

# Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,  
we are CHANGED . . . ." II Cor. 3:18**

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## **THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 2000**

We feel greatly inspired for this quarter to engage a series of Bible Lessons concerning the two trees that we, as created beings of God, are given access to partake of in life. These are the two trees that were put before our foreparents in the garden of Eden, namely, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the latter of which can be more simply and plainly labeled as the tree of death. Much is said in the Scriptures of these two trees in principle and precept. All the way through the Bible clear to Revelation they are mentioned. We are all faced with the reality of these two trees and we, as free moral agents, are given the privilege to choose which of these two trees we will partake of. We will endeavor to show from the Scriptures what these two trees are to us and how they make their appearance and their influence. We will also study what they offer and the effect they can have on our lives. We need to be aware that the decisions we make and what we do during the few days we have upon earth will decide which tree we are partaking of, whether it be the tree of life or the tree of death.

Prayerfully yours,

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



**JANUARY 2, 2000**

### **TWO TREES IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN**

Genesis 2:8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Romans 5:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Because the tree of death was

presented by Satan as being profitable and beneficial and the consequences of partaking of it not being as bad as God said it was, Adam and Eve were persuaded to partake of it. In doing so they lost fellowship with God and had to be expelled from the garden of Eden.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Genesis 2:8), "*Eden*": From the Hebrew this means "pleasantness and delight."

(Genesis 2:9), "*Tree of knowledge of good and evil*": This particular tree was a test to the faithfulness and obedience of the created being called "Man." To partake of this tree of which God commanded man not to eat, was to trespass and transgress against the pleasure of the Creator. To partake of this forbidden tree would bring, as its title implies, the knowledge of evil added to the knowledge of good that man already had. Up to this point man knew nothing but good and experienced nothing but innocence and purity and the blissful fellowship of His Creator. To reach for further knowledge or for knowledge that was adverse and in conflict with what man already had in his God was an affront or insult on man's part to His God. God had it so because He wanted man to choose willingly and lovingly to obey Him. Thus He gave man the chance to reject and disobey His Word if he so pleased.

(Genesis 3:4), "*Serpent*": We know that it was the devil, Satan, that was speaking and working through the serpent that tempted and seduced Mother Eve.

(Genesis 3:6), Note the three things that Satan used to attract the woman and to persuade her that partaking of the forbidden tree would be profitable and beneficial to her: (1) The tree was good for food. This was the bodily appetite and corresponds with the lusts of the flesh. (2) It was pleasant to the eyes. It was beautiful to the sight and looked good. This shows the appeal of the lust of the eyes. And, (3) It was a tree to be desired to make one wise. Herein is the pride of life, the desire to ascend to higher things than what is given of God. In Franz Josef Haydn's musical oratorio, *The Creation*, he made this statement concerning Adam and Eve in their original

innocent state: "O happy pair! and happy ever to be, if not, misled by false conceit, ye *strive at more than is granted, and desire to know more than what ye should know.*" Satan made it appear that God was depriving man from better things, but in reality, God was seeking to keep man in a simple, unincumbered, and innocent state in which he could experience fellowship with God and blissful and uninterrupted happiness. We will see these three things clearly evident further on in our future lessons.

(Genesis 3:24), "*Cherubims*": Winged heavenly beings. The Hebrew says "the cherubim," indicating it to be singular, or, one cherubim. "*A flaming sword which turned every way*": This was a blazing instrument of destruction whirling around in every direction to guard the access to the tree of life and keep fallen man from partaking of its blessing.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The Lord God created man a free moral agent with the power of choice. He wants man to choose to serve Him gladly, willingly and with pleasure. He does not want to make man serve Him by forcing the issue. For this reason the Lord provided man with an alternate course to take. He placed in the garden, within man's reach and convenience, a tree similar to the other trees with good edible fruit on it, but made a difference in that tree in that He clearly labeled it to be a forbidden tree. He made it clear that man was free to partake of all of the other trees, but this one tree was to be left alone. It looks like it would have been easy for man and woman to be content with all the many different kinds of trees to enjoy the fruit off of and to stay away from this one tree that was forbidden. But here is where the devil came in. He tempted the man and woman to partake of that tree. With his little speech Satan caused the forbidden tree to appear attractive, profitable, convenient, beneficial, proper, needful and for their betterment. What Satan did not mention was the spiritual side of things and the aftermath of transgression and their fellowship with their Creator broken.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. What were the two most important trees that God placed in the garden of Eden?
2. What was the benefit of the tree of life?
3. Why did God put a forbidden tree in the garden?
4. Why is God not desirous to force us to serve Him?
5. How did Satan make the forbidden fruit to appear desirable?
6. What were the three attractions that allured Eve to partake of the forbidden tree?
7. Why were they afraid when they heard the voice of God?
8. What punishment did God give man for his disobedience?
9. Why did God drive man out of the garden and keep him from the tree of life?
10. Why can we label the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as the "tree of death?"

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is wise to reject the counsel of the ungodly and cleave to the teachings of God. Worldly wisdom began its woeful work upon man when Satan contradicted the Word of God to Eve. He hid the real truth from her in his lying words in effort to get her to yield to him and feel good while she did it. He got her to thinking of physical death, when the Lord had spiritual death, separation from God, in mind. On that day that Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator and partook of the forbidden fruit they died. But their death was a spiritual death of being severed from fellowship with God. They still were alive in the physical body but their souls were dead in trespass and sin against God. Thus they partook of the tree of death and reaped a harvest of death, being alienated from God, who is the source of life and light. It is still the same today. We are free moral agents with the power of choice. We can take the Word of God and follow its teachings, or we can reject the Word of God and take our own selfish, lustful way. But we suffer death, spiritual death, when we do so. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." I Timothy 5:6. "Once we were dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this

world, having our conversation in the lusts of our flesh, and were by nature the children of wrath." Ephesians 2:1-3. Anything which people do that is in direct contradiction of the Word of God will bring death to the soul and cut them off from fellowship with God, especially if they have light and knowledge concerning such things. Therefore we need to take heed to our souls and be sure that we are partaking of the tree of life in obeying the precious Word of God and following the leadings of the Holy Spirit. This will assure us of being possessors of the grace of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Adam and Eve were created and put into the garden in a stage of innocency. They were not aware that there was a difference between good and evil. Adam and Eve were not created with virtue, for virtue is when a person comes face to face with the choice of evil and good and chooses good.

Some Bible commentators think that God had planned for Adam and Eve to have access to the tree of life after they had learned to trust God's Word. Then they would have known how to handle knowledge. That is conjecture, but it is an obvious actuality that we today are endowed with the knowledge of good and evil. So what God is looking for today are virtuous people.

The problem confronting the present world is not that there is too much knowledge, for knowledge is good. Society's dilemma is that it does not have the faith in God to give the knowledge direction and meaning. To substitute knowledge for faith is destructive. To let faith interpret and direct our knowledge is to fulfill the will of God.

—Wayne Murphey





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**THE TREE OF LIFE IN TRUE WISDOM**

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Psalm 112:1 Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise.

Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Jeremiah 17:7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when

heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

**MEMORY VERSE:** The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. Psalm 37:23-24.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The life of a godly, upright, righteous and holy person is the ground in which grows the tree of life, spiritually speaking. Such a life will be happy, successful and filled with fruits that will be a benefit to his fellowman and praise and honour to his God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Proverbs 3:14), "*Merchandise*": In the Hebrew the word means gain, or profit. "*Gain*": Income, or produce.

(Proverbs 3:16), "*Length of days*": Endless days, or forever. This is what wisdom holds and extends to all who find her. Wisdom, as it was with the tree of life in the beginning, holds the promise of eternal life and riches.

(Proverbs 3:18), "*Lay hold upon*": To fasten upon, to seize with courage, strength and steadfast determination.

(Proverbs 11:30), "*He that winneth souls is wise*": He that lives and labors for the spiritual welfare of people is wise to the greatest degree and in the highest sense of the word, for he seeks eternal good and profit rather than the fleeting riches of this life.

(Proverbs 15:4), "*Wholesome tongue*": The Hebrew says, "a healing tongue." One who uses his power of speech to benefit and bless his fellow man for his spiritual health and welfare portrays and manifests the true healing of the eternal tree of life. "*Breach in the spirit*": A break or fracture injurious to the inner man.

(Psalm 1:1), "*Walketh not, nor standeth, nor sitteth*": For the godly, no attitude is taken, no course is followed, no stand is maintained that goes along with the dark and evil current of a godless society.

(Psalm 1:3), "*Prosper*": The Hebrew says "go forward."

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we will observe how the tree of life is made manifest in the life of a godly man who seeks the wisdom of God and is truly and fully submissive and obedient to God. From Proverbs and Psalms we gain an excellent picture of the tree of life in the righteous and how this tree brings forth fruit that is of eternal worth and value.

From Jeremiah we find a like expression of the fruitful tree of the man who makes the Lord God his hope and trust. This is the tree that we should all seek to partake of and have growing in our hearts and lives. If we will seek after wisdom, the right kind of wisdom, which is the fear and respect for God and His Word, we can hope to gain access to the tree of life in a spiritual way. This means we take heed to the precepts and laws of wisdom and follow them carefully. If we will sincerely do this with all of our hearts, with no hypocrisy nor deceit, God will respond to us with His wonderful help and grace. The Christian life is a pure, beautiful and desirable life to possess. It is worth all the sacrifice and submission to God that we can give.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What three things in our lesson are termed the "tree of life?"
2. What is the true wisdom that we should seek after?
3. What are the things that wisdom offers to us?
4. What kind of man does wisdom make out of a person?
5. In what way does the fruit of the righteous help others?
6. How is a healing tongue likened unto the tree of life?
7. What are the three places in this world that a wise person will diligently avoid?
8. What does it mean to meditate in the law of the Lord day and night?
9. What does the thought "a tree planted by the waters" bring to your mind?
10. How can we make sure that we are partaking of the tree of life and have its life-giving fruits growing in our hearts?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A godly man is one who wholeheartedly fears and has high esteem and respect for God and His Word. In this world of confusion and many religious beliefs it might stagger our minds in wonder as to what is really godly and acceptable in God's sight. But, as Paul said in II Timothy 2:19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." True godliness will cause a man to depart from all iniquity.

It means much to have respect unto the Lord's commandments and feast on them in our hearts and minds day and night. There are so many things to take up our minds and keep us from meditating on the good Word of God. The cares of life, the deceitfulness of riches, the love of fleshly pleasure and the lusts of many other attractions entering into the heart and mind will choke out the Word of God from having its intended effect.

We are living in an enchanted age where the souls of men are charmed and lulled to addiction. That is why it is so hard to get people into a godly atmosphere and frame of mind. But for those who are willing and obedient to the truth of God there is a way to be happy and holy before Him. We can be trees of righteousness.

Oh, let us be wise and turn away from the tree of death and its beckoning allurements. Let us see those pleasures of sin coiled under the roses of pride and turn resolutely away from them. We can be like that tree planted by the rivers of the water of life and we can go forward triumphantly in the straight and narrow way that leads to life eternal. —Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

People have often speculated about what is the most valuable thing in life. William R. Inge, in the book, *Vale*, asks the question this way: "What are the most precious gifts for which an old man, looking back on his life, ought to thank God?"

He then mentions some of the values that men have

cherished, such as the Greeks who put great confidence in good health. He also mentions the blessings of recognition and encouragement. Finally he answers the question this way, "But I have not the slightest doubt that domestic happiness is the greatest of all good gifts, next to that of 'wisdom,' for which Solomon prayed, and which I suppose, may be defined as a right judgment of the relative value of things."

What better could we wish for than to be able to look back on our lives and see where we took advantage of the wisdom which is derived from salvation. The areas of life in which there was sinful folly are regrettable, but those areas where wisdom was exercised we can view with the delight of one who looks at a precious jewel. This brings great delight and contributes to domestic happiness.

—Wayne Murphey



**JANUARY 16, 2000**

### **MAN'S POWER OF CHOICE**

Deuteronomy 30:15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

16 In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments,...

17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish,...

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.

Joshua 24:14 Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth:...

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve;....but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Isaiah 1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Proverbs 1:28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

Isaiah 66:3 ...Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

Luke 10:42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

**MEMORY VERSE:** I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me. Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. Psalm 119:30, 173.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God made man as a free moral agent with the power of choice. He can choose to partake of the tree of life and enjoy the blessings thereof, or he can choose to go after the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life and reap the bitter harvest it will bring. God makes His way plain and His goodness within our reach, but He leaves it up to us to decide for ourselves what we will have.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Joshua 24:14), "*Sincerity*": The Hebrew word here means entirely, completely, perfectly and wholly.

(Psalm 119:30), "*Have I laid before me*": The Hebrew says, "have I held level." This means to be balanced and equal in one's perception and understanding of the Word of God. When one receives a love for the truth that he might be saved, God will enlighten his eyes to be able to properly understand the way of the Lord. But if one rejects the holy way of the Lord, blindness of the soul sets in and such a one is apt to believe a lie and be damned. See II Thessalonians 2:10-12.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we will consider the free moral agency of man in his God-given power to decide for himself what he will do. This power of choice and the right to exercise his own will is the goodness of God to man. God is a God of love and He will accept no service nor relationship with man that is not prompted by love and a true desire. For this cause God furnished man the opportunity to make the choice, and also making available another course to take. The Lord has directed and inspired our hearts with this lesson so sweetly and clearly and it has helped us to be more aware of how important a thought this is. He has brought these scriptures that we have in the lesson so impressively to our mind. The first one comes from Moses in his final address to Israel before the Lord took him from their midst. He had been their leader for forty years and had seen many bitter sorrows that so many had suffered because they had not chosen to obey and follow the Lord. We have the same scene with Joshua in his farewell address to Israel. He, like Moses, exhorted Israel to choose to serve God. He knew that the decision was in their hands. Our scripture in Isaiah 1 carries the same thought. It is a responsibility that every person has to face and bear. It is up to each one individually what they are going to do. God is not going to pressure or force anyone to serve Him.

Our scriptures in Proverbs 1 and Isaiah 66 carry a serious tone with this subject. Here is shown the disastrous result of refusing to choose the fear of God. God is not to be trifled with. If a person refuses to receive the love of God and His salvation there is recompence ahead. You choose your own way and then God will choose the sentence of judgment for you. It is that serious. People need to think seriously when the time for decision comes.

And then we have the words of Jesus concerning Mary who chose to sit at his feet to hear His Word while her sister Martha complained about her not helping her. That good part that we choose in following Christ and His word will afford treasures and blessings that will never be taken from us. Oh, what a blessed privilege we have to shun the tree of death and partake freely of the tree of life!

—Leslie C. Busbee



### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does God want man to serve Him by choice?
2. What are the things that attract us to choose the world?
3. What are the things that attract us to choose the Lord?
4. Why is it that most people choose their own way?
5. What are some of the "other gods" that people worship?
6. What will be the result of refusing the fear of the Lord?
7. What does God choose for those who refuse His way?
8. Can you think of someone who chose the way of sin who would serve as an example of folly?
9. Can you think of someone who chose the way of the Lord who would serve as an example of true wisdom?
10. Why is choosing to obey and follow the Lord a far superior and rewarding way than to live for self and the world?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We are dealing with a problem that has plagued the human race from the very beginning. Eve was faced with a choice. Had she realized more just how serious this matter of making the right choice was and if she had taken time to weigh it all up and count the cost, she might have well held on to obedience to God. Now that is how the tempter works. He throws a curve at us and excites the minds and attracts our desires to make a hasty move. We need to slow down and weigh all the facts and figures. Moses had great difficulty with the children of Israel because of their lack of decision. Moses knew what and how serious a decision for God was. Hebrews 11:24-27 says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Yes, Moses had made a real decision to go for God. He never looked back.

Jesus, in Luke 14:26-33, counselled us to count the cost. We should count the cost to see what it will take for us to really

be saved, and we should also count up what the cost will be if we are not saved. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Have you ever wondered what it must be like for God to take care of all of His creation? Perhaps it is a little like the mother who asked her husband, who happened to be a statistician, to care for the children while she went shopping. When she returned, she found her husband exhausted by the experience. He handed her a record of the ordeal:

Dried the children's tears 14 times.

Tied their shoes 16 times.

Served drinks of water 22 times.

Toy balloons purchased—3 per child.

Average life of a balloon—12 seconds.

Cautioned children not to cross the street 34 times.

Children insisted on crossing the street 34 times.

Number of Saturdays father will do this in the future—none.

People all through the ages have consistently made bad choices, yet God still offers forgiveness and redemption for their waywardness.

Don't you think God would appreciate it if we would make things just as easy on Him as possible? Although He doesn't have the limitations of human endurance, He does appreciate it when people choose to obey His Word. —Wayne Murphey



**JANUARY 23, 2000**

### **TURNING AWAY FROM THE TREE OF DEATH**

Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. I Corinthians 1:21.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** We must resist the attractions and points of temptation that Satan employs to draw us to partake of the tree of death. Jesus was able to resist the devil on every line, and is able to help us to overcome when we are tempted.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Matthew 4:4), *"Man shall not live by bread alone"*: This comes from Deuteronomy 8:3, where Moses reminded Israel of their travels in the wilderness when God fed them with **manna**, which they knew not, that is, they knew not what its composition or ingredients were. Moses said further that God did this so that "he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Christ overcame the desire for fleshly gratification, even in the extreme circumstance of not having eaten for forty days. Christ's physical body hungred for food. The Greek word for *"hungred"* means that he was famished and starving, literally "pining" and wasting away. It was a severe temptation that we ought not to count lightly or suppose that it had no weight nor attraction. But our mighty Saviour, through the power of the Holy Spirit, was able to resist the enticement of the physical with respect to the Word of God. Would it have been wrong for Christ to use His divine power to produce from the stones bread? Yes, it would have been, for it was the suggestion of the devil and not the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In this age of eating and drinking and indulging in the passions of the flesh it means much for us, as holy saints of God, to keep our appetites in strict control of the Spirit of God. This is one of the points of temptation of the tree of death, namely, the *"lust of the flesh."*

(Matthew 4:7), *"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"*: This also comes from Moses in Deuteronomy 6:16. The word *"tempt"* from the Greek means to fully test or experiment. Although the promises of God gives full assurance of His divine protection in times of harm and danger, we are not to deliberately engage in dangerous practices just to prove His worth. This is tempting God, doing something just to show what He can do. Satan quoted the scripture in Psalm 91:11-12 but it was misapplied, and Jesus said, "It is written again,"

which means *"furthermore or on the other hand."* Unbalanced views and doctrines are the suggestions of the devil and we must be on our guard against them. They will lead us away from the truth. Fantastical ideas on the Scriptures are to be avoided, and we must seek to be balanced in all things. People who do anything to make a show to others that they are something special to God are of the wrong spirit, also. All of this is the working of an exalted mind and spirit, and comes under the point of temptation labeled "the pride of life."

(Mark 9:43-47), *"Offend"*: The Greek word here is "scandalize," which means to entrap, trip up, cause to stumble, or entice to sin, apostasy, or displeasure. The terms *"cut it off"* and *"pluck it out"* are figurative terms. It means to limit or bring into absolute subordination or control. The hand represents the temptation to the lusts of the flesh and the appetites of the body. These desires of the natural man must be brought into strict control. Paul said in I Corinthians 9:27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." The Greek word for *"keep under"* means to "hit under the eye," that is, to buffet or beat down and subdue with violent determination. The foot denotes how we walk and conduct ourselves and comes under the category of the pride of life. We are not to literally cut off our physical members. That is not what Christ is referring to here. We are to cut them off, but to do so in the heart and the spirit.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we will consider the attractions and temptations of the tree of death and how we can overcome them. We find Jesus meeting these three points of temptation and overcoming them. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life all made their approach and appeal to our Saviour. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15.) For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor (help, or give aid) them that are tempted. (Hebrews 2:18.) He defeated the devil each time by clinging to what God had spoken in His Word. We must acquaint ourselves with what "Thus saith the Lord" says about things. Through the word of His lips we will be kept from the

paths of the destroyer. (Psalm 17:4.) Satan sought to deter the Saviour from His holy purpose in life. He tempted Him in each of these three points and Jesus rebuffed every time and refused to yield. In being our Saviour He had to defeat the devil in these things that we all meet in life. He subdued His bodily appetites, refused the honour and pride of worldly recognition, and turned away from the seemingly splendid offer of gaining the dominion of the kingdoms of this present world and all of their glory. This was all a ruse of Satan. Even if Jesus would have yielded to gain this world it would have been but a temporary thing. And Jesus knew it. He sought for eternal inheritance. And, in the greatest sense of the word, Jesus ultimately gained the whole world. It was said of Him in Revelation 11:15, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Let us follow His example and allow His power to work in our lives. Let us resist every approach and enticement of the tree of death.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why was the temptation of food so strong to Jesus?
2. What all was included in the temptation to tempt God?
3. What temptation is there in beauties of this world?
4. How did Jesus overcome Satan in these things?
5. How can we keep from loving this world?
6. What are some of the things in this world we are not to love?
7. What did Jesus really mean when He said to "cut off" the hand and the foot, and to "pluck out" the eye?
8. Is it possible to enjoy the lusts of the flesh and at the same time be doing the will of God?
9. Why are the things of the world really not desirable?
10. What are the three main points of temptation?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The bodily appetites for comfort, security, ease and gratification are the avenues through which Satan tempts the soul to transgress the will of God. It is when these things control the man and dominate his actions and ways that they encroach upon his spiritual welfare.

The body needs food for sustenance and health, but we do not live by food alone. Too much food is injurious to the health and debasing to the soul.

The desire for illicit relationships is another great attraction of the tree of death. The need for companionship is God given, but it is vital that this desire be strictly controlled by wisdom and the Spirit of God.

The lust of the eyes is another great problem in this present world. Outward beauty, especially that of the woman, is a prominent item on the agenda of mankind's treasures and goals.

May we receive the enlightenment and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to give us understanding and warning against partaking of this tree of death, that we may avoid that fire that never shall be quenched of which our Saviour warned us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Christ's temptations directly followed the heavenly witness of His baptism. Spiritual high places in our lives do not save us from the onslaught of the enemy.

One writer of times past said, "All the while our Saviour lay in His father's shop and meddled only with carpenter's chips, the devil troubled Him not: now that He is to enter more publicly upon His mediatorship, the tempter pierceth His tender soul with many sorrows by solicitation to sin."

If we are contented to drift with the cares of life and the direction they take us from spiritual things, the enemy will be content. But when we rouse ourselves to new love for God and activity in His service, he will try to destroy us.

"Man shall not live by bread alone...." This is a truth substantiated by yet another scripture, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Life's true object is to obey every word of God, not necessarily to survive physically. If we are living for God, where our temporal means of survival comes from is not our major concern; it is God's. We have the promise that He will give us that which His wisdom dictates. This is what Christ was acting

upon in refusing to assuage His hunger. —Wayne Murphey



**JANUARY 30, 2000**

**A TREE IS KNOWN BY ITS FRUIT**

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Matthew 12:33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

James 3:8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either



a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Luke 3:9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

**MEMORY VERSE:** A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. Proverbs 13:2.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Every man is a tree. He is either a good tree with good fruit, or he is a corrupt tree with evil fruit. One cannot be both kinds of tree at the same time. He is either one or the other. What kind of tree we are is determined by what tree we are partaking of and allowing to grow in our hearts, whether it be the tree of life or the tree of death.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Matthew 7:15), "*Ravering*": That which plunders or takes by force.

(Matthew 12:33), "*Either make the tree good,....or make the tree corrupt*": This expression shows that in God's sight there is no middle ground. You are either a good tree with good fruit or you are a corrupt tree with evil fruit. (Matthew 12:34), "*Generation of vipers*": Offspring or produce of poisonous serpents. This is the condition of mankind in general, shapen in iniquity and in sin conceived. (Psalm 51:5.) The sinful and depraved nature, the root of sin, is in every child born of woman. This calls for a change and a transformation that can only be accomplished by the salvation that God has provided through the blood of His Son and the power of His Holy Spirit. Such a work of grace and power can change a man from a corrupt tree to a good tree.

(Mathew 12:36), "*Idle word*": A word that is useless, of no profit, of no value. It is a word that is injurious and hurtful, spoken with no good purpose or intent. Notice it says, "word," that is, just one idle word.

(James 3:9), "*Similitude*": Image.

(Luke 3:9), "*Now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees*": These words were spoken by John the Baptist in his call to the people to flee from the wrath to come and to bring forth fruits

worthy of repentance. The axe of the everlasting gospel, the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, must be applied to the very heart of man. The old life of sin must go.

(Proverbs 13:2), The Hebrew says here, "From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats good, but the soul of the treacherous (deceitful) eats violence." The fruit of a man's mouth is what comes from his heart and out through his words and actions.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we will consider the thought of each one of us human beings as being a tree. We, as our lesson reveals, are either corrupt or good trees with corrupt or good fruit being brought forth. It seems pointedly expressed, and that with much emphasis and a serious tone, that there is no middle ground, and that we are either one or the other.

Since we are likened unto trees, and especially fruit trees, it is very evident that fruit is an extremely important matter with God. He is looking at the fruit of our life. Our Saviour in the parable of the sower and the seed (as recorded in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8) emphasizes the importance of the fruit. Fruit is the main purpose of all things in life. And we, as trees, are responsible for what kind of fruit we bear.

Jesus has made it possible for us who are, by nature from Adam, corrupt trees to be transformed and changed to become good trees bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. But the axe, as our lesson reveals, must be laid unto the root of the corrupt tree. Through godly sorrow and true repentance (not just words, but actions and fruit) and faith in Christ on our part and by the power of His grace and virtue of His blood, we can be changed from sin to righteousness. We can have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. This is a wonderful truth to lay hold on!

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is fruit such an important thing?
2. Why can we not have a mixture of good and corrupt fruit?
3. How much evil can be in the heart to affect and corrupt it?

4. What must be done concerning us as corrupt trees?
5. What must a person do to be changed from a corrupt tree to a good tree?
6. What does it take on God's part for this to be done?
7. Where are the things that defile and corrupt a man?
8. How do these evil things reveal themselves in a person?
9. What is the "fruit of a man's mouth?"
10. What is the true state of a man who has good and bad fruit in his life?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is the idea in many people's minds that there can be things in their lives that are not what they ought to be, but that this does not keep them from being right with God. Their life is a mixture of good and evil. But with God this is not acceptable. If a person has not obtained light and understanding concerning certain things that the Bible teaches against, he or she is not held accountable for that. But if they know that these things are wrong and should be laid aside and they go on supposing that they are still right with God, such are deceived by the devil. God does not want good and evil living side by side in the same vessel. It must be a good tree with good fruit all the way through for Him to smile His approval down on such. "Make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt." That is the way Jesus put it. Suppose there was a flowing well that people had been used to getting drinking water from and it was known that there were cases of typhoid fever in people who had been drinking from this well. Would you be wise to go ahead and get water from this well? Of course, you would not do it for fear you might contract this same disease. It has to be all pure before one can feel safe to drink of it. The heart of man cannot bless God and at the same time roll curses from his lips against his brother or fellow man. It just cannot be. But, thank the Lord, we can be changed from the impure to the pure.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Many trees are similar in appearance. Although each tree

family differs in bark and leaf shape, it takes an experienced person to discern the difference in every case. But it doesn't take an expert to be able to bite into an apple and declare the tree from which it was plucked to be an apple tree.

God is One who looks on the heart and knows the intent of every action, an ability we don't possess. Herein is a lesson on not passing judgment based on human understanding. Yet when a person's actions are sinful, we cannot make excuses for the condition of the heart from which it originated.

A false prophet can cloak himself in the most pious garments, but he cannot tame his tongue. At some point something will slip out and reveal his true character. At that point only those who are willing to put their souls into his hands will continue to believe in him.

How different it is with the true prophets of God. They will speak from the sincerity of their hearts, and their actions will reflect the love of Christ. How pure, fresh and sweet is the fruit of their fellowship.

—Wayne Murphey



**FEBRUARY 6, 2000**

**THE WORKS OF THE FLESH:  
ADULTERY, FORNICATION,  
UNCLEANNES, LASCIVIOUSNESS**

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

I Corinthians 6:13 ...Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

I Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.

Ephesians 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

I Peter 4:3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Hebrews 13:4.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** These four sexual sins: adultery, fornication, uncleanness and lasciviousness, head the list of the works of the flesh and all they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Galatians 5:19), "*Adultery*": Sexual relations between a married person and someone who is not his or her lawful

companion. Romans 7:2-3 says, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." *"Fornication"*: Unlawful sexual relations between unmarried people. *"Uncleanness"*: Impurity, being without chastity, immoral, unholy, filthiness, obscenity, without decency or principle. *"Lasciviousness"*: Lustful, unrestrained conduct without regard to rules or standards; having no discipline nor control of one's passions and desires; looseness in morals and conduct with the opposite sex.

(Matthew 5:28), *"Lust"*: Strong desire or passion, especially to the excess or beyond what is right and proper.

(Matthew 5:32), *"Saving for the cause of fornication"*: The Greek says, "apart from the matter of fornication." There has been much discussion and disputings concerning this phrase that our Lord inserted here. It has given rise to the idea that if fornication or unlawful relations is found in one's companion, it gives one the lawful privilege of obtaining a separation or divorce and marrying another. Could it be possible that our Lord really had this in mind? It may seem plausible and a seemingly rightful excuse for double marriage. But let us be cautious and careful, and let us be wise. Let us pray earnestly with a submissive heart and an open mind for the counsel of the Lord to prevail in this matter. Personally, I do not believe that our Lord had it in mind to make a provision for adultery or double marriage. There may be a time when one has to separate from their companion because of impurity in his companion, but I would counsel such a one to remain unmarried and respect the laws of God instead of grabbing at this phrase and making it an excuse to commit adultery. Let us remember that God is pondering our hearts and weighing our spirits. Proverbs 16:2 and 21:2.

(I Corinthians 6:18), *"Without the body"*: Outside or apart from the body. Sin is in the heart and the inner man. The sinful acts and deeds committed by a man originate in the heart and

affects those around about apart from the body. But when a person misuses his body he is bringing woe and degradation to this earthen temple that should be kept pure and holy before God.

(I Thessalonians 4:5), "*Not in lust of concupiscence*": The Greek text says, "not in the passion of evil desire." History tells us that Thessalonica, Corinth and other of these ancient cities were abounding in sexual immorality and hideous lustful activities. The gospel axe was laid at the root of these wicked passions and those who were born into the kingdom of God were delivered from them. That is why Paul was so explicit in his instructions to the brethren in Corinth and Thessalonica concerning their stand against fornication and all evil lusts.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

With this lesson we will begin a study of the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit. The works of the flesh are on the tree of death and to partake of them is to suffer spiritual death and separation from God. Today we will begin with the first four works of the flesh, namely: adultery, fornication, uncleanness and lasciviousness. We would refer each student, especially our young people, to the book *The Corrupt Tree* by Sister Anna Marie Miles, a publication of *Faith Publishing House*. In this book Sister Miles discusses each one of the works of the flesh in a very wise and serious manner.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why must our bodily passions be so guarded and controlled?
2. Why does a carnal person not like to control their passions and desires?
3. What do we have to have in order to properly do this?
4. What is God's judgment concerning people who do these things?
5. What hope is there for anyone who is enslaved by these passions?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

**ADULTERY:** A young person should think carefully before

he marries because the Scripture states that marriage is meant for as long as they both shall live. In this wicked world adultery is excused and condoned and encouraged. But adulterers, God will judge.

**FORNICATION:** It is sinful and displeasing to God for people to have sexual relations before they are married. In our society many people think nothing of living together without being legally married. God is against this practice. Petting and fondling lead to more intimate relations. "Never do anything to place your body where your soul will not be the master" is good advice. Save the physical relations for that special time when you are lawfully married. That is the safe and holy way and it pleases God.

**UNCLEANNES:** The people of the world are impure in their minds and conversation. "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Titus 1: 15 Smutty jokes and yarns with obscene expressions shows the filth of our society. We must lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls. (James 1:21.)

**LASCIVIOUSNESS:** This loose and undisciplined age is being shown up in their vanity and folly. A person without restraint and temperance will soon come to ruin. Paul reasoned with Felix of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, and Felix trembled. (Acts 24:25.) It is said that those Roman governors were very immoral and unrestrained in the personal habits and bodily passions. God is calling us to live strictly and carefully with our appetites and desires fully in discipline and control.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

It was Robert Louis Stevenson who wrote: "Everybody, soon or late, sits down to a banquet of consequences." Can you describe some potential results of adultery, fornication, uncleanness and lasciviousness?

—Wayne Murphey





**FEBRUARY 13, 2000**

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: LOVE, JOY, AND PEACE**

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,...

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

30 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.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

I Peter 1:8 (Jesus Christ) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Isaiah 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Isaiah 29:18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Romans 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

James 3:18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Colossians 3:15.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To partake of the tree of life in Christ Jesus will produce the blessings of love for God and man, the fulness of joy and happiness, and the abundance of peace and quietness in the heart and mind.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 5:22), "*Love*": The Greek word is "agape" which means affection and benevolence. Benevolence is the kindly disposition or inclination of doing good. Webster defines love as "a feeling of strong personal attachment induced or caused by that which delights or commands admiration by sympathetic understanding; ardent (warm and passionate) affection." "*Joy*": The Greek word means "cheerfulness or calm delight." Webster defines joy as "the emotion excited by the expectation of or the obtaining of good; pleasureable feelings or emotions caused by well-being, success, good fortune and the like, or, by a prospect of possessing what we love or desire; gladness; delight. "*Peace*": Webster defines peace as "tranquillity or quietness; freedom from disturbance or agitation."

(Isaiah 29:18), "*The book*": This is referring to the book of the vision that God wills to impart to the souls of men. It is the volume of the true knowledge of God, sealed and hidden from the proud and wise of this world, but revealed to the meek and lowly.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today switches from the dark catalog of the works of the flesh that we started on in our last lesson to the beautiful fruit of the tree of life that can be the fruit of our lives if we let the Spirit of God have the preeminence. We will take up the first three mentioned, namely, love, joy and peace. God is love and to be in fellowship with Him is to experience the

greatest delight and quietness from the disturbance of evil. These terms are spoken of so much in the Scriptures. Surely love, joy and peace are qualities of life and character that any sane person would count as the most desirable. But they are the fruit of the indwelling Spirit of God. Only people who are qualified to be filled with the Holy Spirit can have these things actually working in their lives. Sin is the intruding trespass and offending foe of these wonderful things. Jesus brought a perfect salvation that will restore love, joy and peace to the soul. But we must seek after these things and cultivate them in our temperment and behavior. They bring about great happiness and satisfaction for our lives in this world. They afford triumphant power to overcome the strife and turmoil of this present, evil world and a steadfast hope and bright anticipation of life eternal in the world to come.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is love the greatest force in this world?
2. How can we love God with all our heart? With all our soul? With all our mind? With all our strength?
3. What makes these two commandments that Jesus mentioned so great and important?
4. How can we love someone whom we have never seen?
5. What causes one to have joy?
6. Why will the poor and meek have joy more than the high and mighty?
7. What all can the peace of God do for us?
8. Who can have great peace and how does loving God's law bring it about?
9. Why is it wise for us to follow after things that make for peace?
10. What does the peace of God have to do with us being called in one body?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We have in contrast the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh are because of the force and effort of the fleshly mind and its imaginations. They come

about because of man's selfish outreach for pleasures that charm the outward man and his passions. Much conflict and pushing go into their accomplishment. But the fruit of the Spirit is not gained by fleshly endeavor. It comes by partaking of the fruit as the gift and endowment of the heavenly Father. How much more pleasant are the fruits of the Spirit than the fleeting and vain lusts of the flesh! "The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment." Proverbs 12:19. So the fruits of righteousness are forever, but the lusts of the flesh are but temporary. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." I Peter 1:8.

"And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him." Exodus 34:29.

"And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, [Stephen] saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:15.

Years ago a Boston newspaper commented thus on the weather: "The day opened cloudy and cheerless but about noon Phillips Brooks came downtown and everything brightened up."

A biographer said of Henry Martyn, famed English missionary to India and Persia, "His features were not regular, but his facial expression was so luminous, so intellectual, so affectionate, so beaming with divine love as to hold the attention of every onlooker."

The face of Adoniram Judson was so aglow with the love of God that the Burmese called him "Mr. Glory-Face."

—Wayne Murphey



**FEBRUARY 20, 2000**

**THE WORKS OF THE FLESH:  
COVETOUSNESS, IDOLATRY, WITCHCRAFT**

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these;

20 Idolatry, witchcraft,...

Luke 12:15 And he (Jesus) said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Ephesians 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

1 Timothy 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Corinthians 10:7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved flee from idolatry.

Revelations 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake

which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Psalm 96:5.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** There are many other gods that people are worshipping today besides the true and living God. One of the greatest things that is worshipped is wealth and earthly riches. This covetousness is idolatry in God's sight, just as heinous and abominable to Him as the worshipping of images was in days of old, and even more so.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Galatians 5:20), "*Idolatry*": The worshipping of images or idols. To worship any other god or image representing any other god is idolatry. In our lesson we have a covetous man labeled as an idolater, and covetousness is idolatry. The covetous man devotes his time and energies obtaining wealth and riches in this present life. Other things people worship include pleasure and bodily appetites such as food, inordinant passions and profane fashions. "*Witchcraft*": The Greek word from which this term is translated is "pharmakeia" from which comes our word "pharmacy."

(Luke 12:15), "*Take heed, and beware of covetousness*": The Greek says, "Beware and keep back from covetousness." The Greek word for "covetousness" means "avarice," which is defined by Webster as "excessive or unrestrained desire for gain; greediness after material wealth or property."

(Colossians 3:5), "*Mortify*": To put to death or bring into complete subjection. Any bodily appetite that is not controlled by the principles of God's holiness can and will develop into sin and transgression. In the Spirit-filled child of God there must be a constant exercise of discipline and restraint upon the appetites of the flesh, subduing them and bringing them into proper control. Paul said in I Corinthians 9:27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our today's lesson will be about three more of the works of the flesh that are so prevalent in this our day. These three things, covetousness, idolatry and witchcraft, are relative to each other. Covetousness is one form of idolatry, and medication and drugs relate to idolatry and covetousness, too. The modern world of medicine is geared and motivated by the love of money to a great extent. The hospitals and drug manufacturers are abounding and expanding. This gives place for the love of wealth and is another god that people worship and put their trust in.

Jesus warned us about covetousness and told the story of the rich man who made big, selfish plans about what he would do with his incoming crops. He never got to carry out his plans but died that very night and left his crops for someone else to worry about. It is pure idolatry to put your trust in material riches.

People worship the god of fashion. It is uppermost in their minds to conform to the age in matters of dress and personal appearance.

People worship the god of sexual pleasure. At the price of legal abortion people will carry on their selfish desires. The love of ease, entertainment and the praise of men enter the picture. May we take heed to the warning, "Flee from idolatry," and what I John 5:21 says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Jesus warn us about covetousness?
2. In what way is covetousness idolatry?
3. What are some of the other gods that people worship?
4. How is idolatry such a threat to spirituality?
5. What does it mean to mortify our members on earth?
6. Why is covetousness such a gross sin before God?
7. What will be the end of all idolaters?
8. What did Paul say about people who do these things?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Let us remember what the apostle Paul said about people

who "do such things" as he mentioned in the list of the works of the flesh. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The language is explicit. Remember that there is no middle ground. To yield to one of the works of the flesh and be tainted by its defiling poison is to spoil the whole man. A little evil ruins the entire mass. We must be all for God and none for the devil, and all for God and none for sin. It will mean much for us to live true and faithful to God in this world wherein are all of these things abounding and pressing all around us. We live in a world that is full of covetousness and covetous practices. II Peter 2: 14 speaks about people "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children." To let worldly wealth and gain be one's god is to go under the curse of the Almighty God. To worship and follow after the passions of the body undisciplined and unrestrained will bring a harvest of corruption.

We live in what is termed "The Golden Age of Medicine." Medical science has discovered and produced what is termed "miracle drugs." There are people who have spent their life and energies seeking and perfecting drugs for the common market. Yet mankind is beneath the sentence of sin and all must die.

Oh, how we need to worship the Lord God and serve only Him! Money, pleasure and all physical charm and beauty will fail and pass away. But we can abide forever if we will sow to the Spirit and faithfully obey the perfect will of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Consider the difference between the spirit of God and the spirit of Satan. Godliness brings knowledge, love and the essence of light. To serve Satan is to give oneself over to darkness, hatred and secretiveness.

Notice how the Bible commentator Albert Barnes describes witchcraft.

"The apostle does not vouch for the actual existence of witchcraft [that it works]; but he says that what was known as such was a proof of the corrupt nature of man, and was one



of the fruits of it. No one can doubt it. It was a system of imposture and falsehood throughout; and nothing is a better demonstration of the depravity of the human heart than an extended and systematized attempt to impose on mankind. The word which is here used [Gal. 5:20] means, properly, the preparing and giving of medicine. Then it means also poisoning, and also magic art, or enchantment; because in savage nations pharmacy or medicine consisted much in magical incantations. Thence it means sorcery or enchantment, and it is so used uniformly in the New Testament. Some have supposed that it means here *poisoning*, a crime often practiced; but the more correct interpretation is, to refer it to the black art, or to pretensions to witchcraft, and the numerous delusions which have grown out of it, as a striking illustration of the corrupt and depraved nature of man."

In Gal. 5:20 witchcraft is sandwiched between idolatry and hatred. It is quite a list of connecting sins, imposed upon anyone who does not love what is right and just.

—Wayne Murphey



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**FEBRUARY 27, 2000**

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:  
LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS**

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.

II Corinthians 6:3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned.

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

II Timothy 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;...

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

Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light;

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 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.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. Colossians 3:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The fruit of the indwelling Spirit of

God shows itself in the child of God by being gentle, patient, kind and good to others.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Galatians 5:22), "*Longsuffering*": To be longspirited, for-bearing and patient; to be able to put up with adversity, contradiction, hardship and abuse until God sees fit to deliver. "*Gentleness*": From the Greek this is defined as usefulness, moral excellence, suitableness, equity and mildness. No man can be of any value and use for the the work of God who is impatient, unkind and without self-control. "*Goodness*": That which is beneficial, helpful, edifying, valuable and profitable.

(II Timothy 2:24), "*Apt to teach*": Instructive, ready and able to give counsel and wise instruction as is needed.

(Romans 15:14), "*Admonish*": To put in mind, to caution, to gently reprove.

(Colossians 3:12), "*The elect of God*": The chosen of God. "*Bowels of mercies*": Deep tender feelings of compassion.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we will consider three more of the things listed as being part of the fruit of the Spirit, namely, longsuffering, gentleness and goodness. These things are not only beautiful and beneficial, but they are vital for the child of God to have abundantly in manner and conversation. The whole scope of the Christian life should be one scene of moral goodness and excellence of character. A little folly in the life of a person who professes godliness stands out and is more noticeable than any of the good traits one might have. One brother illustrated it this way: He took a pure white handkerchief and hid a black stain within its fold. He showed the congregation the beautiful folded white cloth first with the black spot out of sight. Then he quickly unfolded the handkerchief and the black spot stood out. He said, "I know what you are looking at!" The eyes of all were not on the white cloth, but intently fixed upon the black spot. So it is with our lives. We have chosen various scriptures from the New Testament writers, especially of Paul, and one of

James, that deal with these three vital attributes of godliness. In the Old Testament the goodness of God is mentioned many times. If God is good, it must necessarily follow that His children be good, partaking of and manifesting His Spirit of goodness as well as receiving His benefits. We are to be in His image and His likeness. These things are to be "put on," that is, by practical and faithful obedience to His precepts we are to exemplify these traits of His holy nature. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What does an impatient and harsh attitude show?
2. Do we have these things automatically or do we have to put forth effort to "put them on?"
3. Are these things optional or are they vital to spiritual life?
4. Can there be unity in the church if we allow impatience and harshness to affect our relationship with others?
5. Is there any substitute for holy and loving behavior, and why?
6. Will there be any need for prayer and help from God to have these things manifested as they should be?
7. How can God help us to have these things in our lives?
8. What must be done ON OUR PART to have these things?
9. What effect does failure to show these things have upon the work of God with souls?
10. What will be our outcome if we fail to have the fruit of the Spirit in our lives?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

A person who is not long suffering with others will never be a blessing for the work of God. Patience and the ability to bear with others and keep a sweet attitude is indispensable. One cannot afford to be without it. In the home and in the congregation these three things must be on exhibition for there to be peace and harmony. We have to bear with one another. We do not always jibe with one another. Our minds are programmed in different ways. There are times when we will have conflict with our brother. With those who are truly saved

and sanctified this is usually a difference in background or culture that shows up as we relate to one another. Longsuffering, gentleness and goodness will keep that thing down and committed to God. We are not to be quick to judge or condemn others. We are to be careful with our words and how we deal. We must deal honestly, gently and lovingly. No yelling, quarreling or criticizing is becoming to the meek and lowly child of God. It is a mark of excellence to see a man keep calm and cheery under adverse conditions. "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." Proverbs 17:28. Yes, we must work at this thing, cultivate these good fruit manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and daily "put them on."  
—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Nearly every person alive appreciates longsuffering, gentleness and goodness, no matter how much of a despot he or she may be and regardless of the lack of these fruits in their own lives.

The story is told of a Christian lady, who in the course of a visitation was told of a very depraved woman who was ruining herself by debauchery, but was of so violent a temper that no one dared to interfere with her.

This Christian lady proposed to go up and see her, but was warned, "She will kill you." She went and entered the miserable apartment and saw the woman laying in a corner as if a bundle of rags. She spoke and an old, withered, miserable-looking creature raised herself upon her elbow, and with a frenzied look demanded what she wanted.

The Christian replied, "I love you; I want to be kind to you, because Jesus loves you." She went forward and kissed her brow, and notwithstanding violent, repelling words, kissed her again.

Then came the exclamation, "Go away, go away! You will break my heart; you put me in mind of my mother. Never has anyone kissed me as she did; never have I been so treated since I lost her: many kicks and blows have I had, but no kisses like this."

The fountain of feeling was opened, the confidence of the heart was won, and step by step that all but utterly lost soul was led back to Jesus. —Wayne Murphey



**MARCH 5, 2000**

**THE WORKS OF THE FLESH:  
HATRED, WRATH, AND STRIFE**

Galatians 5:19-20 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these;...hatred,... wrath, strife....

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

I John 2:10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

I John 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

I John 4:20 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?

Proverbs 14:29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

Proverbs 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Proverbs 26:20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

James 3:13 Who is a wise man and endued with

knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Philippians 2:3.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Hatred and ill will against one's fellow man, uncontrolled anger and wrath, and the striving of the heart and mind for selfish gain and pleasure are all the works of the flesh and whosoever allows these things to work in his heart shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 5:20), "*Hatred*": A continued feeling of hostility, intense dislike. "*Wrath*": Violent anger or rage. "*Strife*": Discord, conflict, quarrel, enmity, war, contention for superiority.

(I John 3:15), "*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer*": Real murder, the taking of another's life, is no accident, but is premeditated and the result of intense hatred and bitterness.

(James 3:14), "*Glory not, and lie not against the truth*": The Greek says, "do not exult over and lie against the truth." When bitter jealousy and striving against others manifests itself, it is a clear indication of a wrong spirit or attitude, but too many times a person is not willing to acknowledge his or her woeful condition of heart, and seeks rather to lift up self and believe the lie of Satan that he is right regardless.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will consider three more of the works of the

flesh and of the tree of evil. We are putting hatred, wrath and strife into one lesson because we believe that they are closely related to each other. One has great patience and forbearance for someone he dearly loves. But if there is a hostile and bitter attitude of hate in the heart it will stir up wrath and strife. Anger and wrath comes from a deep feeling of resentment and displeasure, and strife is found abounding in such hearts and lives. Let us remember that we, as children of God, are not to allow these works to be in our hearts and lives. We are to love all men, and be longsuffering and gentle toward them, tolerant and kind in the face of their faults. Wrath and anger can become a dominating passion in a person's make up and actions. It is a difficult sin to get victory over. How sad to see people up in years who have never conquered their anger! Harsh words and unkind expressions make life hard and unpleasant for those around them. And usually when a person is wrathful and quick to anger they are also full of strife and self-promotion. Bitterness and evil thoughts abound in this sort of people. We do not have to be this way. God will help us, but we will have to be on our guard against them. Give over to them and they will rule your life and take you down to a devil's hell.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How does hatred manifest itself in a person?
2. Why is a hateful man so unaware of his sin?
3. Why is a man who hates his brother called a murderer?
4. Why is it not possible to love God and hate one's brother?
5. Why should we not make friendship with an angry man?
6. Why should we be slow to speak and slow to wrath?
7. How does a talebearer add fuel to strife?
8. Why is strife and vainglory contrary to godliness?
9. What is the real mark of the true wise man?



10. What is usually found where there is envying and strife?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Let us, as God's children, be careful that we guard our hearts with all diligence, lest the enemy of our souls begins to work in some dislike for someone upon us. If you do not take a stand against any such thought the devil may bring, it will grow and become stronger and spot your soul. Be quick to forgive and pray for that person. When you are praying the Lord to bless that person, there isn't any chance for dislike to have any room. Good-will and dislike just won't mix. If the fire of the Holy Spirit is burning in your soul brightly, it will burn up any such thought of ill-will toward anyone.

What an awful fruit is wrath to bear out in the lives of people! I am sure that everyone who is guilty of having this fruit is ashamed of it and wishes to be delivered. Some seem to have less control of their temper than others, therefore give vent to it in such a way that terrible actions are manifested. One man got so angry at his wife that he took a hammer and beat her washing machine to such an extent that it could not be used again. If anyone who reads this has any trouble with such a condition, don't be discouraged and feel there is no hope for deliverance. Come to God, confessing and seeking His forgiveness and know He will deliver you. But there is something that YOU will need to do also. You must continually be on your guard and watch. If you feel any temptation to yield to anger or wrath, you must flee to your knees in prayer immediately.

A person cannot get into heaven with strife in his heart, which will show out in his life. We must just face it here and get rid of it or it will meet us over there and condemn us to eternal damnation. When strife is in the heart of a person, he is ever watchful to see something that he can go tell so as to cause more trouble or down the person he is working against. God has deliverance for every soul that has a heart

full of strife. God can take it out and put love in the place of strife.

—Sister Anna Marie Miles, in *The Corrupt Tree*.

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"Malice can always find a mark to shoot at, and a pretense to fire."

—Charles Simmons

"Hatred is the vice of narrow souls; they feed it with all their littlenesses, and make it the pretext of base tyrannies."

—Honré Balzac

"If I wanted to punish an enemy it should be by fastening on him the trouble of constantly hating somebody."

—Hannah More

"If there is any person whom you dislike, that is the one of whom you should never speak."

—Richard Cecil

"I shall never permit myself to stoop so low as to hate any man."

—Booker T. Washington

"There are glances of hatred that stab, and raise no cry of murder."

—George Eliot



**MARCH 12, 2000**

### **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: FAITH, MEEKNESS, AND TEMPERANCE**

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is...faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Habakkuk 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

**Zephaniah 2:3** Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

**Matthew 5:5** Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

**Psalm 25:9** The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

**I Peter 3:3** Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

**4** But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

**I Corinthians 9:25** 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.

**27** But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

**II Peter 1:6** And to knowledge (add) temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. **I Timothy 6:11.**

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** If we would obtain entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour we must have and maintain active, living faith in God, a meek and lowly spirit like Jesus had, and strict discipline and control of our lives, always being in subjection to the will of God.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Galatians 5:22-23), "*Faith*": This word and also the word "believe" are translated from the same word in the Greek, which basically means to be convinced and persuaded. This branches out into further expressions such as

credence (crediting God), reliance, assent (acknowledging God as true), assurance and being constant and steadfast in one's profession. In the Hebrew the word "faith" comes from "emwn" which is derived from "aman," from which comes our English word "amen." Its definition from the Strong's Hebrew Dictionary is "built up or supported, rendered firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet, to be true or certain." Also, the word "truth" is most often translated from this same root word. So faith, in the Scriptures, is greatly associated with truth. "Meekness": In the Hebrew this word is associated with "mildness, gentleness, lowliness, saintliness, being needy, and also condescension. The root word from which these words originate means "depressed." In the Greek it means mild and humble. Another good explanation of meekness is being defenseless and harmless. "Temperance": Self-control.

(Habakkuk 2:4 and Hebrews 10:38), Both of these scriptures are the same. The writer in Hebrews is quoting from the Greek Septuagint rendering of Habakkuk 2:4. Most of the New Testament quotations from the Old Testament are from this Greek translation. Ptolemy, king of Egypt, commissioned seventy scholars to translate the Old Testament Hebrew scriptures into the Greek language in 350 B.C. That is why it is called the Septuagint, because it means seventy, referring to the seventy scholars. Putting the two scriptures together one can get a broader and deeper insight of its meaning. "His soul which is lifted up (if any man draw back) is not upright in him (my soul shall have no pleasure in him), but the just shall live by his faith." The term "his faith" means one's own personal and individual confidence and trust.

(Hebrews 10:39), The Greek renders this verse like this: "We are not of those shrinking to destruction, but of faith to the acquisition of the soul." Acquisition means the getting and gaining possession of as one's own.

(I Corinthians 9:27), "*I keep under my body*": In the Greek this means to buffet or subdue one's physical passions.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we will study three very important aspects of the fruit of divine love. We have endeavored to show the meaning of each of these things, namely, faith, meekness and temperance, and how we can apply them to our lives. "Faith is believing, simply receiving what in His promise God has revealed." Meekness is being lowly and taking injury and offense without retaliation or resentment. And temperance is self-control. Oh, how important these three attributes of character and disposition are to successful spiritual life and victory!

From the Old and the New Testament comes the praise of these things. I am greatly impressed with Zephaniah's words concerning us seeking meekness: "It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Oh, how serious this is! In that day of days when the Lord comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are going to need a hiding place.

Concerning temperance, the apostle Paul brought out about those who strive and compete in the games as exercising self-restraint in diet and keeping from defilement. In the sports world to be an athlete one must exercise and keep his body in tip-top shape. This requires strictness of bodily exercise and proper nourishment. Now these people do this for a worldly crown that will perish. How much more ought we as the saints of God to discipline ourselves to be godly and holy as God would have us to be!

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does the proud not feel the need of faith?
2. Why is faith so vital in pleasing God?
3. How will seeking after meekness help us in the day of the Lord's anger?
4. How will the meek "inherit the earth?"
5. Why does one have to be meek to be led and taught of God?

6. Why does the Lord frown on artificial ornaments?
7. What is the real ornament that He wants us to wear?
8. Why must we be diligent to bring our bodies into subjection?
9. How can we add temperance to our faith and knowledge?
10. Why must faith, meekness and temperance be sought for and followed after?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Faith that works by love is what avails with God. (Galatians 5:6.) If we really love God supremely it will not be hard for us to trust fully in Him and believe His precious promises. Even in times when our faith is put to the fiery test we will be sustained in a believing attitude of assurance and hope. The indwelling Spirit of the Lord will help and strengthen us in faith and confidence. To have a living and active faith in God is a real treasure indeed. Utter dependence upon God and confidence in His faithfulness to us will help us to be meek and lowly before Him. In our gratitude and admiration toward Him for His gracious dealings we will feel our unworthiness and our hearts will be melted in meekness and contriteness before God. We will always remember that He is the giver of our life and we have nothing on our own. Therefore we do not defend nor promote ourselves. No pushing and shoving is needed in the heart of the meek. And in our lowly state of mind and heart we are sensitive to the dangers that exist in our mortal frame. Our appetites and desires and passions must be constantly guarded and carefully brought under control. We do not feel confident in ourselves. So many are tainted with the lack of self-control and let it slide. They make a profession to the public but at home they are tyrants. God has something better for us. We can have these qualities in our hearts if we will seek earnestly for them.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

An elderly lady asked a speaker before he began his

address, "Do you ever get nervous before you speak?"

He replied, "Yes, I do!"

The elderly lady said, "Well, you need not get nervous tonight, for we are not expecting much!"

Are you a "not expecting much" person when it comes to God's blessings?

"But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11:6.

God wants us to ask great things of Him. He wants us to ask for little things also. Asking of Him shows our faith in Him.  
—Wayne Murphey



**MARCH 19, 2000**

**THE WORKS OF THE FLESH:  
DRUNKENNESS, REVELLINGS, AND SUCH LIKE**

Galatians 5:19, 21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these;... drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

I Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

II Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Galatians 5:24.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Seeing that the end of time is close upon us, it behooves us to be diligent, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and seek to be fully charged and living under the influence of the Spirit of God. The world passes away and all the lust thereof but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Galatians 5:21), "*Drunkenness*": This is being intoxicated with the poisons of drugs, liquor, or excessive eating. It can involve a psychological drunkenness, not just a chemical dependence of the body, but a mental and emotional habit as well. "*Revellings*": Wild and hilarious parties. "*Such like*": Things that are similar to these mentioned in which the appetites of the flesh are turned loose in a shameful and destructive manner.

(Romans 13:12), "*The night is far spent*": The Greek says, "the night has advanced and is well along." The darkness of



this world is increasing and gaining momentum. Soon the cup of this world's iniquity will be full and God's wrath will be poured out. *"The day is at hand"*: The light of the gospel has approached the earth. The light has come that will set men and women free if they will see it and obey it.

(Romans 13:13), *"Rioting"*: From the same Greek word as "revellings." *"Chambering"*: Overindulgence in sexual activity. *"Wantonness"*: Indulging in any fleshly activity with no restraint or self-control.

(Luke 21:34), *"Surfeiting"*: Debauchery, which is defined as extreme indulgence of one's appetites, especially for sensual pleasure. The meaning of the Greek word here is "headache" which refers to the "hang over" or result of excessive indulgence in the flesh, particularly drinking intoxicating beverages.

(Luke 21:36), *"Pray always"*: The Greek says, "at every time begging, as if binding yourself." This shows the serious attitude we should have toward being ready for that day and to be accounted worthy to stand before Christ in judgment.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we will consider for our final lesson on the works of the flesh two more, namely, drunkenness and revellings. There are more "such likes" that can be mentioned, but we will dwell mainly on these two. Drunkenness has been a problem for mankind for a long time. Noah was not aware of what drinking too much wine would do and he got dead drunk and was passed out, senseless in his tent. (Genesis 9:20-21.) The scripture warns against excess of wine. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18. Some declare that a little wine, as Paul told Timothy in I Timothy 5:23, would be beneficial. But, be that as it may, we are persuaded that something that holds such a potential to addiction and slavery if taken at an excess, would be best left alone and completely avoided. But our world and society is steeped with drunkenness and abominable revellings and partying. It is licensed and the

accepted norm of many. Much revenue comes to the government through this abominable traffic. Drunkenness and revellings go hand in hand. Think of all the drinking that goes on at holiday seasons, especially Christmas and New Years! A child of God who is born of the Spirit cannot and will not participate in this evil practice. We have something so much better to enjoy, something that will not bring a hangover headache or bitter end. The sweet pleasure of having Christ as our holy Guest day in and day out far exceeds all the light forms of vanity that the sinners thirst for. And let us not forget that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of sleep is destructive to the soul?
2. Why is drinking liquor such an attraction to man?
3. What makes people want to have wild parties, etc.?
4. What harm and danger lurks in drinking and partying?
5. Why is God so displeased with such?
6. How can a young person keep from these evil snares?
7. What does a Christian have that is far better?
8. What other way can we be drunken other than with wine?
9. To whom will the coming of the Lord be a snare?
10. What are we to do to be accounted worthy to escape?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Our hearts ache with sorrow to see what the evils of drunkenness is doing to the souls of men in our world. Being one who has never been in that snare, perhaps I could not understand how such a habit can take hold of a person. We need to be aware that it is not only drunkenness with liquor and intoxicating beverages that is preying on the health and happiness of our society. Overeating is another kind of drunkenness. People are eating too much. The body does not need all the food which some people are eating. The body

is working a great part of the day digesting the food which is eaten. What food is not absorbed is stored and for that reason we see many people who are overweight. It can be a habit, an addiction.

May the Lord stir our hearts and awaken us to the sense of the awful harm the works of the flesh are having upon never dying souls!  
—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Perhaps you recall the expression, "Too much of a good thing." This is what revelry consists of. When God made man, He created in him appetites that are necessary for the continuance of the human race and the preservation of life. However, God expects man to exercise control over his natural desires.

I believe God endowed man with a desire to enjoy himself. One who consistently fails to find pleasure in life is physically or emotionally unhealthy. However, if we allow it, the devil will turn an enjoyable time into something which does not glorify our Creator.

Two ingredients combine to create revelry. They are gluttony and rashness. Just as there is a spirit that accompanies other works of the flesh, so there is with revelry. To be near foolishness makes it easier to become foolish yourself. Samuel Butler once said, "The great pleasure of a dog is that you make a fool of yourself with him, and not only will he not scold you, but he will make a fool of himself, too."

—Wayne Murphey



**MARCH 26, 2000**

### **THE ETERNAL TREE OF LIFE**

Revelation 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

**Revelation 21:1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.

**2** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

**3** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

**4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

**5** And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

**6** And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

**7** He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

**8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

**Revelation 22:1** And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

**2** In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

**3** And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:14.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** In Christ Jesus and His great plan of salvation we can have access to the tree of life again. In the Holy Spirit that He gives us through Christ we can drink of the water of life and eat the fruit of the tree of life and receive healing from its virtue.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Revelations 2:7), "*Paradise*": This is from an Oriental word, "paradec" which means "a park," referring to the blessed state of beauty, rest and happiness that awaits the soul who is faithful to Christ. Notice that this is the first of the blessings that Jesus promises in His letter to the congregations and to us.

(Revelations 21:1), "*No more sea*": The sea held potential and threat of flood in the first earth, and because of man's sin it was overflowed with water. But in this new heaven and new earth inhabited by people who by choice were cleansed, made white, tried, and proven by the grace of the Lord Jesus, there will be no threat of destruction. Thus there will be no need for a sea.

(Revelations 21:3), "*Tabernacle of God*": This expression is probably referring to the type and shadow of the old Mosaic tent that God designed and had constructed for His people Israel during their journeys toward Caanan and re-used until the temple of Solomon was built.

(Revelations 22:2), "*Street*": From the Greek word "platys" from which we get our words "plat, place, plate and plaza." I would think that it refers to something similar to a large square in the midst of a great city where people gather, a central hub of society. There in that plaza blooms the tree of

life, to which we today have access in the Spirit, and which also will be reality in that new heaven and new earth.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our final lesson of this series of studies we will consider the tree of life as portrayed in the glorious revelation that Christ gave to His holy apostle, John, on the Isle of Patmos. What John beheld in the Spirit is identical to what was revealed to God's prophet in Ezekiel 47. How wonderful that John was given sight of the beautiful new Jerusalem and the river of the water of life and the tree of life growing on its banks! This is to us who are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit a living reality NOW in the heavenly places where we commune with Christ. We in Christ have, in a spiritual sense, gotten into a new heaven and a new earth, being made new creatures in Him. But in that blessed world to come it will be fulfilled to the fullest extent in rapturous realities of eternal bliss and in the company of God and His Son, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and all who have partaken of these blessings through the ages of mortal time. We partake of the tree of life now when we turn from the vanities of sin and the world and begin to feast on the Word and the Spirit of God through prayer and constant communion with Him. We have seen in the previous lessons the blessedness of a fruitful life for God and also the curse of the works of the flesh and the ruin they can bring to the soul. Now let us look with open face into the joy that is set before us. The beautiful city of gold, decked with precious stones, in the light of which all who are saved shall walk in fellowship with the Almighty forever—oh, what glory is found there! The Lamb is the light and the glory of God brightens it into dazzling beauty and grace. And there, blooming forevermore with unfading leaf and ever abounding fruit, in its central plaza grows the tree of life. Also on either side of that river that flows through that city blooms the tree of life, bringing forth abounding fruit constantly, "neither shall the fruit be consumed." (Ezekiel 47:12.) All who will be accounted worthy of that world to come as the

children of the resurrection will have access to eat of the tree of life and live and reign with Christ forever and ever. Does not this ravish our hearts and fill us with longing and desire to be faithful to God through these few trials and battles of life?  
—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What must we overcome to partake of the tree of life?
2. How can we partake of the tree of life NOW?
3. Who makes up the population of the New Jerusalem?
4. In what way is this beautiful city the bride of Christ?
5. What did Christ mean by "I am Alpha and Omega?"
6. What is promised to him that overcometh the world?
7. What will happen to all who do not overcome?
8. Why is "the fearful and unbelieving" heading the list?
9. What will we be able to do with the tree of life?
10. What will it and the river of life do for us?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

To him that overcomes through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be given the blessing to partake of and enjoy all the things that are found in our lesson. But to those who fail to take hold of the grace of God will be a part in the lake of fire, the second death. We all have to die once, but we do not have to die the second time. We can live again and be a partaker of the resurrection with Christ. "Born once, die twice; born twice, die once."

Notice that at the head of the list of those who will be cast away are the fearful and unbelieving. People are not going to be lost forever on account of their sins alone. It will be because of their unbelief and fear of man. Fear has always been an obstacle to people with regard to pleasing God. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Proverbs 29:25. We have to overcome our fears through believing God and His promises. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Psalm 56:3. Out of Gideon's army of 32,000 over two thirds went back on

account of being fearful. (Judges 7:3.) Faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit. We can partake of this fruit and develop an overcoming trust that will enable us to overcome the world and all that we meet in life. We do not have to be of that number who will be cast into the lake of fire. We can overcome and be victorious in every scene of life. Oh, what a consolation and hope we have in living for Jesus!

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

“...which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month:...” “The idea is not that there are twelve kinds of fruit on the same tree, for that is not implied in the language used by John. The literal rendering is ‘producing twelve fruits.’ The idea is, that the tree bore every month in the year, so there were twelve fruit-harvests. It was not like a tree that bears but once a year, or in one season only, but it constantly bore fruit—it bore every month. The idea is that of abundance, not variety. The supply never fails, the tree is never barren.”

“...were for the healing of the nations.” “That is, they contribute to impart life and health to those who had been diseased. We are not to suppose that there will be sickness, and a healing process in heaven, for that idea is expressly excluded in Revelation 21:4; but the meaning is, that the life and health of that blessed world will have been imparted by partaking of that tree; and the writer says that, in fact, it was owing to it that they who dwell there had been healed of their spiritual maladies, and had been made to live for ever.”

—Taken from *Barnes' Notes*.



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