

Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control, along with Exhortation

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[0 : 00] Amen. Tonight we'll look at the final three characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit that are listed! in Galatians 5 verses 22 and 23. Those are faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

! We also will finish Galatians 5 by looking at Paul's exhortation to his readers. We know that Galatians 5, 16-26 are part of one section of Scripture, so let's read verses 16-26 of Galatians 5. Paul said there,

The main idea for this section should be pretty familiar by now. That main idea is this. The Holy Spirit within believers battles our worldly desires and enables us to become more and more like Christ.

We'll do some quick reviews since we're finishing up the section tonight. In verses 16-18, we saw Paul's command. That command is to walk by the Spirit. And we know when Paul says to walk by the Spirit, he's talking about a daily pattern or lifestyle. Believers live with a constant internal struggle, and our remaining human nature inside of us battles the Holy Spirit within us as well. We'll never be sinless in this life, but the important thing is direction rather than perfection.

[2 : 51] So a couple of questions to think about are, do we normally exhibit the fruit of the Spirit? And when we do the works of the flesh, do we see evidence of the Holy Spirit working to bring us back to Christ?

We've been camped down in Galatians 5, verses 19-23 for a while now, and those verses have Paul's contrast. In those verses, he gives us several examples of the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit. And we know that actually the work of the Spirit is singular. All nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit form one fruit. And for the last three weeks, we've taken a deeper look into each aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, and so far we've made it through love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and goodness.

That brings us to where we will pick up tonight, and let's look first at the definition of faithfulness. When we did our overview of faithfulness a few weeks ago, here's what we said about the aspect of spiritual fruit. We said faithfulness is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit that pertains to loyalty and trustworthiness. Faithfulness first refers to how we live before God. We receive, believe, and love all that He has said in His Word. We take His Word to be our faithful standard of doctrine and practice. And then we said that faithfulness demonstrates itself most frequently in how we live among those around us. The faithful Christian is the honest person and is committed to honesty. Our yes should be yes and our no should be no. And the Christian should desire to be known as someone who keeps His Word. We said that we must avoid the more flagrant types of lying and we must avoid self-exaggerating statements, along with little white lies, even. Listen to this definition of faithfulness from the Dictionary of Bible Themes. It said,

Faithfulness is a commitment to a relationship with God or fellow human beings, seen in that are loyalty, devotion, and service, which reflect God's own faithfulness. Then it said, God makes faith possible by providing information about Himself and His plans. Because God has made faithfulness possible through His revelation, faithfulness from believers is demanded in Scripture. So let's look at some of the demands for faithfulness now. Psalm chapter 31 verse 23 is a direct command to love God, but the verse reminds us that love is born out of faithfulness. Then using different words, Psalm 31 24 reminds us to be faithful. So here are Psalm 31 verses 23 and 24.

[5 : 50] Love the Lord, all you His saints. The Lord preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. Be strong and let your heart take courage, all who wait for the Lord. Being strong, taking courage, and waiting on the Lord are ways that we can show faithfulness to the Lord.

Here is Proverbs chapter 3 verse 3. Proverbs 3:3 says, Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you. Bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart. Jesus regularly told His disciples to have faith. Listen to Mark chapter 11 verse 22.

Mark 11:22 says, And Jesus answered them, Have faith in God. Speaking to the disciples in John chapter 14, John commanded the disciples to show their faith through their belief in Him. Listen to John 14:1.

Jesus said, Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. Revelation chapter 2 verse 10 reminds us to be faithful unto death. And again, this is Jesus speaking in Revelation 2:10.

Revelation 2:10 says, Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested. And for 10 days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of God the crown of life. Scripture also singles out God's ministers and demands to be faithful.

[7:39] Listen to 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 2. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

faithful. Then next up is 2 Timothy 2:2. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Faithfulness also is required of ministers' wives. 1 Timothy 3:11 is part of the qualifications for deacons. 1 Timothy 3:11 says, Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.

Let's move on to demonstrations of faithfulness now. We won't read all the verses, but Hebrews chapter 11, verses 4 through 40, come in several Old Testament figures for their faith.

Then in the New Testament, Timothy is commended for his faithfulness. Listen to what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 16 and 17.

[8:55] I urge you then be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ as I teach them everywhere in every church.

Several other New Testament figures are commended for their faithfulness, including Epaphras, Onesimus, Stephen, and others. But let's look now at how God shows faithfulness.

And we'll start out by going back to the Old Testament. Listen to Deuteronomy chapter 7, verse 9. Deuteronomy 7:9 says, Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

And here are Lamentations chapter 3, verses 22 and 23. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end.

They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. Moving to the New Testament, how about 1 John 1:9? 1 John 1:9, of course, says, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[10:19] In the opening verses of Revelation, John reminds us that Jesus was faithful even unto death so that he could redeem us from our sins.

Listen to Revelation chapter 1, verses 4 through 6. John, to the seven churches that are in Asia, Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priest to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. So that is why Jesus is our supreme example for faithfulness. And we'll look now at the driver for faithfulness. As with all aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, the driver for faithfulness is God himself.

Here are Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 and 9. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, so that no one may boast.

[11:40] And here is Romans chapter 10, verse 17. Romans 10:17 says, So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Hebrews 12:2 describes Jesus as the author and perfecter of our faith. Listen to Hebrews 12:2. It says, Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

In the ESV translation, gentleness is next on the list of spiritual fruit. You may remember that when we looked at kindness last week, we said that kindness is better translated as gentleness.

The word translated gentleness here in the ESV is better translated as meekness. And this is how we define meekness in our overview lesson on spiritual fruit.

Meekness is similar to patience and kindness, but it is different. Meekness has to do with a disciplined attitude about ourselves before God and one another.

[12:57] We sometimes hear meekness defined as power under control. The Dictionary of Bible Themes defines meekness as an attitude of humble, submissive, and expectant trust in God and a loving, patient, and gentle attitude toward others.

That's a good definition there. Society often mischaracterizes meekness as weakness. However, the spiritual fruit of meekness demonstrates strength, a strength that allows us to trust in God and to be loving, patient, and gentle toward others.

Let's look at some Bible references where meekness is demanded of believers. And we'll start with Zephaniah 2, verse 3. Here is Zephaniah 2, 3.

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands. Seek righteousness. Seek humility. Perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord.

Then moving to the New Testament, here are Romans chapter 12, verses 17 through 21. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

[14:14] If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For by so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. And here is Philippians chapter 2, verse 3. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

The next verse is Colossians chapter 3, and we'll actually look at 12 and 13 here. Here are Colossians 3, 12 and 13. Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other.

As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And here's one last cross-reference in this section. Here's 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 15.

[15:35] But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect.

Let's look now at some demonstrations of meekness in the Bible. The first is Numbers chapter 12, verse 3.

And Numbers 12, verse 3 gives a description of Moses that's often overlooked. That verse says, Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.

Job illustrated meekness in Job chapter 1, verses 21 and 22. Listen to what Job said in Job 1, 21 and 22.

And he said, For New Testament examples, let's go straight to examples of how Jesus demonstrated humble and expectant trust in God.

[16:54] Listen to Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 8. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Here is what 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 23 and 24 say about Jesus.

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

We also see an example of meekness in Jesus' own words when he was on the cross. Listen to Luke 23, 34. Here is Luke 23, 34.

[18:08] And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. And they cast lots to divide his garments. We know that God is the driver for meekness within believers.

In verses other than Galatians 5, 23, show us that biblical meekness comes from God. Remember how Romans 8, 29 reminds us that we are being conformed to the image of Christ.

And then listen now to what James says in James 3, 17. James 3, 17 says, But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

This verse reminds us that being peaceable and gentle comes from above or from God. This takes us now to our last aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, and that is self-control.

When we did our overview of the fruit of the Spirit, we defined self-control like this. We said, Self-control refers to restraining passions and appetites. A person who is truly self-controlled governs himself.

[19:27] Self-government begins with submission to the will of God and His Word. We learned to control our emotions regardless of the circumstances. Emotions are reactive. We cannot immediately control the emotional response, but we can learn to discipline its expression.

Then we said, We should seek to bring our responses and reactions into a quiet, peaceful submission to God and not be blown about by every adverse circumstance. The important thing to note about this characteristic, too, is that this characteristic also applies to our appetites and our bodies.

Listen to how the Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary summarizes self-control. It said, Self-control is the modern translation's term for several Greek words indicating a sober, temperate, calm, and dispassionate approach to life, having mastered personal desires and passions.

Biblical admonitions expect God's people to exercise self-control. Freedom in Christ does not give believers liberty to cast off all moral restraint as some members in Galatia and other churches apparently believed.

Nor does it call for a withdrawal from life and its temptations. It calls for a disciplined life following Christ's example of being in the world but not of the world.

[20:51] I thought it was interesting in that definition that that publication specifically called out Galatia when it gave the definition. Let's look now at how the Bible demands that believers exercise self-control First up is Proverbs 4, verses 23-27 Keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life.

Put away from you crooked speech and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet then all your ways will be sure.

Do not swerve to the right or to the left. Turn your foot away from evil. Proverbs 25, verse 28 says A man without self-control is like a city broken in two and left without walls.

Here are 2 Peter 1, verses 5-7 Peter said in 2 Peter 1, 5-7 For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love.

Titus 1, verses 7-8 includes self-control in the qualifications for elders. Here are Titus 1, 7-8 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach.

[22:43] He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

1 Thessalonians 4, verses 3-5 remind us that self-control pertains to our bodies as well. Here are 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 3-5 For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.

Let's look at some demonstrations of self-control in the Bible now. In Genesis chapter 39, verses 7-12, Joseph demonstrated self-control when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him.

In 1 Samuel chapter 24, verses 1-7, and then chapter 26, verses 7-12, David exercised self-control when he had opportunities to kill Saul.

We just read 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 23 and 24 when we looked at meekness. Those verses also could apply here, but instead of reading those verses again, let's look instead at Isaiah 53.

[24 : 14] Isaiah 53-7 prophesied about the Messiah's actions centuries before they happened. Here is Isaiah 53-7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

For a New Testament example, listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9, verses 24-27. Here are 1 Corinthians 9, 24-27.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things.

They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable wreath. So I do not run aimlessly. I do not box as one beating the air, but I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Let's look at a few verses now to remind us that God working within us is the driver for self-control. 2 Timothy 1, verse 7. 2 Timothy 1, 7 says, For God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.

[25 : 46] These next verses are Titus 2, verses 11-14. Titus 2, 11-14 say, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works.

This brings us to the end of the detailed look at the fruit of the Spirit. We took parts of five weeks to consider the fruit of the Spirit in detail, but true fruit of the Spirit, as we know, includes all nine aspects that are listed in verses 22 and 23.

Here's a quote from Warren Wearsby. He said, We must remember that this fruit is produced to be eaten, not to be admired and put on display.

People around us are starving for love, joy, peace, and all the other graces of the Spirit. When they find them in our lives, they know that we have something they lack.

We do not bear fruit for our own consumption. We bear fruit that others might be fed and helped, and that Christ might be glorified. The flesh may manufacture results that bring praise to us, but the flesh cannot bear fruit that brings glory to God.

[27 : 25] It takes patience, an atmosphere of the Spirit, walking in the light, the seed of the Word of God, and a sincere desire to honor Christ. Seeing the Bible's high standard and knowing that we fail often to meet that standard, we can get very depressed.

To counter that somewhat, we'll look back to Galatians 5.17 before we move forward. Here is Galatians 5.17 again. Remember that believers have a war going on inside of us, and that war is between the desires of our remaining sinful nature and the desires of the Holy Spirit who now lives inside of us.

Although we might think otherwise, that war is actually a good thing. Think about this quote from Joseph Pippa that we heard when we studied verse 17 in depth.

He said, If you are not at war with your lust and the remnant of your sin in you, then most likely you remain unconverted. Mind you, I am not talking about always winning the war, but if there is no warfare within you, that is an indication that you are not born again.

Do not let the reality of the battle discourage you. The fact that you have these interior wars is a sign to you that you are alive. We should never minimize sin, but when we feel the discouragement of sin and the discouragement of failure to live up to the definitions of the fruit of the Spirit, we need to remember Galatians 5.17.

[29 : 15] To use another analogy, we have a construction project happening inside of us. The Holy Spirit is building out the remaining parts of our sinful nature and is bulldozing them out of the way to build us into being more and more like Christ.

However, the remaining sinful nature always resists that building project. We'll make progress toward becoming like Christ when we continue to walk by the Spirit, but we will never be totally without sin in this life.

To paraphrase that Pippa quote, if you recognize your sin and want to be rid of it, that is a sign of the Holy Spirit working within you. Moving forward in Galatians now, Galatians 5.23 has one phrase remaining.

After Paul listed the nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, he wrote, Against such things there is no law. Even the sinful world avoids making a law against the character traits that are listed here. The world has serious problems, but the nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit still are valued by the world. The difference is that non-believers just fail to recognize the source for that spiritual fruit. [30 : 32] We know that God will never make a law against the nine aspects either. Those things are what God wants his followers to demonstrate. The believer who walks in the Spirit and manifests the Spirit's fruit doesn't need a system of law to produce the right attitudes and behaviors.

Those things arise from within. So far in the broader section, we've seen Paul's command and Paul's contrast. And this section ends with Paul's conclusion.

And for those of you who like blanks, your blanks finally return in this one, at least with one. Paul's conclusion is the last thing we'll look at in this section. We see Paul's conclusion in verses 24 through 26.

So let's read those verses again. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Looking at verse 24, you might be thinking, that guy up there just said that we will never be without sin in this life.

[31 : 44] But verse 24 says that people who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. How can both things be true?

Well, here's what John Brown said about verse 24. He said, Crucifixion was a punishment appropriated to the worst crimes of the basest sort of criminals and produced death, not suddenly, but gradually.

True Christians do not succeed in completely destroying the flesh wall here below, but they have it fixed to the cross and they are determined to keep it there till it expire.

Philip Ryken said, The reason sanctification is such a painful process is that there is always something excruciating about putting our sins to death. Our sinful nature loves them so much that we secretly hope that they will live.

Then he said, Those who were crucified may have died slowly, but they always died eventually.

Soldiers ensured that the victims were not taken down from their crosses until they were really and truly dead.

[32 : 56] The same is true in the Spirit's war against the flesh. God is not fighting a losing battle. The sinful nature has already received its mortal blow and the Spirit will see to it that it remains on the cross until it expires.

The question is not if it will die, but only when. Here's John MacArthur's explanation. He said, The best understanding is to see, have crucified, as an allusion to the cross of Jesus Christ, which, as a past event, fits the tense here used by Paul.

It looks back to the cross, the time at which the death of the flesh was actually accomplished. Yet, because we are still alive on the earth and still possess our humanness, we have not entered into the future fullness of that past event.

Meanwhile, the flesh, with its passions and desires, is dead in the sense of no longer reigning over us or of holding us in inescapable bondage. Like a chicken with its head cut off, the flesh has been dealt a death blow, although it continues to flop around the barnyard of earth until the last nerve is stilled.

And then here are a couple more quotes about this verse. Martin Luther wrote, The faithful then, so long as they live here, do crucify the flesh.

[34 : 17] That is to say, they feel the lust thereof, but they obey them not. For they being furnished with the armor of God, that is with faith, hope, and sword of the Spirit, do resist the flesh.

And with these spiritual nails, they fasten the same unto the cross, so that it is constrained to be subject to the Spirit. Afterwards, when they die, they put it off holy.

And when they shall rise again from death to life, they shall have a pure and uncorrupt flesh without all affections and lust. In a sense, verse 24 restates what we just reviewed in verse 17.

It's another picture of the war going on inside of believers. But Paul reminds us here that the flesh has been crucified. The flesh is still living now, but victory over the flesh is certain.

Think about what a fitting analogy that is because we know the actual crucifixion itself wasn't what killed the criminal. It was the after effects of the crucifixion that killed the criminal.

[35 : 23] The crucifixion just made it certain that death would eventually happen. Here's one last quote on this verse and it's from Charles Spurgeon. He said, Oh, to have all the affections and lust of the flesh nailed up.

They may not be actually dead for those who are crucified may still live on for some hours, but they are doomed to die. Their life is a very painful one and it is hastening to a close.

A man who is crucified cannot get down from the cross and do what he wills. It is a great blessing to have our sinful self thus nailed up. It may struggle but it cannot get down.

It may strive and cry but its hands and feet are nailed. You cannot go into active actual sin. The Lord grant that the nails may hold very fast, that none of the struggles of our old nature may be able to pull out those nails that have fastened it up to the cross.

And happy indeed shall that day be when it shall be wholly dead. Check out verse 25 now. Paul says, If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

[36 : 40] This exhortation bookends what Paul said in verse 16 when Paul told us to walk by the Spirit. And it also goes along with what he said in verse 18 when he told us to be led by the Spirit.

The verb translated keep in step there literally refers to people being drawn up in a line. It means to walk in line or be in line with.

It's used about believers who by sharing Abraham's faith are said to walk in line with his footsteps and follow his example. Similarly, it describes Christians who walk in line with the position that they have so far attained.

You can see that in Philippians 3.16. And it talks about walking in line with the requirements of the law in Acts chapter 21 verse 24 and the truth of the gospel in Galatians 6.16.

In each case, a rule, a standard, or a principle is being followed. In Galatians 5.25, this rule or line is the Holy Spirit himself and the Holy Spirit's will.

[37 : 45] To walk by the Spirit is deliberately to walk along the path or according to the line which the Holy Spirit lays down. The Holy Spirit leads us, but we are to walk according to his rule.

As we crucify the flesh, repudiating what we know to be wrong, we must walk by the Spirit, setting ourselves to follow what we know to be right instead. We reject one path to follow another.

We turn from what is evil to occupy ourselves with what is good. And if it is vital to be ruthless in turning away from the things of the flesh, it equally is vital to be disciplined in turning toward the things of the Spirit.

Romans 8.9 makes it clear that all believers have the Holy Spirit. And here's Romans 8.9 again. You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

If, in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. So here's a question.

[38 : 52] How does the Holy Spirit lead us? Well, the Holy Spirit leads us through Scripture. He leads us as he prompts us and works within us to respond to the truth that is within Scripture.

If you're going to walk by the Spirit, you will favor the things of the Spirit. We will follow the Spirit as we obey God's law set down in the Scriptures.

We know that the Scriptures are the light for our path. They are the way in which God would have us walk, and it is the Spirit who prompts us to walk in them. Walking in the Spirit is simply seeking to live according to the will of God.

Let that last part sink in. That longer quote boiled down to this. Walking in the Spirit is simply seeking to live according to the Word of God. That's a simple concept that is sometimes much harder to do.

When we walk in the Spirit, we naturally will comply with Paul's exhortation in verse 25. However, verse 26 still gives us an important warning.

[39 : 57] Verse 26 says, Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Paul likely included that verse for two reasons.

One, he knew that even believers can be prone to acting this way. And two, he probably knew it described the current situation in Galatia when he wrote the letter.

John Stott said, this is a very instructive verse because it shows that our conduct to others is determined by our opinion of ourselves. It is when we have self-conceit that we provoke and envy other people.

The Greek adjective denotes somebody who has an opinion of himself which is empty, vain, or false. He is either cherishing an illusion about himself or is just plain conceited.

When we are conceited, our relationships with other people are bound to be poisoned. Whenever relationships with other people deteriorate, conceit is nearly always the basic cause.

[41 : 04] Think about the situation in Galatia that we've been studying about all these months. The Galatians were bothered by false teachers who were driven by conceit, vain ambition, and envy.

They were attacking Paul and producing a similar spirit among the Galatian Christians. Only as we walk by the spirit and walk in the spirit can we be delivered from vain ambition which is provocative and envious.

So Paul actually is telling his readers and us to be different from the false teachers. We must avoid being like what they are. Instead, we should listen to the Holy Spirit that resides within us.

Remember, the main idea that you've heard several times. The Holy Spirit within believers battles our worldly desires and enables us to become more and more like Christ.

Listen to how John Stott summarized the broader passage. He said, we have seen that the works of the flesh are many and evil, that the fruit of the spirit is lovely and desirable.

[42 : 15] We have seen that flesh and spirit are in continuous conflict with each other so that by ourselves we cannot do what we want to do. We have seen that our duty is to crucify the flesh, rejecting its evil ways, and to walk by the spirit, fostering his good ways.

Then he said, this victory is within reach of every Christian. Every Christian has crucified the flesh and every Christian lives by the spirit.

Our task is to take time each day to remember these truths about ourselves and to live accordingly. If we have crucified the flesh, which we have, then we must leave it securely nailed to the cross where it deserves to be.

And if we live in the spirit, which we do, then we must walk by the spirit. When the tempter comes with evil insinuations, we must round on him savagely and say to him, I belong to Christ.

I have crucified the flesh. It is altogether out of the question that I should even dream of taking it down from the cross. Say, I belong to Christ. The spirit dwells within me.

[43 : 27] So I shall set my mind on the things of the spirit and walk by the spirit according to his rule in line from day to day. When we occasionally get discouraged over our sins and our failures to walk according to the spirit, remember the words of Philippians 1.6.

We've seen that God is faithful and Philippians 1.6 reminds us, and I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the reminder of the fruit of the spirit that you're working within us.

And we thank you even more for the reminder that even though it doesn't always feel like it, for true believers, our sinful nature has been crucified.

and you working through us will eventually help that sinful nature pass away. Let us look forward to the day when you come back or we go to be with you and we deal with that sinful nature no more.

[44 : 38] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I'm I'm I'm