the omnipotent One; and whether it was his going out to a land that he knew not, or his faith as a pilgrim midst the thousands of Canaanites—his faith said: This is my land—or whether it was his faith in waiting twenty-five years for a son in his old age, against all hope, or whether it was the raising up of Isaac from the dead on Mount Moriah when he was going to sacrifice him—Abraham believed God. He was strong in faith, giving glory to God, because he accounted Him who had promised able to perform.

The cause of the weakness of your Christian life is that you want to work it out partly, and to let God help you. And that cannot be. You must come to be utterly helpless, to let God work, and God will work gloriously. It is this that we need if we are indeed to be workers for God. I could go through Scripture and prove to you how Moses, when he led Israel out of Egypt; how Joshua, when he brought them into the land of Canaan; how all God's servants in the Old Testament counted upon the omnipotence of God doing impossibilities. And this God lives today, and this God is the God of every child of His. And yet we are some of us wanting God to give us a little help while we do our best, instead of coming to understand what God wants, and to say: "I can do nothing. God must and will do all." Have you said: "In worship, in work, in sanctification, in obedience to God, I can do nothing of myself, and so my place is to worship the omnipotent God, and to believe that He will work in me every moment"? Oh, may God teach us this! Oh, that God would by His grace show you what a God you have, and to what a God you have entrusted yourself—an omnipotent God, willing with His whole omnipotence to place Himself at the disposal of every child of His! Shall we not take the lesson of the Lord Jesus and say: "Amen; the things which are impossible with men are possible with God"?

Remember what we have said about Peter, his self-confidence, self-power, self-will, and how he came to deny his Lord. You feel, "Ah! there is the self-life, there is the flesh-life that rules in me!" And now, have you believed that there is deliverance from that? Have you believed that Almighty God is able so to reveal Christ in your heart, so to let the Holy Spirit rule in you, that the self-life shall not have power or dominion over you? Have you coupled the two together, and with tears of penitence and with deep humiliation and feebleness, cried out: "O God, it is impossible to me; man cannot do it, but, glory to Thy name, it is possible with God"? Have you claimed deliverance? Do it now. Put yourself afresh in absolute surrender into the hands of a God of infinite love; and as infinite as His love is His power to do it.

God Works in Man

But again, we came to the question of absolute surrender, and felt that that is the want in the Church of Christ, and that is why the Holy Spirit cannot fill us, and why we cannot live as people entirely separated unto the Holy Spirit; that is why the flesh and the self-life cannot be conquered. We have never understood what it is to be absolutely surrendered to God as Jesus was. I know that many a one earnestly and honestly says: "Amen, I accept the message of absolute surrender to God"; and yet thinks: "Will that ever be mine? Can I count upon God to make me one of whom it shall be said in Heaven and on earth and in Hell, he lives in absolute surrender to God?" Brother, sister, "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Do believe that when He takes charge of you in Christ, it is possible for God to make you a man of absolute surrender. And God is able to maintain that. He is able to let you rise from bed every morning of the week with that blessed thought directly or indirectly: "I am in God's charge. My God is working out my life for me."

Some are weary of thinking about sanctification. You pray, you have longed and cried for it, and yet it appeared so far off! The holiness and humility of Jesus—you are so conscious of how distant it is. Beloved friends, the one doctrine of sanctification that is scriptural and real and effectual is: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." God can sanctify men, and by His almighty and sanctifying power every moment God can keep them. Oh, that we might get a step nearer to our God now! Oh, that the light of God might shine, and that we might know our God better!

I could go on to speak about the life of Christ in us—living like Christ, taking Christ as our Saviour from sin, and as our life and strength. It is God in Heaven who can reveal that in you. What does that prayer of the apostle Paul say: "That he would grant you according to riches of his glory"—it is sure to be something very wonderful if it is according to the riches of His glory—"to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"? Do you not see that it is an omnipotent God working by His omnipotence in the heart of His believing children, so that Christ can become an indwelling Saviour? You have tried to grasp it and to seize it, and you have tried to believe it, and it would not come. It was because you had not been brought to believe that "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

And so, I trust that the word spoken about love may have brought many to see that we must have an inflowing of love in quite a new way; our heart must be filled with life from above, from the Fountain of everlasting love, if it is going to overflow all the day; then it will be just as natural for us to love our fellow men as it is natural for the lamb to be gentle and the wolf to be cruel. Until I am brought to such a state that the more a man hates and speaks evil of me, the more unlikable and unlovable a man is, I shall love him all the more; until I am brought to such a state that the more the obstacles and hatred and ingratitude, the more can the power of love triumph in me—until I am brought to see that, I am not saying: "It is impossible with men." But if you have been led to say: "This message has spoken to me about a love utterly beyond my power; it is absolutely impossible"—then we can come to God and say: "It is possible with Thee."

Some are crying to God for a great revival. I can say that that is the prayer of my heart unceasingly. Oh, if God would only revive His believing people! I cannot think in the first place of the unconverted formalists of the Church, or of the infidels and skeptics, or of all the wretched and perishing around me, my heart prays in the first place: "My God, revive Thy Church and people." It is not for nothing that there are in thousands of hearts yearnings after holiness and consecration: it is a forerunner of God's power. God works *to will* and then He works *to do*. These yearnings are a witness and a proof that God has worked *to will*. Oh, let us in faith believe that the omnipotent God will work *to do* among His people more than we can ask. "Unto him," Paul said, "who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think... unto him be glory." Let our hearts say that. Glory to God, the omnipotent One, who can do above what we dare to ask or think!

“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” All around you there is a world of sin and sorrow, and the Devil is there. But remember, Christ is on the throne, Christ is stronger, Christ has conquered, and Christ will conquer. But wait on God. My text casts us down: “The things which are *impossible with men*”; but it ultimately lifts us up high—“are *possible with God*.” Get linked to God. Adore and trust Him as the omnipotent One, not only for your own life, but for all the souls that are entrusted to you. Never pray without adoring His omnipotence, saying: “Mighty God, *I claim Thine almightiness.*” And the answer to the prayer will come, and like Abraham you will become strong in faith, giving glory to God, because you account Him who hath promised able to perform.

