

# Introduction (Part 2)

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Date: 12 June 2024

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[ 0 : 00 ] We kicked off our introduction of our study last week with a look at Galatians 2.20.

! You can turn there if you want to because we're not done with all of that yet. In Galatians 2.20, I am crucified with Christ is what the Apostle Paul said.

I'm crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but it's Christ that lives in me. And that is through faith in the person of the Son of God, Christ Jesus.

We began looking at that picture of yieldedness to the Lord and living a life that truly is Christ living within us.

We looked at a number of different things, and it came down to the reality, we'll just review a little bit, of the principle that we're to live by.

[ 1 : 13 ] The principle we're to live by, and that is being yielded, totally surrendered and totally dependent upon God, and in particular the Spirit of God that dwells within us.

All right? So catch that. That's the principle of our life, of Christ living with us, taking that yieldedness from us, requiring that yieldedness from us, and totally surrendered, totally dependent upon Him for that to get the true value of His indwelling Spirit within us.

Again, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. Can you hear me, Jerry? I heard you. Okay, thank you. You notice that Jerry and Jeannie are not back in the back anymore. Okay. There's a reason for that.

Now, the reality is, we know all this in our minds. This is nothing new to us. Amen? We've been taught it for years. We've heard it, read it, all of those things.

[ 2 : 31 ] So it's nothing new. We know it in our minds. But the question is, to what degree is all of this a reality in our lives?

You know, you see all these reality TV shows, which are fake. And the question for us then is reality.

Our own reality. How much is our yieldedness to Christ, the work of God within our life, a reality within our lives? So again, the choice lies with us.

It lies with the believer. We're the ones that will determine that. All right. Romans 6, verse 16 says, Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.

Another true principle. All right. So again, it's up to the believer to what extent the Spirit of God is working within our lives.

[ 3 : 38 ] And that, again, is to whom we're going to obey, who we're going to yield ourselves to. There's only two possibilities. All right. It's either Satan and the natural man or it's God and the Spirit of God and the Holy Spirit.

There's no neutral ground here. Amen. No neutral ground. As much as we sometimes would wish there were, there isn't. All right. So that's the dilemma of Christian living.

All right. And that's, of course, what we're going to be looking at. The dilemma of Christian living.

How to do that. That's the same thing Paul looked at in Romans chapter 7.

Do I have that down here? I don't think I do. Let's go to Romans chapter 7 just to remind us here again of what Paul said. This is the conundrum he had in his life.

Of course, a lot of things that Paul describes here for his own life. We're, we can safely say we're relatively unknown.

[ 4 : 42 ] All right. Relatively new as far as living a life as a Christian. Because this, all of this Christianity business is relatively new here in the day of the Apostle Paul.

All right. Paul had to learn this. He had to learn it. And what a great picture for us. He had to learn this. And the way he learned it was not to go to somebody else.

Amen. Yeah. God took him to the desert for a couple of years. And there taught him the things that he wanted Paul to know and to understand.

All right. And then when he finished with that time alone in the desert with God, what's the first thing he wanted to do? He wanted to go to Jerusalem and see Peter.

Amen. And find out, I think this is my conjecture, which is not safe. But I think what happened is the Apostle Paul was so excited about what God showed him in that desert experience.

[ 5 : 51 ] That he wanted to go see Peter and not only share with Peter what God had shown him, but he wanted to know what else God had shown Peter to put everything together.

Paul wants to absorb as much of this as he can. And what a picture that is here. All right. But in Romans chapter 7 again and verse 13. So there's that sin principle.

Okay. Okay.

That when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. All right. The inner man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

Okay. Again, that's an operating principle. The law there is an operating principle within Paul and within us as well. All right. It's there. It's there to stay until we get the redeemed body.

[ 7 : 37 ] All right. But thankfully, God has given to us what we need to combat that. All right. And Paul recognizes that again. A wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death.

I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So in verse number one of chapter eight, there's now no, therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, to them that walk after not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

And that's not in the original, that last phrase. But he talks about the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Jesus in verse two, hath made me free from the law of sin. So again, Paul learned.

He saw the truth and the principle there, but he learned the truth of the dwelling spirit of God. All right. That frees us from being captive to the law of sin and the natural man within us.

All right. So that's the conundrum he finds and the relief that he finds. So again, that's going to be our focus here through our study on Esther. If we ever get there. No, we'll get there next week.

[ 8 : 40 ] Now, in Romans 8, 29, the Bible speaks of the design of God in conforming the believer, conforming the believing sinner into the image of his son, Christ Jesus.

Romans 8, 29, for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

We call that Christ likeness. So it's the work of the spirit of God in progressive sanctification that produces the grace, graces of Christ in our life.

Now, when we talk about the graces of Christ, it's everything that Christ possesses. All right. We see that expressed in Galatians 5, the fruit of the spirit right here.

This is 22 through 25. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance against such.

[ 9 : 41 ] There is no law. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live by the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. And so there's the twofold idea there.

That which God is working within us, but also that that is our responsibility. Now, notice, he says the fruit of the spirit, as Lee so dynamically taught us in our Galatian study, that that word fruit is singular.

All right. It's not a number of different fruit. Because you go out, you go out and, oh, never mind. Never mind. All right. So it's singular.

It's all the elements of the character of God and Christ spoken of in these verses. So they are unified character that we see that Christ possesses, that he's developing within us.

So that makes for us a well-rounded and complete Christian life. But again, the question is, how completely have we allowed the Holy Spirit to develop these graces in us?

[ 10 : 49 ] Now, case in point. Now, he identifies, or speaks of the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, and so forth.

Interesting, is it not? The first element of that is love. All right. Realize, love there is agape love. That's the love that God is, according to 1 John 4, verse 16.

God is love. God is agape love. It's produced in the heart of the yielded believer by the spirit of God. See that in Romans 5.5 and Galatians 5.22.

Now, remember, the chief ingredient of agape love is self-sacrifice for the benefit of the one love. We see that in John 3.16.

Also, remember, the focal characteristic of agape love is self-sacrifice. All right. It's sacrificing yourself, giving up yourself for the benefit of the one that's loved.

[ 11 : 56 ] One has said that a good way to think of agape love is agape love is a love that sees the object or the person loved as being something very, very precious.

All right. And that's a good way to consider that. So, now, so, case in point here. How much of this is active, a reality in our life?

Agape love is a good one for us to consider when we see that. Now, these are not in your notes. If you want a copy of all of this, I will be more than happy to run some copies off. Characteristics of agape love are described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Now, this is King James rendering. And that is that charity is the word agape love. All right. It suffers long. All right. Now, as we look at these, I want you to think about your own life and your own characteristics in your life and see how well you think.

Notice I said you think your life matches up to what we see here. All right. So, agape love. Do we have that at operation within our life?

[ 13 : 10 ] It suffers long. That is, it has a long mind. Neither trials, adversities, persecutions, or provocations can reach it. It is patient toward all men.

Suffers all the weakness, ignorance, errors, and infirmities of fellow Christians. You ever have a hard time with other people's ignorance? Amen.

Yeah. I had a preacher friend. When you talk about young preachers and the foolishness that they get into, he used to say, that's just ignorance on fire.

Amen. Yeah. Ignorance on fire. But agape love suffers through that weakness, ignorance, errors, and infirmities of fellow Christians. In other words, it doesn't like it, but it puts up with it.

Now, all of the malice and wickedness of the children of this world as well. So, in other words, you look at the characteristics of the Christians and the things that they do that just are, you know, foolishness or whatever.

[ 14 : 20 ] Agape love enables us to kind of overlook that and put up with that, as well as all the stuff that we see from the unsaved of the world.

And all of that, not merely for a particular time, but it's without end. Okay? Because we see at the end of this, agape love never fails. Now, it's kind.

It is tender and compassionate in itself and kind and obliging to others. Mild and gentle and if called to suffer, inspires the sufferer.

Agape love inspires the one that suffers with friendly sweetness and most tender affection. Now, think about that just a moment. When Jesus was in the wilderness temptation, 40 days and 40 nights, we see a record of the three of the events of the face-to-face temptation with Satan. He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights. He was hungry. He was weak physically, probably spiritually and mentally exhausted. But what happened at the end of that?

[ 15 : 33 ] The angels came and ministered to him. The father in his agape love sent angels to minister to his son. Now, so, that's what agape love does for us.

It enables us to go through all of those things and yet that love ministers to our own heart.

It's also submissive to all the working of God. Notice the word all. All right. And never creates problems or trouble for anyone.

It also envies not. It's not grieved because another possesses a greater portion of earthly, intellectual, or spiritual blessings. With agape love, we rejoice as much at the happiness and the honor and comfort of others as we do our own.

Always willing that others should be preferred before them. All right. But it's everyone before. It vauneth not itself. So, it does not act rashly, insolently, does not frequently change without reason, and so forth.

[ 16 : 46 ] So, it does not set itself forward, nor does it desire to be noticed or applauded. Boy, when you see somebody holler about me, me, me, I, I, I, this is what I did, this is what, you can notice that that's not agape love speaking.

All right. It wishes that God may be all in all. So, it's not puffed up. It's not inflated with a sense of its own importance because it knows it has nothing but what it has received and that it deserves nothing that it has gotten.

Now, that seems like a funny statement there. I thought maybe I ought to change that word gotten, but I'm not going to. Amen. That's Oakey speak, right? Yeah. Yeah.

Okay. Now, it doth not behave itself unseemly. It never acts out of its place or its character. Always recognize, of course, we know that everything that God does and everything God has done in the past and is doing now, he's always done that on the basis of who he is and what he is, in particular, agape love.

Now, notice here, God never worked and acts outside of his character. We never see that in Scripture because he doesn't do that because that's what agape love is.

[18:05] It never acts outside of its place or character. Observes due decorum and good manners, is never rude, bearish, or brutish, is always willing to become all things to all men.

It seeketh not its own. It's not desirous of her own spiritual welfare only, but of her neighbors also. Then, it's not easily provoked, not irritated.

It's not made sour or bitter. One Greek scholar says it's not easily exasperated. I like that word.

Amen. Is anybody like that?

Easily exasperated? Amen. Men? No, I'm not going to ask you that. It thinks because I think no evil. Thinketh no evil. It believes no evil where no evil seems. Never supposes that a good action may have a bad motive. Now, let's camp right here just a minute.

[19:12] Have we ever done that? Jerry? Huh? Huh? Amen. Yeah. So and so. So and so. Walked down the aisle to get saved.

I bet it doesn't last. You know what's going to happen there? It's going to go right back to what he used to do. Amen. It won't take him ten months. It won't take him ten weeks to do that. Right? Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's kind of a crude illustration. But boy, how many times have we done it in our minds, if not verbally with someone else? Amen. Yeah. Yeah.

Now. His heart is so governed and influenced by the love of God that he cannot think evil unless evil is really there.

All right. Now, the implication is that it does not invent or devise any evil. It rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

[20:08] Rejoices not in falsehood, but in the truth. Everything that is opposite of falsehood. All right. Is, you know. Truth is everything opposite of falsehood.

Let's see. It bears all things. To endure, bear, sustain, cover, conceal, contain. Believes all things. Is ever ready to believe the best of every person.

And not accuse of evil without clear evidence. It hopes all things. When there's no place left for believing good of a person. Okay.

Now, here's a good picture. If there's no place left for believing good of a person. Then love comes in with its hope.

Amen. Yeah. God can change that. That's a thought. God by the left says God can change that. Even though there's no seemingly good in that person.

[21:04] God can change that. Where it could not work by its faith. That's a God by the left. Where a God by the left could not work by faith. It anticipates the repentance of the transgressor.

And his restoration in his relationship to others. All right. Isn't that it? Shouldn't that be the focus of our life? In every individual that we have contact with and dealings with.

That if there's something that's not right there. Our hope should be. That one day. God will bring genuine repentance and salvation.

If that's needed. To somebody. To that person. Amen. That should be the focus of our mind. Our heart. And so forth. Now. It endures all things.

And here's a good one. Bears up under all persecution and maltreatment. From enemies and professed friends.

[22:02] You ever been hurt by a friend? A good friend? A close friend? A dear friend? Yeah. Agape love endures that. It bears up under all of that.

Bears adversities with an even mind. As it submits without complaint. Now catch this. It submits without complaint.

To the permission of God in the circumstance. If we've genuinely been saved by the grace of God. Yielded our life to him. Then we know.

Up here anyway. That there's nothing. That goes through our life. That God doesn't allow to happen. He's in control.

Amen. But how many times do we find ourselves complaining. About circumstances. About what other people have done toward us.

[ 22 : 56 ] Whatever the case may be. Alright. However long the Bible study's been. Yeah. God. God's permitted that.

Right? Yeah. Yeah. Do we complain about that? If we do. It's not agape love at work. Because agape love does not complain when God allows those things to take place.

And never say of any trial, affliction, or insult that it cannot be endured. Alright. I just can't do this. I can't go through this. No. Agape love doesn't do that.

And there again. Charity. Agape love never fails. It never falls off. Because it bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things.

And while it does so, it cannot fail. It is the means of all other graces being preserved in our life.

[ 23 : 54 ] Alright. That's, I believe, that's why God had Paul put that right at the very first. As the first element of the fruit of the Spirit.

And that is love. Alright. Now. Love, joy, peace. Run through these real quick. So. Anybody. Has anybody allowed all that to happen in their life?

No? No? Copious Matthias? You're working on it.

You're working on it. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. But see, that gives us a good, that gives us a good look at where we are in all of this. Then there's joy.

Joy is that spirit has a spiritual basis. Exaltation that arises from the sense of God's mercy. Given and the prospect of eternal glory. That's what brings us joy.

[ 24 : 52 ] Alright. Peace then follows that. It's a calm, quiet order. Which takes place in the soul that's justified by God. Instead of having doubts, fears, alarms, and dreadful forebodings.

It's a tranquility of mind. Or really, a tranquility of spirit and mind. Based on the consciousness of a right relationship with God. How many remember back in the 60's?

Whoever it was came out with that song. Me and Jesus got a good thing going. Amen. It's as if they or two were the only ones. Now, never did like that song.

But the idea is, if we have, if we have a convicted, no, a conviction. A deep-seated, heartfelt conviction of our relationship to God.

Then, that's what brings peace to us. Because Jesus said, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives it, but I give it to you. Alright.

[ 25 : 54 ] So, we ought to have peace. That tranquility of mind and spirit. That allows us to be realizing that we have a right relationship to God in all of it.

Long-suffering then speaks of the steadfastness of the soul under provocation. Includes the idea of forbearance and patient endurance of wrong under ill treatment.

Without anger, without thought of revenge. Gentleness refers to friendliness and kindness, mellowing in our nature all that is harsh and stern.

Goodness refers to that quality in one who is ruled by and aims at what is good. Namely, the quality of moral worth. Faith does not refer here to the faith exercised by the saint, but more like faithfulness.

Alright. Fidelity that the spirit of God produces within the life of the yielded believer. Meekness refers to the qualities of mildness, gentleness, meekness in dealing with others.

[ 27 : 03 ] Temperance, possessing power, strong, having mastery or possession of something of yourself and self-control. It refers to the mastery of one's own desires and impulses.

Then, a reminder for us of what God has produced in us already. Galatians 5.24 They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and the lusts.

Now, as we get into our study, actual looking at the book of Esther, we'll be looking at some of this, crucifying the flesh. Those who belong to Christ, this is in the Amplified, those who belong to Christ Jesus, the Messiah, have crucified the flesh.

That's the godless human nature with its passions and appetites and desires. So, our identification with Christ in his death resulted in the breaking of the power of the sinful nature over our lives.

Now, notice. Didn't say it got rid of the sinful nature. But it breaks the power. Romans chapter 6. It breaks the power of that natural man and its control of our life.

[ 28 : 18 ] So, the victory over sin is made actual and operative in our lives as we yield to the Holy Spirit and trust him for that victory. Alright? Again, there's that word yielded.

So, it's the Holy Spirit's ministry that applies the freedom from the power of the sinful nature, which Jesus the Son procured for us on the cross of Calvary. Now, so, what then is our responsibility in all of that?

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. In view of the fact that we possess divine life by the Holy Spirit, a new life principle, then, operates within us.

We are then to walk by the Spirit. Again, the word walk here is to walk in a straight line, to conduct oneself rightly, to conduct ourselves under the guidance, impulses, and energy of the Holy Spirit. So, it's an admonition to live the highest type of life the Christian can live. Alright? And that is with the grace of God, which makes it all possible.

[ 29 : 31 ] To live on higher ground. You remember the old song, I'm pressing on the upward way. New heights I'm gaining every day still.

Praying as I onward bound, Lord plant my feet on higher ground. Alright? Verse 2. My heart has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay.

I want to live above the world though Satan's darts at me are hurled. For faith has caught the joyful sound, the song of saints on higher ground. Then the fourth verse.

I want to scale the utmost height. Catch a gleam of glory bright. But still I'll pray till heaven I've found. Lord, lead me on to higher ground.

Lord, lift me up and let me stand. By faith on heaven's table land, a higher plane than I have found.

Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

[ 30 : 32 ] I love that song. Amen? That should be the desire of our heart and our life. Oh, that our heart's desire would be like that of the Apostle Paul.

As he writes to us in Philippians chapter 3, verses 7 through 16. I want to read this to you. In the Amplified Version. Because it gives to us a good picture of what he's saying here.

Speaks of true liberty that we have in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3, beginning verse 7. But whatever former things I had that I might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as one combined thing, loss for Christ's sake.

Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss. Let me back up there just a minute. I like this idea.

When Paul considered all this, Paul was a thinker. All right? He was a deep thinker.

He's putting all this together, what Christ has done and is doing in his life and what he's wanting to make him. He realized what he was in the past, what was beneficial to him in the flesh.

[ 31 : 42 ] But now all that he considers rubbish. All right? But he contemplated all those things. And when he said, when he said here, I've considered all those things as one combined thing.

He didn't take one thing, do I need this? Can I hold on to this? Or I'll let that go. But what about this? No. He takes everything that he talked about earlier as one combined thing.

Those things, all those things that were beneficial. He counts them loss for Christ. Yes, furthermore, count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege.

That's the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing wealth and supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply intimately acquainted with him.

That is, perceiving and recognizing and understanding him more fully and clearly. For his sake I have lost everything and consider it all but mere rubbish in order that I may win or gain Christ the anointed one.

[ 32 : 55 ] And that I may actually be found and known as in him. Not having any self-achieved righteousness that I can call my own based on my obedience to the law's demands.

But possessing that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ. The truly right standing with God which comes from God by saving faith.

For my determined purpose is that I may know him. That is, that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with him.

Perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of his person more strongly and more clearly. You know, I think about that.

I can perceive Paul waking up every morning and saying, Lord, I'm ready. I want to find out what you want to show me about yourself today.

[ 33 : 55 ] Amen? That was his joy. That was his, that was his, his, his passion. Lord, what is it you're going to show me about yourself that I can learn that I've not seen before?

What's that going to be? All right? Now, for my determined purpose is that I may know him. That I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with him.

Perceiving, recognizing, understanding the wonders of his person more strongly and more clearly. And that I may in that same way become known, become to come to know the power outflowing from his resurrection.

Which it exerts over believers. And that I may so share his suffering as to be continually transformed in spirit into his likeness even.

To conform to his death in the hope that if possible I may attain to the spiritual and moral resurrection. That lifts me out from among the dead even while in the body.

[ 35 : 00 ] Not that I have now attained this ideal. Or have already been made perfect. But I press on to lay hold of or grasp and make my own.

That for which Christ has laid hold of me and made me his own. Do not consider, brethren, that I have captured and made it my own yet. But one thing I do.

It is my one aspiration. Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the supreme and heavenly prize to which God in Christ Jesus is calling us upward.

So that those of us who are spiritually mature and fully grown have this mind and hold these convictions. And if in any respect you have a different attitude of mind, God will make that clear to you also.

Only let us hold true to what we have already attained and walk and order our lives by that. What a tremendous picture that is.

[ 36 : 07 ] That Paul had. A desire for him. To know Christ Jesus as fully and completely as an individual can know him. In this human flesh. Yeah.

His passion. His desire. And he realized what that would mean. He wants to be a part and experience everything that Christ experienced. Amen.

Yeah. Yeah. And had the power of the resurrection. The power that raised Jesus from the dead. He wanted operative in his life. Amen. For the glory of God. Now.

We're not going to reach that complete image of Christ in this life. All right. It'll only be when we go to be with him that we will reach that epitome.

Amen. So. We cannot though. Use that as an excuse for failing to respond and yield to the spirit of God.

[ 37 : 04 ] Amen. It's no excuse. I mean in reality folks. Think about it just a moment. Everything.

God has placed in this book for us. He's going to hold us responsible for and accountable for. Because he's given it to us.

To read. To know. To understand. To let the spirit of God teach us. Through it. And walk us in it. Amen. So.

Just because. Your hair is not going to get any thicker in this life. It's not. No. No. No. I'm not afraid about that.

And because. Copious Maxim there. Is going to get older. And his hair is going to get grayer. And thinner.

[ 38 : 04 ] Yeah. It's no excuse for us. Not to grow in Christ. Amen. And allow him to do with us. And within us. What he wants to do. Through our lives.

So. We've got to clearly understand. The wickedness of the natural man within us. All right. Always remember. The heart. Is deceitful above all things.

Desperately wicked. We can't know it. All right. Yeah. So. That needs to be. When we clearly understand. The wickedness of the natural man.

That becomes our motivation. To surrender to the spirit of God. Remember what David said in Psalm 139. Verses 23 through 24.

Search me oh God. And know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way.

[ 38 : 59 ] Everlasting. Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Father again. Thank you for your loving kindness. And your goodness and grace to us. Again. Father. Thank you. For the time that you've given us tonight.

To be together. And thank you for what you've shown us. And I do pray God. That you'll continue to enable us. Give us the grace. To. To be honest with ourselves.  
And take a look at these things. And. Place them beside our life. And see where we're at. In our spiritual development. So enable us to see that.  
If you will. While we do that. Again. Thank you for this great. Group of people. They love you. They love your word. Pray your blessings upon them. Now. And bring us back. We pray. pray next week. See what else you have for us. We ask it in Jesus' name.  
Amen.