

Bible Lessons



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

Galatians 5:22-23

Volume 52, No 3
July • August • September

2020

Quarterly Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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*Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of Jesus Christ and His Church.
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THEME FOR BIBLE LESSONS 3RD QUARTER 2020

The Fruit of the Spirit—At Home

For some time I have sensed a need for another series of lessons geared toward marriage and family. The more I study scripture the more I see the great importance of applying the specifics of the “gospel life,” as some call it, to our lives at home. When I began to study the fruit of the Spirit with this in mind, some amazing things started coming to light!

A theory or ideology is one thing; applying it to practical life can be quite another! Can the principles of love, joy, or self-control actually work in daily life? Can they become reality? They must. What good is my Christian profession if it’s not working at home?

Our loving God has promised to make us partakers of His divine nature. Let’s give our hearts unto prayerful study of the divine characteristics He has shared with us through the pouring out of His Holy Spirit. If you are married or single, a parent or a child, a grandparent or a teenager, there will be something in God’s Word for you in this series!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

JULY 5, 2020

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT AT HOME

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Hosea 14:8b From me is thy fruit found.

Romans 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Philippians 1:11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

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

MEMORY VERSE: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. —**Galatians 5:22-23**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus has saved us and filled us with His Spirit so we may bear the precious fruits of righteousness every day in our lives; only as we are in union with Him, abide in Him, and

remain under His discipline will we bear good fruit that will endure.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 15:1 “Husbandman”: farmer; vine-dresser; tiller of the soil.

John 15:2 “Purge”: to cleanse from filth or impurity; to prune.

Hebrews 12:11 “Chastening”: discipline; instruction; training.

“Exercised”: from a Greek word picture of the ancient Greek athlete in intense training. Stripped of his outer garments, he endures constant, rigorous discipline in order to maintain top physical ability, agility and endurance. From this word, *gumnazo*, we get the English words *gymnasium* and *gym*.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

We begin this series of lessons with Jesus giving the example of the vine and branches as He prepared His disciples for His death, resurrection, ascension and indwelling Holy Spirit. Combine this passage with Romans chapters 6 and 11, and you have a very clear teaching about the possibility of being cut off or losing your salvation if through unbelief or disobedience you do not abide or remain in Christ; coupled with verses of hope for the cut-off ones to be reconnected to the vine through faith and obedience. We also quote from Paul’s writings to the Galatians, Philippians, and the Hebrews, and James’ instructions to the church.

Fruit-bearing was not a new subject for Jesus to be teaching. As early as His Sermon on the Mount, He had used analogies of fruit, trees, and plants to illustrate spiritual truths. In the Old Testament, God had compared His dealings with His people to a husbandman who cares for a vineyard: “What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” (Isaiah 5:4).

Our verses today teach very important truths, which we may use as a quick check-list:

We must be connected to the vine. Fruit only comes through union with Christ! (“Abide in Me.”)

In the parable of the sower, the “ground” of the heart must be “good.” Fallow, unattended, or hard ground must be broken up;

meaning **the heart must be made tender and receptive, and stones, thorn roots and carnal seeds taken out.**

Through trusting in Him and delighting in His Word, we must draw spiritual water from His Spirit. (“And my words abide in you...”)

The old life of *self* must die—initially and continually. (“If it die it bringeth forth much fruit.”)

We must endure pruning, chastening, cultivating, and fertilizing. (“He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”)

Don’t be discouraged if you feel you just aren’t seeing the love, gentleness, or self-control in your life; neither should you let the fear of being “cut off” keep you from progress. Consider the parable in Luke 13 where Jesus told of *taking extra time* to dig about and fertilize an unfruitful plant. This is not an excuse for slothfulness but a reminder of God’s mercy shown in discipline.

Accept His discipline which will, many times, involve Him letting you see how weak and marred you are without Him. Remember, He is digging about you, pruning the little shoots of self-reliance and pride, hacking out the stones of envy and bitterness, feeding the malnourished pockets where fear and doubt wreaked havoc. He has chosen you and put you where He put you, and it is His will that you bear MUCH FRUIT!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. Jesus is the true _____, and His Father is the _____, which means _____, _____ - _____ or _____ of the _____.
2. Every branch that does not bear fruit, He _____.
3. Every branch that bears fruit, He _____ it, which means to _____ or _____.
4. Find two statements that match very closely—one from Hosea and one from Jesus.
5. Which prophet told the Pharisees that their fruits must be fitting to their repentance?
6. Jesus spoke of purging, or pruning, for more fruit-bearing. How does Hebrews 12:11 express this same truth?

REFLECTIONS

Years ago when our children were young, an older minister bared his soul in a message preached at Monark. He gave examples of how he often neglected his sons for the work of the ministry. He was gone a lot in meetings, and when he was at home he was often busy with counseling, visiting, praying for the sick and other ministerial duties. He asked his sons' forgiveness when they were older, but couldn't buy back the years that were spent.

We were deeply moved by the message and didn't want that failure to be ours. One of our greatest desires was to have a happy home. So we made many good memories: camping, trips back to campmeeting, skiing, tubing, hiking, trips to the coast, reading, and singing. However, we failed to comprehend and understand the value and great significance of meeting emotional needs in one another and our children. Being together is wonderful and a great start, but it is not enough. As I, Bob, have gotten older, I realize that my emotional needs as a child were not met; that, along with many negative influences have made it very difficult for me to know and understand emotional needs. I also realize that much of men's communication is surface level (it's easier) and lacks emotional depth.

Following is a list of innate emotional needs we as humans have:

1. Security—safe territory and an environment which allows us to develop. Consider the danger of over-using or overdoing of corporal punishment.
2. Attention—to give and to receive.
3. Sense of autonomy and control—having volition to make responsible choices.
4. Emotional connection to others.
5. Feeling part of a wider community or bigger whole.
6. Friendship; intimacy—(IN-TO-ME-SEE)—the knowledge that at least one person accepts us totally for who we are, negatives and all.
7. Privacy; opportunity to reflect and consolidate experience.
8. Sense of competence and achievement.
9. Awareness of meaning and purpose.

We all—husband, wife, children—have emotional needs which are just as real and important as nourishment for the physical body.

—Bro. Bob and Sis. Leah Wilson, Enid, Oklahoma
Married September 28, 1985

JULY 12, 2020

LOVE (PART ONE)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

John 17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Romans 5:5b The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Romans 12:9a Let love be without dissimulation.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his

wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Titus 2:4 That they [the aged women] may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

I John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

MEMORY VERSE: My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. —**I John 3:18**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: As God loved Christ, and Christ loved us and gave His life for us, we are to love one another with that same kind of love and sacrifice; particularly, a husband is to love his wife and nourish and cherish her as he does himself, the wife is to reverence and love her husband and love her children, and all of us are to lay down our lives for one another and show our love by deeds and actions, and not just words.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 13:34 “A new commandment”: not new because the commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” was not in effect, but “His commandment proposed a new object of love, it set forth a new measure of love, so greatly different from all that had preceded it as to become almost a new kind of love, and it suggested and supplied a new motive power for love” (*MacLaren’s Expositions*). “It was new because it had never before been made that by which any class or body of people had been known and distinguished ... They were not to be known by distinctions of wealth, or learning, or fame; they were not to aspire to earthly honors; they were not to adopt any special style of dress or badge, but they were to be distinguished by tender and constant attachment to each other” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*). This “would be based on a new principle, and measured by a higher standard, and even mean more than love of self altogether. Christ’s love to his disciples was self-abandoning, self-sacrificing love” (*Pulpit Commentary*). “Now Christ more than fulfilled the Mosaic precept; he not only loved his neighbor as himself, but he

loved him more than himself, for he laid down his life for men. In this he calls upon the disciples to imitate him; to be ready on all occasions to lay down their lives for each other” (*Clarke’s Commentary*).

Romans 5:5b “Shed abroad”: poured out; copiously diffused.

Romans 12:9 “Without dissimulation”: unfeigned; without hypocrisy; sincere.

Romans 12:10 “Be kindly affectioned”: tenderly loving; the special affection between family members, especially the reciprocal tenderness of parents and children.

Ephesians 5:29: “Nourisheth”: feed; nurture to maturity.

“Cherisheth”: keep warm; foster; comfort. *Webster’s* definition of *foster* is, “to encourage, sustain and promote.”

Ephesians 5:33 “Reverence”: to treat with deference or reverential obedience; respect. *Webster’s* definition of *deference* is, “A yielding in opinion; submission of judgment to the opinion or judgment of another. Hence, regard; respect.”

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

Jesus had just washed the feet of His disciples, thus instituting a new ordinance for them to follow; an example of humility and charity. Afterward, He talked about the one who should betray him, and Judas immediately went out to carry out his plan. Jesus spoke then about His impending death, by which they would be separated from Him. But now He gives them something special and new, and contained in this commandment is a promise that this new and special kind of love would be their identification to all the world.

The emphasis in this lesson is the concept of the self-giving and self-sacrificing love that was in Christ; He spoke of continuing in the love that will cause a man to “lay down his life” for his friends. He also prayed for that love to be in His followers (John 17).

Paul wrote about that love to the Romans as a genuine, sincere love, generously poured out by the Holy Spirit; tender, affectionate, and one which works no ill to its neighbor. In the Romans and Galatians letters he spoke of love as being the fulfillment of the entire law of God. To the Galatians he qualified the freedom we have by saying that we, being set free, are still to lovingly serve one

another; that the fruit of the Spirit in our lives would be, first of all, love.

The characteristics of that love are especially essential for marriage and family life. To the Ephesians and to Titus, Paul wrote specific instructions for marriage and raising children. Again he spoke of the special love Christ had as the kind of love a man should have for his wife: He gave himself. The kind of love a wife gives to her husband is also an expression of giving: she must yield to, or respect, her husband. The older women, Paul explained, were to teach this kind of love to the younger women, so that they would love their husbands and their children.

The apostle John also taught the quality of Jesus' love that would dwell in the hearts and lives of believers. They were to "lay down their lives." This, he said, is the genuine love that is proven by deeds and actions.

Practically speaking, every husband and wife need to seek God: "Lord, break up the hardened, fallow ground of my heart! Make me tender and completely willing to GIVE myself for my spouse. Lord, make my heart compassionate and tender toward the little ones You have given me. Take out the stony heart of harshness, scorn and sarcasm. Make me a willing servant of love for my family. Help me to lay down my life for my loved ones."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. Give the "new" commandment and its specifications which are set forth in both John 13:34 and 15:12.
2. What does this mean? "As the Father hath loved me."
3. The gospel brought freedom from all bondage, but what special servitude is enjoined?
4. List the qualities of the love of Christ set forth in the verses of the lesson. Can you find at least 12?
5. Share how self-sacrificing love is practically carried out in marriage.
6. Share what hinders the production of this fruit in everyday life.

REFLECTIONS

On our wedding day, November 28, 1987, we had the song "Each for the other and both for the Lord" sung. That was over thirty-two years ago and we have found that when God is the central figure of a marriage union, it is the greatest of blessings. We have enjoyed each other's company and have found a spiritual strength in carrying the burdens and responsibilities of life together. Our home has been a safe haven for ourselves as well as our children. It is a pleasure to share meals, thoughts, ideas, and memories with our family.

This is not to say that the journey has always been easy or smooth sailing, as life has a way of bringing unexpected twists and turns, but we are thankful that the Lord has been with us to guide and direct every step of the way. We have a plaque hanging in our house that says, "We may not have it all together, but together we have it all." Life does not have to be perfect in order to enjoy a perfect life.

—Bro. Michael and Sis. LaDawna Adams, Neosho, Missouri

JULY 19, 2020

LOVE, (Part Two)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

1 Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

I Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

MEMORY VERSE: And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

—I Peter 4:8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God's self-giving, sacrificial love in our hearts will teach us to be kind and long-suffering; it will expose and remove envy, pride, rashness, selfishness, anger and ill will. It covers and bears with faults and endures hardships, fervently and genuinely caring for every individual.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Corinthians 13:1 "Tongues": languages. "Charity": goodwill; from a word which means "to prefer;" hence, a moral preference or act of the will. "The word *agape* which is used here for love is peculiar to the New Testament (and a few passages in the LXX.). It is not to be found in any heathen writer. The [English] word 'charity,' which signifies either tolerance or almsgiving, is an insufficient rendering of the original, and destroys the force of the passage, especially in I Corinthians 13:3, where 'almsgiving' without love is pronounced worthless. The Latin *caritas* was used as the rendering of *agape*, probably because the ordinary Latin word *amor* (love) was considered too significant of a mere earthly or fleshly affection; and hence the word 'charity' in the English version" (*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*). "Sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal": a piece of metal which makes a loud noise; or a clanging cymbal, an instrument that produces no intelligible tune.

I Corinthians 13:3 "Feed the poor": dole out; feed by giving a bit of crumb or morsels. "To be burned": "Both at this time and in the

persecution of Diocletian, there were Christians who, oppressed by debt, by misery, and sometimes even by a sense of guilt, thrust themselves into the glory and imagined redemptiveness of the baptism of blood.... The extravagant estimate formed of the merits of all who were confessors, became, almost immediately, the cause of grave scandals. We are horrified to read in Cyprian's letter that even in prison, even when death was imminent, there were some of the confessors who were puffed up with vanity and pride, and seemed to think that the blood of martyrdom would avail them to wash away the stains of flagrant and even recent immoralities" (*Lives of the Fathers*, by Frederic Farrar).

I Corinthians 13:4 "Suffereth long": Long-spirited; perseverant; patient. The opposite of quick-tempered. "To be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish" (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*). "Kind": mild; benevolent; full of service to others. "Envieth": from "zēlóō (an onomatopoeic word [a word that phonetically imitates, resembles, or suggests the sound that it describes], imitating the sound of boiling water) – properly, to bubble over because so hot (boiling); (figuratively) 'to burn with zeal'" (*HELPS Word Studies*). "Vaunteth": boast; brag; show off. "Puffed up": from the word for "air bellows;" inflated; arrogant; proud.

I Corinthians 13:5 "Behave itself unseemly": unbecomingly; improperly; indecently. "Seeketh not her own": is not self-seeking. "Is not easily provoked": from the word meaning "sharp," meaning to sharpen or excite the mind; rouse to anger or wrath. Tyndale translated: "Is not provoked to anger." "Easily" was not in the original. "Thinketh no evil": does not reckon, impute or keep account of the evil.

I Corinthians 13:6 "Rejoiceth not in iniquity": finds no joy, does not delight in, is not glad for sin, injustice, unrighteousness, or wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth, with the truth; whenever the truth wins out.

I Corinthians 13:7 "Beareth": from a word meaning to "roof over"; to cover; endure patiently. "Believeth": have faith in; entrust. "Hopeth": expect; trust. "Endureth": remain under the load; bear up against; persevere.

I Corinthians 13:13 "Abideth": remain; do not depart.

I Peter 1:22 “Unfeigned”: unhypocritical; sincere; genuine.

I Peter 1:22 and 4:8 “Fervent”: earnestly; strenuously; without slack; to maximum potential. From the Greek word *ektenes* and *teino*—stretched out or fully extended— from which we get the English term *tension* or *tense*. “Charity shall cover”: forgive; cover, to hide and keep from seeing; procure a pardon. “The mutual love of Christians, their kindly words and deeds, check the work of sin; their prayers, their intercessions, call down the forgiveness of God” (*Pulpit Commentary*).

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

The apostle had been giving guidelines for worship and ministry to the Corinthian church as correction for a lot of chaos that had obviously been characterizing the gatherings in that church. The women had been speaking out of turn and causing disturbance. Several people were trying to speak in different languages at one time, creating confusion instead of unity. The sacred communion service had become a feast instead of a time of quiet reflection on the sacrifice of their Savior. In the last verse of chapter twelve, after properly lining up spiritual gifts and callings, the writer seems to look at the whole picture and receive a special inspiration. “Wait,” he seems to say, “I see a way of living and worshipping that is even more excellent than proper protocol.” And he begins to describe how it all sounds without the one motivating force which is the true, pure life of Jesus Christ in the soul, and how only love, springing up and overflowing, creates the peace, the comfort, the gentle courtesy, the freedom for which every heart yearns.

The apostle Peter also saw the immense need for the church to cover all thoughts, motives, intents, reactions and emotions with fervent, flowing love. Fervent love covers a multitude of sins, he says, possibly alluding to Proverbs 10:12 (also James 5:20).

A warm and tender heart, so willing, submissive, sacrificial and kind at the beginning of marriage can in time become cold, hard, rebellious, critical, resentful, and cruel. I Corinthians 13 warns that believers who are active in preaching, praying, and giving alms can become this way.

It is so hard to see ourselves! We can preach to others about

dealing gently and wisely with a spouse or child and not realize that the years and hardships have actually brought changes in our own hearts.

“A good marriage is not one where perfection reigns: It is a relationship where a healthy perspective overlooks a multitude of ‘unresolvables’” (*James Dobson*). The covering/bearing quality of love is what creates that healthy perspective. When it becomes clear that a characteristic we dislike in our spouse isn’t ever going to change, it’s time to entreat God for a fresh supply of His forbearing love.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. Having a gift of another language but preaching it with a lack of love in the heart is like what unpleasant sound?
2. How was it possible to feed the hungry or even become a martyr while not yet having the heart full of the love of Christ? Explain how this took place in ancient times, and share how something like that could happen in the home.
3. The word “envy” describes a boiling pot. How can that happen in a family?
4. Give the word pictures used in I Corinthians 13:7, “beareth all things” and I Peter 4:8, “cover.” What kind of heart motive is described here, and what passion of Christ Himself is this portraying? Give an example of applying this in marriage and family life.
5. Discuss how an inflated ego or a self-serving attitude keeps a spouse from bearing the fruit of genuine, fervent love.

REFLECTIONS

Climbing out of the ruts of blame and unsolved problems is an act of faith that will keep the coldness from setting in. Just as the manna was gathered fresh in the morning before it spoiled, couples need to rise early and pray to bind the evil one that fights marriages, and be filled with grace (unmerited favor) to impart to each other.

Pressures of finances, stresses of family life, misunderstandings, sickness, etc., can destroy a marriage; but as the couple is honest and

willing to communicate by listening to each other, even though it will take much time and effort to understand, the spark will amazingly rekindle. If each spouse is willing to make adjustments with humble grace, the Lord will be glorified by their lives together. The song says, "I promised the Lord that I would make it somehow, and I love Him too much to fail him now."

A husband has a need to feel safe and understood by his wife. Remember that as wives we can bear a lot more than we think we can because God partners with us, understands, and gives us grace, strength, and the ability to forgive and move on. From a practical standpoint, wives, remember four things:

1. Give your husband space to be himself.
2. Take the pressure off your husband to make you happy, and find your ultimate fulfillment in God. Your happiness means the world to your husband.
3. Tell him often what has exceeded your expectations.
4. Cut your words down to simply 25%, and be ready to listen and understand without giving a lot of details.

Couples need to remember to sing and live the words to #270 in our hymnal, "Standing Firm." Married life has its ups and downs, but through it all, be committed to "Hear the voice of our Commander," Christ. We are not fighting against flesh and blood but against Satan. Pray for "the powers of hell to surrender and be a valiant overcomer" over your spouse's faults, yourself, your wants, and your disappointments, to submit to the greater cause of unity and togetherness.

—Bro. James and Sis. Tricia Bell, Sapulpa, Oklahoma
Married August 20, 1977

JULY 26, 2020

JOY

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Psalm 128:1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou

be, and it shall be well with thee.

3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

Psalms 113:5 Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,

6 Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!

7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

Proverbs 5:18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

Proverbs 31:25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun: all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

MEMORY VERSE: Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. —**Psalms 16:11**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: A man who fears the Lord experiences a joyful life in his home as he obeys God's command to rejoice and delight in his wife; God also gives a woman joy as she embraces her role as a godly wife and mother. In good times and bad, they can be joyful in early marriage and in later years, because they both fear the Lord and experience His presence—the true source of all joy—in the home.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalms 128:1 "A Song of degrees": There are fifteen of these

Psalms, beginning with 120 and going through 134. Bible scholars vary in their explanations of this. Some believe they stood for the fifteen steps going up to the temple. (*Degrees* translates “to mount up or ascend.”) Some believe these Psalms were sung as the returning Israelites came back to Jerusalem from places of their captivity. “Blessed”: an exclamation, “How happy!” “Feareth the Lord”: “the fear of reverence, of dread to offend, of anxiety to please, and of entire submission and obedience” (*Spurgeon’s Treasury of David*).

Psalm 128:2 “Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands”: “This is a general promise respecting the prosperity which religion affords. If all people were truly religious, this would be universal, so far as man is concerned. Property would be secure; and, except so far as abundant harvests might be prevented by the direct providence of God—by blight, and mildew, and storms, and drought—all people would enjoy undisturbed the avails of their labor. Slavery, whereby one man is compelled to labor for another, would come to an end; every one who is now a slave would “eat the labor of his own hands;” and property would no more be swept away by war, or become the prey of robbers and freebooters. Happiness and security would be the consequence of true religion.” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*).

Psalm 128:3 “Fruitful vine...olive plants”: “The vine and olive are in Hebrew poetry frequent symbols of fruitfulness and of a happy, flourishing state” (*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*). “The vigorous offsets from an aged olive tree, which spring up around it, ready to take its place” (*Pulpit Commentary*).

Psalm 113:7-9 “He raiseth the poor...a joyful mother of children”: a possible allusion to Hannah’s song in I Samuel 2:1-10.

Proverbs 5:18 “Fountain”: wife. “Rejoice with the wife of thy youth”: “Seek not to harlots for that comfort and delight which God allows thee to take in thy wife” (*Benson’s Commentary*).

John 15:11 “Joy”: cheerfulness; calm delight.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

A closer study into Scripture reveals the precious knowledge that God created a wife for man to *bring him joy*; not only so, but he was to rejoice in her and *bring her joy*. Part of Moses’ law concerning the

Israelite military was that a man was not to go to war for a whole year after he married, but was to stay at home and “cheer up” his wife, or bring her joy and happiness (Deuteronomy 24:5). Being a wife and mother was also the ultimate joy in ancient Hebrew culture. This kind of joy only comes from the heart that fears or reveres God and obeys Him.

The true essence of marital joy is the joy God takes in His people, who were chosen and redeemed as His bride. He delights in His bride and sings songs of joy to her (Isaiah 62:4-5, 65:19, and Zephaniah 3:17). In His presence is fullness of joy.

There will be days where we cry to the Lord, “Okay, where is the joy in all of this? Why aren’t we enjoying life? Why must this be so hard?” But let us remember:

Joy is a by-product of the presence of God, which daily, until we leave this world, is going to be highly contested by the enemy.

Marriage is the union of two very different individuals, each going through the pruning and cultivating disciplines of the Holy Spirit, who are learning how to bear and forbear with the humanity of each other.

Parenting involves two—and sometimes, only one—individuals being disciplined by the Holy Spirit who are learning how to discipline, shape, and nurture developing individuals who have inherited their parents’ combined *unsanctified* character traits!

Joy isn’t a feeling; it’s not just an abstract noun. Joy is also a verb—an action. It is something we *choose* to do. A man *chooses* to obey God and rejoice in his wife. A woman *chooses* to rejoice; she *chooses* to be a joyful mother. We *choose* to rejoice in trials, temptations, and in each other when we’re being the somewhat difficult and complex humans that we are.

Joy, as fruit given by God, is *promised*. What grasps and secures the promises of God? Firm belief and trust in the Word of God; obedience and follow-through even when the feelings are not there.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. In Psalm 128, what are the prerequisites for a happy home?
2. Discuss the personal, spiritual and political implications of the phrase, “Eat the labour of thine hands.”

3. What five things are promised to the man who fears the Lord?
4. Psalm 113 possibly refers to what Old Testament mother?
5. What is the source of true joy?
6. What is the true essence of a man rejoicing with his wife?

REFLECTIONS

Prior to becoming a couple, both of us had individually determined to place God first in our lives because we loved and feared Him, so when we were married we naturally committed to asking Him to be the Head of our marriage, even entering specifically into contract with Him during our wedding vows!

When we first married, we were told by a number of close acquaintances that knew us well they believed we were well-matched and put together by God. We too believed our marriage was in God's will and expected to be happy together. However, starting early in our marriage, we had to learn that the joy in our marriage came primarily from Him, for putting an independent, fastidious bachelor with a baby girl straight from her parents' home led to more tears in our first six months of marriage than all the other years since! Adding to that, our first few years were marked with job loss, the near loss of our home, and the heartbreaking loss of the first child we were expecting. But what we learned through those difficulties was that there is a special joy for those that choose God and each other, and we look back fondly on those years as the basis for our strong marriage today!

After a few years, we were uncertain that parenthood would become a realized dream, but God inspired us with the passage in Psalm 128 referenced in this lesson, and we became parents with joy! This brought about new opportunities for growth. For example, we learned that a wife's consternation at the possible disapproval of her husband when arriving from work to a home where all the chores weren't completed could cause her small children to have feelings of fear and worry as well, so, after prayerful consideration, changes were made. These days, upon his arrival home, it's not uncommon to hear an anticipatory exclamation of "Daddy's home!" ring throughout the house followed by kisses and hugs all around!

Yes, we've seen our share of loss and disappointment, but we've also gotten to experience physical healings, the salvation of our

children, financial blessings, and joy in knowing that the Holy Spirit is in control of our home—a home of singing, laughter, and genuine enjoyment with each other. As a phrase from *As The Deer*, a song Brother Fari often sings, states, God alone is “the real Joy-Giver”!

—Bro. Fari and Sis. Bonnie Matthews, Mission Hills, California
Married March 31, 2001

AUGUST 2, 2020

PEACE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

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

Isaiah 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

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

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Ephesians 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

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

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: A person who loves God's law and has God's heavenly kingdom within him; who allows God's righteousness to work, and Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to rule and reign in his heart and guide him in the way of peace, and who follows peace and seeks for peaceful relationships with others will sow and reap the precious fruit of peace in his heart and home.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 119:165 "Peace": completeness; soundness; health; welfare (*Strong's Concordance*). "A state of quiet or tranquility; harmony; concord; reconciliation; freedom from disturbance or agitation" (*Webster*). "Offend": means or occasion of stumbling. "True love to the will of God, however it is made known to us, either in the Book or in our consciousness, or in daily providences ... brings to us, in all circumstances, and in every part of our nature, a tranquillity which nothing can disturb" (*Maclaren's Expositions*). "There is a perfect calm in the breasts of those who not only do the will of God, but love to do it. They are at peace with God by the blood of reconciliation; at peace with themselves by the answer of a good conscience and the subjection of those desires which war against the soul; at peace with all men by the spirit of charity; and the whole creation is so at peace with them, that all things work together for their good" (*Benson Commentary*).

Matthew 5:9 "Peacemakers": maintainers of peace (*Tyndale*).

Romans 12:18 "As much as lieth in you": give it your best effort. "This implies two things: (1) We are to do our utmost endeavors to preserve peace, and to appease the anger and malice of others. (2) We are not to 'begin' or to 'originate' a quarrel" (*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*).

Ephesians 2:14 "He is our peace": an allusion to Isaiah's Prince of Peace. "Here ... is our Lord called not the giver of peace, but the peace itself—His own nature being the actual tie of unity between God and mankind, and between man and man (*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*).

Colossians 3:15 "Rule": act as umpire; arbitrate; make the call.

Hebrews 12:14 "Follow": aggressively chase; earnestly pursue.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

The verses in our lesson are but an outline of a character trait so majestic and sublime its very name is given to our Lord: Jehovah-Shalom (Jehovah is my peace). He is the “Prince of Peace,” and “He is our peace.” What becomes very clear as we study is that He delivered this peace to our souls at the cost of His own life (Colossians 1:20 and Isaiah 53:5). This emphasizes again the self-sacrificing quality of true love, so essential for marital happiness.

The fruit of peace can also share these names: contentment (peace with circumstances or possessions), harmony (peaceful blending with family members, neighbors and fellow Christians), and rest (personal peace in the soul).

Peace, as a direct result of loving God’s will and way and walking in His righteousness, will find its way into all these areas, as they directly impact the marriage relationship. Studies have shown that 83% of couples’ arguments are about finances, and money is listed in the top three reasons for divorce. At the root of many of these issues lies a lack of contentment. My wants and demands vs. your wants and demands. Following Christ’s way of laying down my life for your sake brings peace to the struggle, as does learning and obeying the Bible’s way of making money, spending money and saving money while ultimately trusting God to supply our needs.

Harmony evokes the idea that you don’t have to do everything just like me to be valuable and appreciated. In fact, our differences enhance our marriage. God put us together, not to be exactly alike, but to produce a pleasing blend. We appreciate each of the differences of our children as well.

Personal soul rest is the kind of peace I must have in order to “live peaceably with all [people].” This, according to the Hebrews writer, is accomplished when I “cease” from my own works. (The love that gives up its own life, again!) I don’t have to have things my way to be happy. I am free to risk loving and accepting you because I have accepted who I am before God and am no longer straining and stressing to “be something.”

Putting my all into being a peacemaker involves making sure my attitudes and words are “pleasing” in God’s sight; that I understand which words are hurtful, inflammatory, belittling, or negative to my

spouse, and which words bring peace and actually edify or build up.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. Great peace comes from _____.
2. The effect of righteousness is _____, _____, and _____.
3. What positive actions are described in the verses of our lesson?
4. Give a Biblical example of someone who portrayed the quality of peacemaking or one who did not.
5. Who is our peace, and what has He done for us? (Two things are described.)
6. What does it mean for God's peace to "rule" our hearts? How can this concept enrich a marriage?

REFLECTIONS

Marriage: two people of varying backgrounds, drawn together by an attraction to one another. That attraction develops into what we call love. They have different personalities, are raised in different environments, different cultures, and maybe different religious backgrounds. Some things may be important to one and of little to no importance to the other. The dynamics of this marriage relationship have the potential to be the greatest thing or the worst thing; or somewhere in between. The choice is made by the parties involved.

To live peaceably with one another is a conscious choice that is renewed and reinforced every day. The wonderful state of marital peace is possible and is brokered through compromise and sustained by love. Over the years we have counseled many couples and we would like to share a few things that we have learned.

THERE MAY BE ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT IT: A dollar bill has two sides. The color and size are consistent, but the description of each side is quite different. It is very possible to look at the same thing and describe different aspects of it and both be completely accurate and be in complete disagreement at the same time. "I don't understand why you can't see it. It's as plain as day!" But which side

are you describing, yours or mine?

Our perspectives are influenced and shaped by our experiences. What happened in our formative years follows us into adulthood and impacts our relationship with one another. Just because that is the way that you see it, does not mean that it's totally accurate. It is possible for both parties to be partially right and completely wrong. We must understand that each person comes into the relationship with preconceived notions and ideas. To keep the peace, seek to understand each other, not to prove your point.

HEARING VS. LISTENING: There is a difference between listening and hearing. In most disagreements we “hear” but we do not “listen.” We hear long enough to make a counterpoint, but we fail to listen with the heart. Sometimes what speaks the loudest is not the words but the wounds. Find the hurt and soothe it.

You must not only listen to what is said but what is left unsaid. Emotions are complex and often confusing, especially when they are cross-translated between the sexes. Women and men think and process things quite differently. The scripture tells husbands to dwell with their wives according to knowledge. Take time to study your spouse. Know the intricate details that make them “tick.” Then train your heart to hear, not only what they said, but what they did not say. With her words she may be saying: “a bouquet of flowers is not necessary,” but with her heart she may be saying: “but it would be nice.”

SECURITY AND SUPPORT: Women need security and men need support. God made us that way. Women need to feel secure in their relationship, in their homes and in their finances. In general, women tend to be more risk-averse than men. For instance, men are more likely to quit their jobs and start a new business but may not understand why their wife is not fully supporting that decision.

When women feel insecure they respond negatively. They may not clearly understand why, nor be able to articulate it. Insecurity is often disguised behind seemingly unimportant points and issues that may be insignificant to the man. When we understand the “why” it eliminates much disagreement and facilitates peace.

Men need support. No matter how macho they may seem; they crave the support of their wives. God said it is not good for man to be alone, so he made a helpmeet for him. The role of a helpmeet is to support. There may be times when men are baffled as to why they do

not have the full support of their wives. But if the wife's "security need" has not been met, she cannot fully support him. (Note: we purposely used: cannot vs. will not) Yes, it is her duty to submit but she may not be able to fully put her heart into it.

From our experience these are the two basic needs of men and women in a marital relationship. It should also be noted that this is a reciprocal process. If women feel secure and men feel supported, it makes for a peaceful relationship.

DEALING WITH ANGER: Psychologists would say that anger is a secondary emotion. It masks other emotions, such as disappointment, disgust, sadness, fear, etc. Make it a point to know what is behind that mask of anger. Is it fear? is it disappointment? Once you deal with the primary issue, the secondary issue of anger will remedy itself.

There will be disagreements in every marriage that can become the foundation for anger. How you deal with anger is of utmost importance. The danger of excusing anger as a normal process of the human experience is that, if left unmitigated, it will develop into unforgiveness and bitterness. No relationship can stand up against this. Take it upon yourself to be the peacemaker. Make it a point to be slow to anger and swift to forgive.

DIFFERENT STAGES: Marriage goes through stages. As we mature, our marriage matures and the dynamics of the relationship change. Many fail to realize this. It has been our experience that there is a major adjustment around each seven-year mark. Of course, this is unofficial, but we have noted the pattern in our own relationship and in the marriages of people that we have counseled over the years.

Everyone matures at a different rate, in different areas of their lives. Because of this, what was once only a mild nuisance in younger days can become intolerable as we grow older. One party may have matured in a certain area while the other has not. We must navigate these stages of life and be willing to adjust our expectations in order to "reset" our relationship and maintain peace in our homes.

—Bro. Darrell and Sis. Kimberly Johnson, Sacramento, California
Married July 21, 1984

AUGUST 9, 2020

LONGSUFFERING

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Psalms 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

Isaiah 48:9 For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

15a And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.

I Corinthians 13:4a Charity suffereth long, and is kind.

Colossians 1:11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.

Ephesians 4:2 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.

I Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

MEMORY VERSE: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. —**Colossians 3:12-13**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Longsuffering is an attribute of God and must come from God if we are to have it in our character; therefore, we must experience and value His longsuffering and neither despise nor misunderstand it. We must be filled with His Spirit so that His love and mercy will be poured out in us for others and daily be replenished by His grace, wisdom and divine patience.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Exodus 34:6 “Longsuffering”: long (-suffering; -winged); slow to anger; patient.

Psalms 103:13 “Pitieth”: has compassion. From the same root word as “womb,” which is translated “compassions” in Lamentations 3:22.

II Peter 3:9 “Slack ... slackness”: unduly slow; tardiness; delay.

I Peter 3:7 “According to knowledge”: scientifically; intelligently; “Christian knowledge: appreciating the due relation of the sexes in the design of God, and acting with tenderness and forbearance accordingly: wisely: with wise consideration” (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*). “Hindered”: cut down; cut off; frustrated; removed. “If the husband treated the wife unkindly; if he did not show her proper respect and affection; if there were bickerings, and jealousies, and contentions between them, there could be no hope that acceptable prayer would be offered. A spirit of strife; irritability and unevenness of temper; harsh looks and unkind words; a disposition easily to take offence, and an unwillingness to forgive, all these prevent a ‘return of prayers.’ Acceptable prayer never can be offered in the tempest of passion, and there can be no doubt that such prayer is often ‘hindered’ by the inequalities of temper, and the bickerings and strifes that exist in families” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*).

Colossians 3:12 “Bowels of mercies”: the heart, as the seat of the affections, and those affections being strong with compassion, sympathy, and pity toward suffering. “...a sympathizing spirit with saints in distress, weeping with them that weep, suffering with them that suffer, being touched, as their high priest is, with a feeling of their sorrows and weaknesses: it denotes inward pity and compassion to distressed objects, the most tender regard to persons in misery, and such compassion as is free from all hypocrisy and deceit” (*Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*). “Longsuffering” long spirited; “a patient holding out under trial; a long-protracted restraint of the soul from yielding to passion, especially the passion of anger” (*Vincent’s Word Studies*).

Colossians 3:13 “Forbearing”: hold up; bear with; endure; tolerate. “Forgive”: to grant grace.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

Moses had just dealt with the disobedient Israelites who worshipped the golden calf. Now he implored God to show him His way and His glory. He needed something special to be able to lead the great congregation of people. God commanded him to go back up into Mount Sinai and bring two more tables of stone. Moses obeyed, and God met him there in a cloud. As He passed by Moses, He proclaimed His name, His attributes, and His way. Moses was there with God forty more days and wrote again God’s covenant, The Ten Commandments, on the stones. When he went back again to camp, he was unaware that his face shone so much that the people could not look at him. What a glorious visit with God!

One of the attributes God showed Moses was His longsuffering. The next time we see this particular word was when the Israelites were so rebellious and angry against God they refused to enter Canaan and instead called to appoint another leader to take them back to Egypt. God told Moses He would smite them and make a new nation from Moses’ descendants. Moses pleaded with God, for His name’s sake, to pardon and spare them, citing God’s own words given to Him that day on the mountain. “The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy” (Numbers 14:18). This word is used in reference to God eight more times in the Old Testament: by David in Psalms 86,

103 and 145; by Jeremiah in a touching dialogue with God where he pleaded with God not to take him away; by the prophets Joel, Jonah and Nahum; and by Nehemiah as he recorded the Levites' quoting Moses' same words to God (from Numbers 14:18) in their prayer of repentance for Israel after the Babylonian captivity.

In Isaiah 48, God defined His longsuffering toward the rebellious Israelites: because of His "name's sake," He deferred his anger and did not cut them off.

In the New Testament, Peter explained it was longsuffering that caused God to tarry His second coming, not tardiness nor for lack of keeping a promise. All these examples let us know that we can totally miss the meaning of God's longsuffering; we can discount it and actually despise it. And when we don't comprehend this about God, when we don't realize the depth of His forbearance, longsuffering and forgiveness toward us, we will not understand how longsuffering we should be toward others.

The apostle Paul wrote about longsuffering from his unique perspective of having been a persecutor of the church but, being awakened by God's mercy, he had repented and obtained forgiveness. He stated that from that time forward he would be known as a "pattern" of the longsuffering of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 1:16). This example, as well as other New Testament admonitions, remind us that longsuffering is a part of that "more excellent way," a quality of divine Love, without which we are nothing. Being able to joyfully suffer long is the ultimate expression of Divine strength in the soul. It takes longsuffering to keep the unity of the Spirit.

One aspect of longsuffering I kept running into was that grace, mercy, and forbearance are especially to be offered to those who do us injury, who owe us regard or obedience. Certainly that is how Christ has been forbearing and longsuffering with us.

As Christ forgave. As He loved us. If I would forbear with my spouse in just that way, how tranquil and happy our home would be!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. Explain the context of the verse in Exodus 34. What had just happened to Moses?

2. What does the Lord remember as He pities us with a Fatherly pity?
3. How is a husband to treat his wife, according to I Peter 3:7?
4. What two things accompany longsuffering in I Corinthians 13 and Colossians 1?
5. I Peter 3 outlines specific things that make up longsuffering. What are they?
6. Name the elements of spiritual clothing listed in Colossians 3. How do they apply specifically to marriage?

REFLECTIONS

Psalm 86:15 "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." David's words portray a God having compassion for the weak and sorrowing, grace for the undeserving, longsuffering for the provoking, mercy for the erring, and truth for the tested—exactly the qualities needed in marriage. God's love has many forms, and all of them are lovely. Its pure white light, when shining through our hearts, has the peculiar characteristic of separating into all the colors of the rainbow of heavenly graces this verse unveils until it bathes our lives in iridescent splendor. Nowhere is that radiant, sparkling, dancing light more resplendent than when two people flash it upon each other in a godly marriage.

Perhaps each of us could say "we are different, my spouse and I." In some ways our personalities mesh and in some they can collide. Married couples pledge hearts and lives to each other, and thus commit to adapting their personalities to each other. Roberta and I knew we must do that diligently, for like all couples we faced the additional task of meeting an uncertain future that would hold the same kinds of mountains and valleys as the generations who had blazed the path before us. We each brought to the contest our devotion, fortitude, character. They were valuable, but they were not enough. Only the mighty hand of God could enable us to truly mold to each other while both young and old, through joy and delight, through tears and altered expectations. We needed Him when we came to the "choice points" of life, when we had to decide whether to allow the challenges we met draw us closer together or

wedge us apart. The gentle spirit of holy longsuffering with which God has helped us has been the key to filling our home with the kaleidoscope of beautiful colors, largely unseen by others, that make our marriage our secret treasure.

For just one example, we have learned to give to each other. We have a marital bank account: we continually put special gifts and kindnesses in it for each other, so when an unexpected emotional expense arises we have a balance. It makes longsuffering easy—neither of us can bear to see the other hurt because we're in love. Thus we find ourselves continually trying to do things to keep the beautiful white multicolored sunshine from heaven in each other's day.

—Bro. Ed and Sis. Roberta Wilson, Shawnee, Oklahoma
Married April 2, 1966

AUGUST 16, 2020

GENTLENESS

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

Psalm 18:35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.

Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

II Corinthians 10:1a Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...

I Thessalonians 2:7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.

Philippians 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

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; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

MEMORY VERSE: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

—James 3:17

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The gentleness and kindness of God, given through our Savior, Jesus Christ, is manifested by the servants of Christ in word and deed, through the Holy Spirit working in them, to the benefit and nourishment of all to whom they minister, which includes the members of their own families.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 18:35 “Gentleness”: meekness; merciful kindness; mildness, clemency, favor. The word has a sense of royalty, or someone in a position to rule, who, instead of being harsh and dictatorial, is mild-mannered and extends favor.

Isaiah 40:11 “Gently lead”: lead on to a place of rest or a watering station; journey in stages; lead softly.

II Corinthians 10:1 “Gentleness”: considerateness, fairness; true equity; mildness; forbearance; justice beyond justice. “Sweet reasonableness” (*Matthew Arnold*) “that knows when to “relax the

strict legal requirements concerning others . . . to carry out the real spirit of the law" (*G. R. Berry; HELPS Word Studies*). In Acts 24:4 the word is translated clemency: ("1. Mildness of temper; gentleness or lenity of disposition; disposition to treat with favor and kindness. (2. Mercy; disposition to treat with lenity, to forgive or to spare, as offenders; tenderness in punishing; opposed to severity, harshness, or rigor" (*Webster*).

I Thessalonians 2:7 and II Timothy 2:24 "Gentle": affable; mild; speaking calming words which bring God's order to a situation (*HELPS Word Studies*). "Applied to external appearance, affable denotes that combination of features, which invites to conversation, and renders a person accessible, opposed to a forbidding aspect; mild; benign; as, an affable countenance" (*Webster*). "Cherisheth": brood over; foster.

Philippians 4:5 "Moderation": seemly; equitable; yielding. "Gentle in the sense of truly fair by relaxing overly strict standards in order to keep the 'spirit of the law'" (*HELPS Word Studies*). This is a slightly different form of the word in Acts 24:4 and II Corinthians 10:1. It is translated *moderation* in Philippians 4:5; *patient* in I Timothy 3:3; and *gentle* in Titus 3:2, James 3:17 and I Peter 2:18. "It means in effect considerateness, the attitude of thought and will which in remembrance of others forgets self, and willingly yields up the purely personal claims of self. The "self-less" man is the "moderate" man of this passage; the man who is yielding as air in respect of personal feeling or interest, though firm as a rock in respect of moral principle" (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*). "Let your moderation be known; exercising an even temper of mind, in governing the sensual appetite, with modesty, patience, and gentleness, in opposition to all impetuosity and inordinacy of affections, yea, to all excess and exorbitances in words and actions" (*Matthew Poole's Commentary*).

Titus 3:2 "No brawler": not a fighter; uncontentious; peaceable.

Titus 3:3 "Divers": diverse; various.

Titus 3:6 "Abundantly": richly; copiously.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

In the Word Definitions, we get a good picture of gentleness; how it defines God's manner toward mankind, how it was portrayed by the New Testament apostles toward all people—Jews and Gentiles alike—and how followers of Jesus ought to manifest it themselves.

David stated the important truth that it was God's gentleness that made him great; it made him prosper and grow. This is the same idea Isaiah brings out when he speaks of Christ as a tender Shepherd. The ewes carrying unborn young present a word picture of someone who needs utmost care, thoughtfulness, protection, and gentle treatment. Remember how Jacob refused to push his family caravan beyond the limits of the mothers and little children? Jesus is just that solicitous over us. He doesn't drive or push us.

Paul cited the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ Himself as the motive or basis from which he made a strong personal appeal to the Corinthians. In his letter to the Thessalonians, he called them to give witness to the treatment he and the other apostles had given them.

In Paul's letters to the Philippians, Timothy, and Titus, he admonishes them, as servants of Christ, to be just that tender, caring and mild-mannered in their ministry. Especially to those who "opposed themselves," they were to use gentleness. To Titus, he again points to Jesus Christ as the one who treated us, who once were foolish and disobedient, with kindness (gentleness) and mercy.

When I keep my memory keen as to how much I needed "justice beyond justice" and how in mercy he saved me and generously and copiously poured out His Spirit upon me, I can better show my spouse, my children, and my neighbors that "sweet reasonableness" that goes beyond the letter of the law and extends the spirit of the law, which is the peace and prosperity of all.

There are extreme ways of managing a home. We can be so legalistic and domineering that we drive our children away from God altogether. We can be so permissive our children have no compass, no guidelines, no direction. We can be uninvolved. A young man sadly shared with me, "My mother just 'checked out' of mothering before we were even raised."

God ordained there should be order and guidance in the home. The husband is to be under Christ's authority; he is to follow and obey Him. This puts him in the proper position to be the authority for his wife. She is to revere and yield to him as he yields to Christ. The children then are to be governed in this same way. The wife is to open "her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). The words of a wise man are "gracious" (Ecclesiastes 10:12). The discipline of the home should pattern after God's law, which He said was for the well-being of his people. The beautiful fruit of gentleness makes this a reality.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. Keeping in mind the spirit and intent of God's law for us, share how important gentleness is in the rule and management of the home.
2. What did David say was the result of the gentleness God had shown him?
3. Give your thoughts about the picture Isaiah gives us of Christ as the gentle shepherd.
4. What are we to remember when we deal with those who are unsaved? How does that affect our tone of voice and manner of spirit?
5. Give synonyms of the word *gentleness*.
6. Share how the definition of *gentle* in I Thessalonians 2:7 and II Timothy 2:24 can help us understand how to deal with a spouse or child.

REFLECTIONS

Learning proper etiquette and good social manners is what helps make little boys and girls grow into gentlemen and gentle women. As parents, part of our responsibility is to teach these manners to our children. One day when our daughter was just learning to talk, she was sitting in her highchair at the table and let out a burp. Her father asked her, "What do you say?" She leaned her head to the side and with a smile said, "Thank you!" As time progresses children quickly learn the difference between "thank you" and "excuse me." We

teach them the importance of respect, of sharing, of learning to solve differences with their siblings, and the skills needed to get along with people in school, in the workplace, and especially in the home. We teach our children the value of a soft answer turning away wrath.

There is a gentleness that is of far greater value than mere social manners. It comes as a fruit of the spirit. It is not just a head knowledge, but it reveals itself as we yield our hearts to God and let His Spirit make us into His likeness. Rules are concerned about actions—the externals. True spirituality is concerned about the attitudes of the heart and the actions that are a product of a heart softened by the spirit of God. These fruits are of inestimable value in the success of our marriages and family life.

By God's grace we are enabled to bear and forbear, to behave with courage in adversity, and to not take advantage of a situation or discussion even if we are right. We will have a readiness to forgive injuries, recognizing that when we err or make a mistake is the time we will feel our greatest need of someone else manifesting gentleness toward us. Gentleness is not weakness but having strength under control.

—Bro. Clifford and Sis. Patsy Smith, Keizer, Oregon
Married June 8, 1968

AUGUST 23, 2020

GOODNESS

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Numbers 10:29 And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.

32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what

goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

Proverbs 31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Matthew 12:35 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.

Mark 14:3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

Romans 15:14 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.

Ephesians 5:9 For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

MEMORY VERSE: That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. —**Titus 2:4-5**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The fruit of goodness comes from the goodness of God Himself, directed to us through Christ and

manifested through us by the Holy Spirit; where once “no good thing” dwelt within us, He births in us an inner disposition to be a benefit, blessing and channel of God’s goodness to everyone around us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Numbers 10:29 “We will do thee good”: cheer; be pleasing; do well. “The Lord hath spoken good”: giving pleasure, happiness, prosperity; agreeable; pleasing.

Proverbs 31:12 “Good”: benefit; bring beauty.

Mark 14:6 “Good work”: beautiful, as an outward sign of the inward good, noble, honorable character; good, worthy, honorable, noble, and seen to be so.

Ephesians 5:9 and Galatians 5:22 “Goodness”: intrinsic goodness, especially as a personal quality, with stress on the kindly (rather than the righteous) side of goodness; the goodness that comes from God showing itself in spiritual and moral excellence (*Strong’s Concordance and HELPS Word Studies*). There are four occurrences in the New Testament; the Greek word is only found in Biblical writings. It does not appear at all in secular Greek writings.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

When Moses gave an invitation to his brother-in-law to join the Israelites on their journey to Canaan, he said, “Come with us, and we will do you good.” He further qualified the kind of treatment he was intending when he said, “What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.” Truly, that is the basis for any goodness we might do for others. As with every other fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and gentleness—we recognize it is only God’s work in us by which we can produce His character in our lives.

In the passage about the virtuous woman, the woman who fears the Lord is one in whom her husband can safely trust. Why? Because she does him good. She doesn’t trash his reputation. She wisely uses the income he brings home to the family. She makes good use of her time and makes sure the members of her household are well-equipped and well-fed. Paul seems to allude to this passage when he

writes to Titus about instructing wives of their duties in the home.

A third illustration from Scripture that so aptly illuminates the word *good* is the long-memorialized scene at Bethany, just days before our Lord's crucifixion. In this story, Jesus defended the criticized actions of the woman who did what she could. He said, "She hath done a good work." He affixed a motive on her action that I wonder if she had even discerned. Did she dream it was anointing for His burial? But He counted it as such. What an honor! It forever linked her name with His death and resurrection, the most important events in all time.

The examples in our lesson provide understanding of the word *goodness*. In each we can see our moral obligation, both toward God and toward humanity. I want to be able to say to those around me—friends, my spouse, my daughter, my son—"You come with me. I'm going to heaven and along the way I'll do you good. I'll treat you kindly. I'll be a great benefit to you." May every word and deed of our lives reflect the goodness of God toward us!

Think deeply about what it means to be "a good man" with a "good treasure" in his heart; and "a good woman" who is discreet, chaste and pure, and loves her husband and children. What would such a man or woman read or watch? What kinds of music would they enjoy? What kinds of entertainment or friends might they have? How would a "good" man or woman dress? My father told of mail-order catalogs in his boyhood days (1940's). In the middle of the women's clothing section was a page or two dedicated to "The Gracious Woman." The clothing offered was more conservative and modest than the more fashionable, trendy items. Even these details of living affect the marriage relationship (I Peter 3:1-6).

One of the definitions of "good" is to bring beauty. One husband was known to affectionately say of his wife, "She colors my world." How may we bring beauty to each other in the home?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. What was the *particular quality* of the goodness Moses promised to Hobab?
2. Share what this example teaches about our treatment of others today.

3. What treatment does the husband of the virtuous woman receive and what does this involve?
4. How would the “good man” in Matthew 12 speak and act toward his wife and children?
5. Jesus called the woman’s sacrificial gift to Him “ _____ ”
6. Explain how the fruit of goodness is important in the home.

REFLECTIONS

The Lord has blessed my husband, Charles, and I with a good marriage. Looking back over the fifty-five and a half years of our life together, there were several things that energized us and kept us happy. However, it was our commitment to God and each other that has been and continues to be paramount and our driving force.

First, we made God the head of our home and family. We found truth in and believed that “...a threefold cord is not easily broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12). By letting the Lord lead, not only was He there with us, He also helped us in all the phases and challenges in our life—including joyful celebrations, disappointments, afflictions, grief, parenting and financial decisions.

Secondly, we learned the value of togetherness and that “...two are better than one” (Ecclesiastes 4:9). This included praying together to find strength, answers and direction to deal with ourselves and each other. As we worked toward common goals and interests, supported each other and compensated for each other’s weakness we began to understand more what “..they twain should be one flesh” really meant and the joys it could bring. Although two halves make a “whole” in a marriage, it doesn’t mean keeping score to ensure everything relationship-wise is split 50/50. Becoming “one” means being willing to give and do as much as needed to make “the whole” successful. Honoring the golden rule (Matthew 7:12), we were careful not to wound or injure each other. To act otherwise would mean we were hurting ourselves since we were “one.”

Learning the importance of listening, being quick to forgive, and in humility to ask for forgiveness helped to keep us happy and at peace. Being thankful and content kept us from worrying and fretting over what we did not have and enabled us to be more

appreciative for the things we did have

God is a wonderful, patient teacher and leader. After all these years, He is still the third, and most important, cord in our threefold-cord marriage. We still look to Him!

—Bro. Charles and Sis. Geneva Lowe, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Married September 18, 1964

AUGUST 30, 2020

FAITH

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

Proverbs 28:20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

I Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

I Corinthians 13:6 [Charity] Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

I Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

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: Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? —**Proverbs 20:6**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The word faith is scripturally given in two senses: an assent of the will to, belief in, and reliance upon the

faithfulness and truth of God (active sense); and fidelity, trustworthiness, and trust (passive sense). As a fruit of the Spirit, the active reliance upon a faithful God produces the God-like characteristic of faithfulness and trustworthiness in the believer.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Proverbs 28:20 and 20:6: “Faithful”: from a root word meaning to confirm or support; firm; stable. The root word *aman* is the Hebrew word for faith, faithful, believe, assurance, establish, sure, steadfast, and nurse (as to support and foster, as a parent or nurse). The familiar Hebrew word “Amen” is also from this root and means verily; so be it; it is established; firm; faithful. In Isaiah 65:16 the title “God of truth” (in the King James version) is in Hebrew “The God of AMEN.” When Jesus said, “Verily, verily” in His sermons, He used this word! In Revelation 3:14, this title is given to Jesus Christ—“the Amen, the faithful and true witness.”

Luke 16:10 and I Corinthians 4:2 “Faithful”: trustworthy; sure; true. From a primitive root meaning *to convince; to assent to evidence or authority; to rely by inward certainty*. “Unjust”: wicked; treacherous; unrighteous.

I Corinthians 13:7 “Believes”: to have faith; entrust; credit. “Takes the best and kindest views of all men and all circumstances, as long as it is possible to do so. It is the opposite to the common spirit, which ... paints it in the darkest colours, and makes the worst of it. Love is entirely alien from the spirit of the cynic, the pessimist, the ecclesiastical rival, the anonymous slanderer, the secret detractor” (*Pulpit Commentary*).

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

The basis of our faith is a faithful, trustworthy, sure, and certain God who cannot lie; whose name is “AMEN,” whose word is forever settled in heaven and shall never pass away! Our faith then is the firm assent of our will—“I believe.” It involves a “deep sense of sin, a distinct view of Christ, a consenting will, and a loving heart, together with a reliance on, a trusting in, or resting in Christ” (*Easton’s Bible Dictionary*). It is being persuaded by the evidence of His truth, love, wisdom, holiness and power, with that persuasion ministered to us by the Holy Spirit, and a loving response to that persuasion, which is

what “Amen” means. “Yes, Lord, yes!” “It is true!” (An exciting thing about the word “Amen” is that it is pronounced very nearly the same in every language.)

Faith follows the same pattern as the other fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness—all are first God’s characteristics and can only be produced in our lives through our union with Christ. Our ability to have fidelity and faithfulness can only come by abiding in Jesus and having His own life lived out in and through us by the infilling of His Spirit.

The two verses from Proverbs in our lesson mention a faithful man. Other passages in Scripture speak of a faithful God, a faithful priest, a faithful servant, a faithful witness, a faithful spirit, a faithful ambassador, a faithful messenger, a faithful city, and a faithful steward. In the Old Testament, Joseph was an example of faithfulness, whether he was a steward in Potiphar’s house, keeper of the prison or governor of Egypt. Another example was when Jehoshaphat (Joash) was king (II Kings 12:15). The people had given willingly of their money to repair the temple, and the money bags were committed into the care of the workmen to use to buy stones and timbers. Because they were men who “dealt faithfully” no one had to police their activities or “reckon” with them to make sure they were using the money honestly and fairly.

Our lesson teaches us that faithfulness, the fruit of abiding in Christ and trusting in a trustworthy God, is required in a steward. Are we not stewards over the homes and families God has given us? We are stewards over the marriage bond; the covenant into which we entered before God and witnesses. We are stewards of the financial resources which are involved in having a family. We are stewards of little hearts which are entrusted into our care. A man, in reality, is a steward of his wife’s heart, which she entrusted into his care and keeping; a woman is a steward of her husband’s heart. She wields a power over his desires, affections and emotions.

The word “unfaithful” in the Bible and the word “treacherous” are the same Hebrew word. Malachi 2:14-16 speaks to the man who dealt treacherously with his wife. This is where God stated that He hated putting away (divorce). “Take heed to your spirit,” He said, “that ye deal not treacherously.

God is looking for a people of faith; when Jesus comes again, his question was, will He find faith on the earth? Will He find faithful

messengers, faithful ambassadors, faithful witnesses? Will he find Zion a faithful city? Will He find His people being fervent in spirit, diligent in business matters, and showing fidelity and integrity to employers, clients and customers? Will He find fathers, mothers, wives and husbands being true and faithful to their marriages and families?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. What (or Who) is the basis for our faith?
2. How is faith ministered to us by the Holy Spirit?
3. Our belief and trust in a trustworthy God produces _____ in our lives.
4. Paul spoke to the Corinthians about faithfulness in a steward. Give an example of a faithful Old Testament steward.
5. Jesus spoke about being faithful in that which is “least,” which in the context is evidently speaking about money matters. What did Jesus then mean by “that which is much”?
6. Unfaithfulness and _____ mean the same in the Bible. How does this apply to marriage?

REFLECTIONS

In the United States, in 2019 there were almost 62 million married couples. Currently the divorce rate is just under 50%. Researchers estimate that 41% of all first marriages will end in divorce. Faithfulness in marriage is a virtue lacking in many homes today; not just those broken with divorce or separation, but also in those that are still intact but missing the love, respect, honor, and loyalty so necessary in family relationships.

God ordained marriage and declared it to be “honorable.” Love is of God, and was to be the foundation of marriage and the home. The perfect plan for the family unit centered around the husband and wife each filling their places by serving one another, as well as their family, in love and with love. True love begets the virtues and the fruits of the Spirit. A home and marriage founded on respect, honor, and loyalty will be a happy home.

So, the question is, who can find a faithful man? There have been

examples that shine forth with faithfulness, and oh how beautiful! We have witnessed honorable faithfulness in a marriage when the vows were put to the test—in sickness or in health. For this couple, life brought some hard challenges with the wife becoming an invalid fairly young. This “faithful man” did not take the easy way. Some could have taken selfish actions and “put her away” and fulfilled the desires for a family and an enjoyable life. But, this man has served his wife, loving and honoring her. We have called this man “a jewel.”

God is calling for us to be faithful to our companions and in our families. God is calling for us to “swear to our own hurt and change not.” God is calling for us to be “lights” in this world, and examples of faithfulness in our marriages.

—Bro. Loren & Sis. Maxine Busbee, Edmond, Oklahoma

—Married June 1, 1963

SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

MEEKNESS

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

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

Psalm 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Psalm 147:6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Psalm 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

Proverbs 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

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.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and

lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

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

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 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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

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; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Titus 3:2b Shewing all meekness unto all men.

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.

MEMORY VERSE: Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 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 Peter 3:3-4**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Meekness, a blend of gentleness and strength, is the spirit of Christ Himself, and is a Christian grace rather than a natural virtue. Humility and moderation are expressed by meekness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 25:9; 37:11; 147:6; 149:4; Proverbs 3:34 (lowly); Zephaniah 2:3 “Meek”: poor; afflicted; humble; lowly. From a root meaning “to put down; to become low; depress; afflict.” It is

interesting that the word *proud* in the Old Testament comes from a word that means “to rise up.”

Matthew 5:5; 11:29; 1 Peter 3:4 “Meek”: (Greek: *praus*) mild; humble; “exercising God’s strength under His control; demonstrating power without harshness; a blend of gentleness (reserve) and strength” (*HELPS Word Studies*). “The Greek word ‘*praus*’ (prah-ooos) was used to define a horse trained for battle. Wild stallions were brought down from the mountains and broken for riding. Some were used to pull wagons, some were raced, and the best were trained for warfare. They retained their fierce spirit, courage, and power, but were disciplined to respond to the slightest nudge or pressure of the rider’s leg. They could gallop into battle at 35 miles per hour and come to a sliding stop at a word. They were not frightened by arrows, spears, or torches. Then they were said to be *meeked*. As centuries went by the secret of training such animals was passed from the Greeks to the Roman legions, then to the Moors, the Spanish conquistadors, and finally the Austrian Empire. We see a few war horse descendants today in the Lippizanner horses of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna. To be meeked was to be taken from a state of wild rebellion and made completely loyal to, and dependent upon, one’s master. It is also to be taken from an atmosphere of fearfulness and made unflinching in the presence of danger. Some war horses dove from ravines into rivers in pursuit of their quarry. Some charged into the face of exploding cannons as Lord Tennyson expressed in his poem, ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade.’ These stallions became submissive, but certainly not spineless. They embodied power under control, strength with forbearance” (Sam Whatley, *readjourneymagazine.com*)

Ephesians 4:2 “Meekness”: “the natural expression of a lowly state of mind, opposed to boisterous self-assertion and rude striving with others; it genders a subdued manner and a peace-loving spirit that studies to give the soft answer that turneth away wrath” (*Pulpit Commentary*)

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

The Old Testament verses in our lesson today describe God’s view of the special grace of meekness and His promises for persons

who will seek for it: He will teach them His way; He will give them the earth as their inheritance, which in the New Testament points to a spiritual application. God will cause the meek to delight themselves in an abundance of peace; He will lift them up; He will give them grace; He will beautify them with His deliverance and salvation; He will hide them in the day of His anger.

In the New Testament, Jesus promises rest to the meek; by meekness and lowliness is the bond of spiritual unity kept. The believers are admonished to earnestly pursue meekness, show meekness to all men, and meekly instruct opposers and those who have been overtaken in faults. The wisdom of a truly wise man is marked by meekness. Wives are to adorn themselves with meekness and quietness of spirit, upon which God places high value.

In Biblical examples of meekness, such as Moses, Jesus, and Paul, we find strength and focused authority. Where each might have unleashed harshness and given vent to hateful, savage and bitter vengefulness, we see self-control and self-restraint. Therefore, scriptural meekness is not weakness, timidity or cowardice. It is power and strength properly used.

We notice in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount that "blessed are the meek" comes after "blessed are the poor in spirit" and "blessed are they that mourn." "[Meekness] is the conduct and disposition towards God and man which follows from the inward experience described in the two former Beatitudes" (*MacLaren's Expositions*).

My interest in meekness at this time has to do with marriage, because it is mentioned by the apostle that a wife's adornment is to be a meek and quiet spirit. As I read that the Greek word for meek has to do with a horse that has been trained, it gave me a mental picture of a husband and a wife who have had God take the wildness and egotism and cowardice out of them. They are both being trained to pull together, not apart. They are both loyal to the core to the duties of the home and family, and to the will of God. The sweet atmosphere in the home of peace and contentment is so valuable to them they will not choose to fight for selfish whims nor cunningly connive to achieve them. They courageously confront issues that divide them and work through them, each yielding to what they know God requires. God, give us meekness!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. Share the promises in God's Word for the one who is meek.
2. Share a Biblical example of meekness.
3. Explain the "blend" contained in meekness.
4. Express how necessary it is for both husband and wife to bear the fruit of meekness.

REFLECTIONS

Communicating in meekness and wisdom can build respect, love, and loyalty! "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

1 Samuel 25 tells the story of Nabal, a very rich man of whom David, when he was in the wilderness hiding from Saul, asked for food. Nabal railed on David and refused to help him with food when he was in need. His sharp, demeaning, and unkind words stirred anger and resentment in the heart of David. This was Nabal's way. His servant testified of him that he was "such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him." Nabal's wife Abigail said to David, "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he." When you look up the Hebrew for Nabal, it says "dolt." According to Webster, dolt means "a heavy, stupid fellow; a blockhead; to behave foolishly."

In contrast, James 3:13 speaks of a wise man. "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." When our conversation, our words, and our actions are in meekness, it opens many doors in marriage. James 3:17 tells us the wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated (easy to speak to)!

In marriage the thought processes between husband and wife are very different sometimes. This can lead to scorn, resentment and anger. When we are gentle, peaceable, and easy to talk to, we can learn by healthy communication to appreciate each others' differences. Meekness can make us able to "build" together and accomplish wonderful purposes when it wouldn't be possible otherwise.

Our own feelings of inadequacy can hinder meekness because we are trying to prove who we are. If we will truly come to Jesus and learn of Him; learn of his love and how much He values us, then we don't have to prove our worth. We can take the yoke of submission to Christ and of being a servant to others. We can learn of His love and then truly be meek and gentle. Meekness is not weakness but is "exercising God's strength under His control," as was mentioned in the lesson. Oh, if we could learn this early in life, how much trouble it would save us and the people that have to live around us! Let us allow God to make us great by His gentleness (Psalm 18:35).

When we are "meek" we will:

Be easy to approach. This is what "easy to be intreated" means. Instead of being like a thorn bush when being approached about something difficult, we can have an inviting, trusting atmosphere.

Be peaceable. When someone "wants" peace, there is ground to find resolution to our differences.

Be gentle. Fear of an "explosion" keeps people from communicating. This greatly complicates the marriage relationship.

The benefits of meekness can hardly be overstated. Allowing God to work meekness into every area of our life will make for a wonderful oneness in spiritual, emotional, and physical ways that the stiff and the proud can only dream of. This is inheriting the promises given to us by the Lord of life! He will beautify the meek with salvation, guide them in judgment, and teach them His way.

—Bro. Phillip and Sis. Rosie Gellenbeck, Guthrie, Oklahoma
Married November 15, 1980

SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

TEMPERANCE, PART ONE (THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

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.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after

me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

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.

Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

I Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

I Corinthians 9:27 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.

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

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.

I Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

MEMORY VERSE: And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. —**II Peter 1:5-7**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In order to be a disciple of Jesus, live a godly life, and gain eternal life, believers must deny the flesh, put to death the desires that oppose Jesus' life in the soul, and keep the

appetites of the body under the control of the Spirit.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 5:28 “Lust”: passionate desire; from a word meaning *to long for, to set the heart upon*.

Luke 9:23 “Daily”: an every day experience; a similar passage to Matthew 16:24 and Mark 8:34; *daily* is only mentioned by Luke.

Luke 21:34 “Surfeiting”: drunken nausea or headache; dissipation from excess food or drink; “To feed with meat or drink, so as to oppress the stomach and derange the functions of the system; to overfeed and produce sickness or uneasiness” (*Webster*).

Romans 6:13 “Instruments”: implements; arms; weapons.

Romans 8:13 “Mortify”: put to death; make to die; destroy.

I Corinthians 6:12 “Expedient”: to bring together; profitable; beneficial. “Power”: wield power over; have authority; master; dominate.

I Corinthians 9:27 “I keep under”: strike in the face (literally, *under the eye*); discipline; subdue; keep in subjection. “Castaway”: “a metaphor derived from the testing of metals, and the casting aside of those which are spurious” (*Pulpit Commentary*); in other places rendered “reprobate” or “rejected;” unapproved after testing; counterfeit; of no value; worthless.

Galatians 5:23 and II Peter 5:6 “Temperance”: only in New Testament four times; mastery; self-control; continence (to hold or withhold—*Webster*); dominance from within; a firm control over the passions.

I Thessalonians 4:4 “Possess”: acquire; win; have mastery over. “His vessel”: implement; goods; instrument; figuratively interpreted two ways: 1) his wife, as acquiring a wife of one’s own was an ordinary Greek expression and familiar also to the Hebrews; a man’s wife was called by Peter “a weaker vessel;” however, this also meant the man was a vessel; therefore, 2) his own body. Paul said, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels,” meaning in our bodies. “In sanctification and honour”: “Paul views marriage... in its chaste and religious form... a remedy against sensual passion, not a gratification of that passion (*Expositor’s Greek Testament*). “The victim of sensual passion ceases to be master of his own person—he is possessed; and

those who formerly lived in heathen uncleanness, had now as Christians to possess themselves of their bodies, to “win” the “vessel” of their spiritual life and make it truly their own, and a fit receptacle for the redeemed and sanctified self” (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

The Old Testament background for the teachings of Jesus and the apostles gives us understanding of God’s mind about self-control. Solomon’s wisdom in both Proverbs and Ecclesiastes weighs in: “Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee” and “It is not good to eat much honey” (Proverbs 25:16 and 27), and “Blessed art thou, O land, when thy ...princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness” (Ecclesiastes 10:17)!

Daniel’s purpose to not defile himself with the Babylonian king’s diet of unclean meats and excess of wine was a part of the “excellent spirit” he possessed as a prophet of the true God. The Old Testament priests were not to partake of wine at all.

In matters of purity, we have positive examples of Job (31:1), who “made a covenant” with his eyes to keep him from thinking impure thoughts, and Joseph, who fled the temptation presented to him by Potiphar’s wife, even though it cost him dearly. David’s costly sin with Bathsheba is a solemn lesson directly connecting with what Jesus said about “looking” to lust.

Jesus went on to talk about cutting out the eye or hand that causes us to fall into sin, as a figurative way to express the kind of “violence” a person must use in the spiritual battle against his own flesh. Paul also expresses the fight with an illustration from the Greek athletes. “I keep under my body.” To the Romans he used the words “mortify” and “crucify.” These illustrations give us the sense as strongly as Jesus expressed it: a disciple must “take up his cross daily.”

Peter also reminded the saints that as pilgrims and strangers, who are not of the world, we are not to be mastered by the passions and desires of the flesh, but are to abstain. He showed the development of graces in the Christian life, and temperance is one of those graces.

Our lesson today drives home the importance of self-control in

marriage and daily life in the home. Looking at several studies of major causes for divorce, I found that infidelity, domestic violence, substance abuse and financial stress were at the top. Lack of commitment, constant arguing, and lack of communication were major contributors also. Temperance—the mastery of the appetites of the body, the control of the emotions, attitudes and words, the rule over the passions and desires—is the answer for the marriage problems in our world.

Who is master in my life? My desires or Christ? Paul helped us understand how to make the difficult choices in the area of our appetites. Something may be lawful to eat or drink, he told the Gentiles, who were not bound by the scruples of Jewish dietary law, “But I will not be brought under the power of any.” That is an excellent rule to follow.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. What constitutes adultery, according to Jesus?
2. What is the Bible answer to dealing with the flesh and its desires?
3. What is the will of God and an essential part of our personal sanctification, or holiness?
4. What does “keep under” mean to the Christian?
5. Discuss what it means to be brought under the power of a food or drink.

REFLECTIONS

“She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms” (Proverbs 31:17). According to this scripture, we need to be aware if there is anything that we're eating or doing that is sapping our strength and hindering the fulfilling of our duties as wives and mothers. Individuals are different, but we can ask God for guidance.

In our memory verse, “patience” follows “temperance.” How easy it is to be impatient when we're “spread too thin.” It's so easy to be over-busy and cram too many things into our lives, but may God give us wisdom to know how to have temperance in the duties of life.

As someone said, “We do have a charge in life, but we should not be overcharged.”

According to research, being routinely overcharged and stressed can have adverse effects on children. “Parental stress can weaken the development of a child's brain or immune system....Stress is highly contagious between parent and child, even if the parent is unaware of his or her own anxiety.” (*Kids Pick up on Everything* by David Code).

Since David wasn't out doing battle as kings were expected to do—Bro. Louis Kimble used to say he SURELY should have TURNED HIS HEAD instead of lazing around gazing upon Bathsheba. When the devil tempts through our flesh, it's not innocent! It's black, dark, and evil! It leads to death! Swift and sure! “And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14).

“Quit you like men.” Don't give satan an inch! “Casting down imaginations.” The air is charged in the culture all around us, everywhere. Let us be up and doing...every man to his post of duty! Be firm and true! Go! Get up! And may God keep you! Up to our task, fellows!! Gird up purity about thyself! Pursue and turn loose the Spirit of the Lord in our private thoughts, life, home, family, and on the job. Over and over, we must ask, and the Lord will help us to lift up His standard against the devil.

—Bro. Nelson and Sis. Genece Doolittle, Loranger, Louisiana
Married April 17, 1976

SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

TEMPERANCE, PART TWO (ANGER)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

Psalm 37:8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

Proverbs 14:17a He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly.

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

Proverbs 16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Proverbs 19:11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger;

and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

Proverbs 25:28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. —**James 1:19-20**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: While God's anger is always the response of His holiness against willful and inexcusable sin and is tempered by His love for mankind, the anger of man is born of selfish interest, the response of an insulted carnal nature, and can be instantly enraged or blaze long afterward; both extremes are sins that must be put away.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 37:8 "Anger": from a word also used for *countenance* and *face*; also *nose* or *nostril*; "to snort." "Wrath": fury; rage; indignation; the same word is also used for *poison*.

Proverbs 14:17 "Soon angry": quick-tempered.

Proverbs 19:11 "Discretion": prudence; insight: the same word is used for *prudence*, *wisdom*, *understanding*, and *knowledge*; also to describe Abigail, who turned away David's anger (1 Samuel 25:3).

"Deferreth": prolongs; makes long; endure; slow to anger.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 "Resteth": settle down and remain. "[Anger] hath its settled and quiet abode, is their constant companion, ever at hand upon all occasions, whereas wise men resist, and mortify, and banish it" (*Matthew Poole's Commentary*).

Ephesians 4:26 "Angry": to make angry; irritate; provoke;

become exasperated; enrage.

Ephesians 4:27 “Devil”: slanderer; false accuser; one who sets at variance. “Excess of wrath is forbidden, as giving opportunity to the enemy, who desires to break up unity, and ‘set at variance’ those who should be one in Jesus Christ” (*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*).

Ephesians 4:31 “Bitterness”: acrid; pungent; sharp. From a word meaning “to cut.” A harsh, resentful spirit. “Wrath”: to be in a heat; breathe violently; strong passion. “Anger”: from a word meaning *to teem or swell, as a plant or fruit swelling with juice*. “The natural disposition, temper, character; movement or agitation of soul, impulse, desire, any violent emotion, but especially anger” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). “Clamour”: outcry; with great emotion. “Evil speaking”: injurious speech; blasphemy; abusive language; railing. “Malice”: an underlying principle of evil; wicked disposition; spite; viciousness.

Ephesians 4:32 “Kind”: sweet; amiable; gentle in bearing with wrong; pleasant; useful. “Tenderhearted”: sympathetic with the infirmities, griefs and miseries of others; compassionate; merciful. “Forgiving”: showing favor and pardon.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

Our lesson today is part two of the study of temperance or self-control. The Old Testament verses speak much to us about the control of our spirit. Wisdom, prudence, and understanding from God are offered as answers to the problem of a hasty spirit. It is the fool who allows his life to be out of control in this area. God lays out the path to wisdom clearly: fear and reverence Him; cry out to Him daily for wisdom; hate evil.

To find examples showing how God dealt with man’s anger, we can go as far back in the Bible as the very first family. God asked Cain, “Why are you angry?” It would be good if when we find ourselves in a spiritual struggle with anger, we ask ourselves this question. Let God go through the memories, the years, the inherited disposition, the childhood environment, the learned behaviors. Let Him reveal the “why” to our hearts.

Another time, God questioned Jonah, “Do you well to be angry?”

To which Jonah retorted, “I do well to be angry!” Anger is easy to justify within ourselves. It blinds our reason so we will even argue with God.

The Bible speaks of having our loins girded about; girding up the loins of the mind; having the loins girded about with truth. Husbands are not to allow bitterness to develop in their minds toward their wives. Wives are to be sober and discreet. Parents are not to provoke their children to wrath when administering discipline. What does this have to do with a girded mind? The mind, or the seat of the emotions, is to be *controlled*. The New Testament word *discreet* is a combination of two Greek words meaning, (1 safe, preserved, whole; and (2 to rein in or curb the midriff; figuratively, the feelings or sensitive nature; also the mind or cognitive faculties. It means self-controlled, moderate as to opinion or passion, sober, and temperate. What reins in or controls and curbs the loins—the mind or inner feelings and emotions—of a man or woman is God’s truth.

The truths in the New Testament are clear about God’s plan for dealing with this very common human problem. I don’t believe the admonition would be given for putting away wrath and anger if He didn’t also intend to give us the grace and power to do so. Again we see the answer in coming to God for wisdom: be swift to hear. Get still before God. Listen to what He reveals to your heart and obey what He says. Only He can control the passion within and the expression without. The secret to overcoming lies in the positive actions of kindness, tenderness and forgiveness.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. He that is slow to anger _____, but he that is soon angry _____.
2. He who rules his spirit is better than _____.
3. He who doesn’t rule his spirit is like a broken down _____.
4. What is the secret to deferring anger, or making someone slow to anger?
5. A _____ allows anger to rest in his bosom.
6. What positive actions are to replace anger, wrath, and malice?

REFLECTIONS

When a man and a woman come together and take the marriage vows, they promise to love, honor, cherish each other and seek the other's happiness, as well as their own. With those vows comes great responsibility to each other and to the children who are born to them. Too many times we see those vows forgotten and angry words are spoken. Quarreling and fighting take place. Those things break down the stability of the family unit and create insecurity in the children. This comes from the carnal human nature. The inner workings of the two of them set the tone of the home.

I had an experience some years ago that opened my eyes to the power of the enemy I had never experienced before. My husband, Gerald, was a taxidermist, and we have a small taxidermy supply business. We were at the state taxidermy convention where we had a booth at their trade show. He went out with some things to put in the truck and I came a little later with the rest of our things, as we were checking out of the hotel. I found the truck locked and he was nowhere to be seen. I waited a little while and he came around the building; he had gone to check the U-haul trailer parked on the other side of the building. The devil got in the truck with us as we rode across the parking lot to the convention hall. A sudden fury came over me and an urging to tell him how awful that was. I knew he had locked the truck out of habit, not thinking I was coming later. No big deal. The urging got so strong I almost could not keep my mouth shut, but I was determined by the help of the Lord, I would not say a word because I knew it would be a blast if I opened my mouth, and I obeyed that spirit. I was thankful the Holy Spirit was with me and came on the scene and intervened by the time we got to the center. That evil spirit was gone in an instant and I was free, able to ask him about the trailer in a kind voice. Victory was sweet. We were able to go to our booth where a couple who had heard of Gerald's cancer being divinely healed came to us in tears asking for prayer for their little grandson who was being afflicted with a disease similar to ALS. Had I given in to the temptation to give him a good "going over," we would not have been in any shape to administer hope and comfort which comes from the Holy Spirit. "Keep thy heart with all diligence....." (Proverbs 4:23).

—Bro Gerald and Sis. Connie Flynn, Loranger, Louisiana
Married September 25, 1959

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

BEARING FRUIT UNTO ETERNAL LIFE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

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.

II Peter 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

—**Song of Solomon 4:16**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The pleasant fruit we bear is a blessing to our lives and to the lives of those around us, giving joy to our Lord and lasting into eternity.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 1:2 “Delight”: longing; desire; pleasure. “In his law doth he meditate”: “The law or truth of God is not distasteful to him, but he so delights in it as to desire to become more and more acquainted with it, and to have its truths impressed more and more on his heart” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*). “It is no irksome restriction of his liberty but the object of his love and constant study” (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*). “To meditate in God’s word, is to discourse with ourselves concerning the great things contained in it, with close application of mind and fixedness of thought. We must have constant regard to the word of God, as the rule of our actions, and the spring of our comforts; and have it in our thoughts night and day” (*Matthew Henry Commentary*).

Jeremiah 17:8 “Shall not see when heat cometh”: shall not fear when heat cometh (*Hebrew text; Septuagint; Vulgate; Revised Version*). “Shall not be careful in the year of drought”: shall not be anxious. Because it is planted by the riverside, it is not dependent on rainfall.

II Peter 1:5 “Diligence”: Haste; bringing in all zeal or effort. “Unless you work with haste, with earnestness, and therefore with much putting forth of strength, your faith will not evolve the graces of character which is in it to bring forth. All that galaxy of light and beauty will shine forth on the one condition of diligence, and it will not appear without that.” (*MacLaren’s Expositions*). “Virtue”: moral excellence; manliness; valor. “Knowledge”: “experiential, functional knowledge, connecting theory to application” (*HELPS Word Studies*).

II Peter 1:6 “Temperance”: dominion within; self-control; self-restraint; true mastery from within. “Patience”: a remaining behind or remaining under; endurance; steadfastness; perseverance. “Godliness”: from two Greek words meaning “well” and “venerate or pay homage.” A heart response that expresses itself in reverence to God.

II Peter 1:7 “Brotherly kindness”: affection for fellow believers. “Charity”: goodwill; from a word which means “to prefer;” hence, a

moral preference or act of the will.

II Peter 1:8 “Barren”: idle; lazy; thoughtless; unprofitable; injurious. “Unfruitful”: from two Greek words meaning “no fruit”; eternally fruitless; a waste; profitless.

II Peter 1:11 “Abundantly”: richly; copiously.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND LIFE APPLICATION

We end this study with the picture set forth in Psalms 1 and Jeremiah 17 of the person who sets his or her hope, trust and delight upon the Lord, and loves and meditates upon His Word. Similar pictures in Ezekiel and Revelation describe a beautiful tree of life, also by the river, whose fruit and leaves are for healing. This is very deep and most certainly applies to Christ; but, as He is, so are we in this world. The fruit and leaves are symbolic of the way we share the life and wholeness and healing of Christ within us to the troubled souls about us.

Jesus spoke in John 15 of the fruit that should “remain.” The apostle Peter connected this beautiful, fruit-bearing life to the other world, the eternal realm. Peter went on to talk about his “decease,” using the Greek word “exodus,” which Luke also used in his gospel when he spoke of the conversation Jesus had with Moses and Elijah about His “decease.” But Peter also talks about an “entrance” into eternal glory. Surely, to the Christian, death is truly an exodus from the bondage, corruption, and limitations of mortality and an “abundant” entrance into the eternal presence of our Lord and Savior. When Paul gave his beautiful exposition about love, he said it “never fails.” It endures. These are eternal fruits. Their beauty—the pleasure they give to others and to God—never ends.

Our memory verse is from the spiritual allegory written by Solomon, where we find many comparisons of marriage to our spiritual relationship with Christ. In this verse, the bride invites the north and south winds to blow into her garden and release the fragrance of the spices and fruits there for the enjoyment of her spouse. In the same way, we don’t fear the heat, drought, winds, or other trials of life, because through them the fragrance of the fruit of our lives can be released to bring joy and beauty to our Lord.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. What does the blessed man do and not do; and to what is he compared?
2. In Jeremiah's tree illustration, what four things are a result of being planted by the water and spreading out roots by the river?
3. Name the seven qualities to be added to our faith and the quality that accomplishes this.
4. From what negative characteristics will we be kept if we add and abound in these graces?
5. Of what two things will we assure ourselves if we are diligent?
6. What brings out the fragrances in the beloved's garden? Share the spiritual application.

REFLECTIONS

The fruits produced in our lives will manifest the "spirit" that is being given liberty to work within us! And herein lies the secret to the fruit of the Spirit. If we have consecrated our lives to God, allowed His love to be perfected in our hearts and lives, then His love, working in and through us, will cause us to be willing to deny ourselves for the good of others. But this fruit will only continue to bear as long as that consecration is maintained! The real question is, what are we allowing to work in our lives?

If we yield to the desire of the flesh, to speak "one word" in retaliation, to get even, to inflict pain, cause hurt, or to cast a reflection on the one who has wronged or displeased us, it will hinder the good fruits from bearing in our lives! While that "one word" may not cause us to be "cut off" from God, we must remember that the enemy's goal is to get us to be like the tree in Luke 13:7. "One word" may seem like a little thing to some, but oh what a difference it would make in our world today if people followed our Savior's example and the fruits of the Spirit were allowed to bear in people's lives!

How many marriages would be prospering instead of ending up in bitter divorce? How many lives would be saved because the good fruit brought about reconciliation between siblings instead of resulting in murder, as in the story of Cain and Abel? How many homes would be a haven of rest, a place of encouragement and

support instead of a place of continual strife and contention? How many arguments, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings would be avoided if that "one word" had not been spoken?

How much difference would it make in our lives, our homes, our marriages, our congregations, if we would each humbly follow our Savior's example and instead of rising up in our own defense, meekly endure the wrong, the hurt, the disappointment, or frustration, and be willing to "suffer in silence" for the salvation of their souls?

—Bro. Curtis and Sis. Karen Williams, Sapulpa, Oklahoma
Married August 13, 1983

