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FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Teaching Notes by Joyce Meyer

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Teaching by Joyce Meyer

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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The Fruit Of The Spirit

I. God Gives Spiritual Gifts To Men.

A. How many of you want to have spiritual gifts from God and freely flow in them?

B. God gave **gifts** and **men with gifts** to the church.

1. **Ephesians 4:8, 11-12**

C. Purpose: The perfecting of the saints

1. Not for pride, comparison, ego, or importance

2. **I Corinthians 14:26** – For the good and profit of all

Not for our own personal good and profit, but for ALL

3. **I Corinthians 14:1** – . . . *earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments (gifts), especially that you may prophesy (interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching).*

a. One who prophesies and one who stands in the office of a prophet are two different things.

b. When one prophesies, they may be considered a prophet for that moment; but that is still different than the office of a prophet.

4. **I Corinthians 14:26-32** gives instructions for the gifts being used properly.

Verse 31 clarifies again that the gifts are **for the good of the people.**

- D. **I Corinthians 12:1-7** – Don't be misinformed about spiritual gifts.
1. Don't be deceived like a heathen.
 2. Use some wisdom and realize that a person under the influence of the Holy Spirit will conduct himself properly.
 3. Perhaps Paul's sermon was the same as mine is tonight. "Don't be so awed with a person's gifts that you don't judge their fruit."
- E. We can see that Paul was encountering problems with how they handled the spiritual gifts.
1. **I Corinthians 14:20** – He instructed them to GROW UP!
 2. Gifts are frequently given to immature people with no character.
- F. Why would God give us gifts when we were in that baby state?
1. Without sensing our gifts, we would have no direction in life and no motivation to press forward.
 2. I had to have the gift of teaching to know I was called as a teacher, but God gave me the gift before I developed character and the Fruit of the Spirit.
 3. I had no experience in biblical leadership, dealing properly with people, or handling authority with humility.
- G. **Romans 12:6-8** – There are all kinds of gifts, not just tongues and prophecy.
1. **I Corinthians 12:8-11**
- H. Healing is really no greater than administration or serving.

1. Where would I be in ministry without my team of people?
- I. Get satisfied with your gift.
1. My purpose is to teach that gifts without fruit are useless and possibly even dangerous.
 2. **A dissatisfied person does not bear good fruit** – they are frustrated and hard to get along with.
 3. **John 3:27** – There is no source for gifts but from heaven – **get content.**

II. The Greatest And Best Gifts

- A. **I Corinthians 12:31** – Love
- B. **I Corinthians 14:1** – Pursue love.
- C. **I Corinthians 14:2-5** – Prophecy is a gift to be respected.
1. Interpreting the divine will in inspired preaching and teaching
 2. Prophecy is not always, “Thus saith the Lord.”
- D. The greatest gift is love – the only one that is also a fruit.
- E. **Galatians 5:22** – The Fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE.**
1. I believe all the others are facets of love.
- F. Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control
1. Love and self-control are like bookends that hold all the others in place.
 2. They all emanate from love and operate in us when we choose to develop and use self-control.

We often try to control other people and even God.
We try to control all of our circumstances – **we should strive to control ourselves.**

3. If someone is rude to me and I show kindness, **it is not always because I feel like it** – but because of love, I choose to do it God’s way. Because I love God, He loves me; and I am striving to be Christlike.

III. Fruit

- A. Everything is created to give forth fruit.
 1. Adam and Eve were told to be fruitful.
- B. Fruit (defined) – To be fertile or bring forth something that can be plucked.
 1. Is your life bringing forth something others can make use of?
- C. Fruit is usually found under the leaves.
 1. The visible leaves are like gifts of the Spirit – the things people see first.
 2. **Matthew 21:17-19** – Jesus cursed the fig tree that had leaves and no fruit.
 3. People with gifts and no fruit eventually get dealt with by Jesus also.
 - a. We have seen public examples of it in the last ten years, as God exposed ministers with very strong gifts and bad fruit.
 - b. The fruit of humility would have saved three different ministers and ministries that I know of personally.

Humility listens to others and is open to receive correction. These men were not open to listening to anyone.

- c. The fruit of self-control would have saved many who have been involved in adulterous affairs or excessive wrong use of ministry funds.

D. **Matthew 12:33 – YOU KNOW THE TREE BY ITS FRUIT.**

E. Listen to what people say – you can tell a lot about them by what they talk about.

1. **Matthew 12:34-35**

- 2. If someone talks excessively about money and things, you can quickly discern that they have a problem with greed.
- 3. If someone puts a negative edge on everything, you know they are going to be a problem.
- 4. If someone regularly mentions things that are wrong with people, organizations, churches, their pastors, church leadership, church programs, the post office, and their boss, you know they have a critical, judgmental spirit.
- 5. Example: Recently someone came to me, telling me critical, judgmental things about a certain spiritual leader. They had a dream they felt was a warning from God. They thought they were discerning problems, and that they were called to expose this person and straighten them out.
 - a. It only took me a few minutes of listening to judge the tree by its fruit. **THE FRUIT WAS NOT GOOD!**
 - b. It was causing suspicion, strife, division, grieving, gossip, and turmoil.
- 6. I have a real problem with people who feel they are called to the ministry of exposing the faults of others. It is pride based and unbiblical. **I don't see faultfinding as a biblical calling.**

- F. If our gifts are not developed for God’s use, Satan can easily deceive us and use them to bring destruction.
 - 1. My mouth (before God got control of it) would be a good example.

- G. I remember having a prayer line for people who were depressed, and seventy-five percent of the crowd came up.
 - 1. Many of them were people I knew with gifts – they prophesied to others and spoke in tongues, were on the worship team, sang special songs, and gave so-called words of knowledge in services.
 - 2. But they had no fruit of joy in their lives.

- H. We need to seek fruit, not just gifts.
 - 1. I prayed a lot for gifts for years and rarely ever prayed for God to develop the Fruit of the Spirit in me – as a result, I had neither.

IV. Who Is Spiritual?

- A. Is it the person who can stand and give an eloquent prophesy in church and be impatient and self-centered at home?

- B. Or the person who can have their foot run over by someone’s cart in the grocery store and take it patiently, displaying kindness and self-control?

- C. **I Corinthians 2:15** – A man who discerns, looks deeper than the surface and sees underneath what is showing.
 - 1. God does not judge us according to the flesh, but He sees our heart.
 - 2. The Bible says, “We judge at a glance and superficially.”

- D. **I Corinthians 3:1** – Paul said the Corinthians were unspiritual.

1. They had all the gifts functioning.
- E. The gifts will function to a degree without fruit and for a certain period of time – but without fruit, they will never mature.
1. Gifts come as seeds and mature when nurtured like everything else.
- F. Is a person spiritual who has no peace, joy, love, self-control, etc.? **NO!**
- G. **Obviously, the fruit of self-control is largely missing in many lives, or we would not see so many problems – especially in relationships.**
- H. **Philippians 1:9-10** – Paul prayed that we would know what was really important.
1. **IT IS TIME TO CONCENTRATE ON WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT.**
 2. Pray for, seek, and cultivate the gifts – **but major on the fruit.**

V. Gifts Must Be Balanced With Fruit.

- A. Healings/miracles
1. Compassion (mercy), kindness, and gentleness
- B. Words of knowledge or prophecy
1. Humility
- C. Faith
1. Love (See **I Corinthians: Chapter 13** and **Galatians 5:6.**)

Always remember: **You will know THEM by THEIR fruit – and WE will be known by OUR fruit!**

The Fruit Of Love

I. The More Excellent Way

- A. **I Corinthians 12:31** – Seek the gifts, but I show you a still **more excellent way**.
- B. **Philippians 1:9-10** – Seek what is **EXCELLENT**. Abound in love!
- C. Daniel displayed spiritual gifts because he was an **excellent** man of God.
 - 1. **Daniel 5:11-14**
- D. People seeking the love walk are also seeking to live excellent lives.
 - 1. Seeking excellence in personal behavior
 - 2. We cannot walk in love and be mediocre.
 - 3. **Love is basically how we treat people – if we are mediocre, we will treat people with a lack of respect. If we are excellent, we will treat people excellently.**
- E. Our personality is an area to examine.
 - 1. **Ephesians 3:16** – Paul prayed for the Ephesians that the Holy Spirit would indwell their personalities.
 - 2. **Personality** (defined/Webster's) – That which makes you a distinct individual, or the thing that constitutes individuality; the totality of qualities and traits, as of **character** or **behavior** that are peculiar to an individual; distinctive traits of mind and behavior. The pattern of collective character, behavioral, temperamental, emotional, and mental traits of an individual or distinctive qualities of an individual, especially those distinguishing personal characteristics that make one socially appealing.

3. Our personalities are a combination of our God-given temperament and those things that have occurred in our lives in the past that have formed and molded us as individuals.
 4. Often the personality needs healing.
 5. An insecure person was not born insecure. He may have been born with a sensitive nature and been around harsh people who showed a lot of disapproval. This will often leave a sensitive person insecure. A person who is inclined toward perfectionism will usually be insecure if they encountered a lot of disapproval from parents or peers. **THEIR PERSONALITY NEEDS HEALING!**
- F. To mistreat people (be rude, harsh, controlling, manipulative, selfish, or insincere) and then say, “Well, that’s just my personality” is not acceptable.

II. Is The Love Of God Clogged Up In You?

- A. **Romans 5:5** – The love of God is shed abroad in your heart.
1. God’s love is in us.
- B. **I Corinthians 13:1-8** – Love begins as a seed. It is God’s love for me and in me.
1. The seed develops and bears fruit only as we learn to love others (let God’s love flow through us).
- C. **I John 4:12** – When we love one another, **GOD ABIDES** (His presence is with us).
1. Love is brought to completion when we love others. God’s love, which was poured into us, has made full circle.
- D. **I John 3:17** – When we close our heart of compassion, we clog up the love of God.

1. **DO YOU NEED SOME SPIRITUAL DRAINAGE?**

E. We **CLOSE** or **OPEN** our heart of compassion.

1. Operating in love is a choice, not a feeling – **LOVE IS NOT A FEELING.**

F. Receive God's love – love yourself in a balanced way, love God, and let Him flow out of you to other people.

III. Believing In The Love Of God

A. **I John 4:16** – Says we are “to believe in the love God has for us”

B. He loves us because He wants to – not because we deserve it.

1. **Ephesians 1:4-5**

C. **Galatians 5:6** – Faith works by love.

1. How can we put faith in someone unless we are **ASSURED** they care about us?

2. Another view of this Scripture teaches us that our faith won't produce desired results unless we are walking in love.

3. **Mark 11:23-26**

a. Faith produces prayer, which won't yield results without love.

Example: Believe God loves you; love yourself in a balanced way; love God for Who He is, not just what He can do for you; and love other people.

b. **I Peter 3:7** – Husbands' prayers can be hindered if they don't consider and honor their wives.

- D. Pursue love!
 - 1. **I Timothy 6:9-11** – Flee from sin and **PURSUE** love.
 - 2. Pursue (defined/Webster’s) – To seek, go after, to follow with a view to overtake, to chase, use measures to obtain, to continue, to strive to gain a thing.

- E. Don’t give up until you believe you have a deep revelation on God’s love to you, in you, and through you.
 - 1. It was a matter of importance to the Apostle Paul.
 - a. **Ephesians 3:17-19**
 - b. **Romans 8:35-39**

IV. Facets Of Love

- A. **I Peter 4:8** – Love forgives and DISREGARDS the offenses of others.

- B. We usually teach on forgiveness, but what about teaching on DISREGARDING AN OFFENSE.
 - 1. **I Corinthians: Chapter 13** – Love pays no attention to a suffered wrong. It takes no account.
 - 2. Many today are very good accountants in the area of keeping track of offenses.
 - 3. We pay too much attention to ourselves and our hurt feelings – IT KEEPS US OUT OF THE SPIRIT and into ourselves.

- C. Disregard (defined/Webster’s) – To fail to take notice; to slight as unworthy of notice or regard.
 - 1. Love does not make a big deal out of little things – and **love does not make a big deal out of big things.**

- D. Love requires a willingness to humble oneself.
1. Love is not haughty or puffed up.
 2. I spent many years “**PUFFED UP**” – angry, full of hot air, refusing to give in, and unwilling to humble myself.
 3. **James 3:13** – Humility is the attribute of true wisdom.

We have no wisdom unless we have some humility.
- E. Love does not expose faults through gossip or talebearing.
- F. Love sticks with people. Love is faithful.
1. **Proverbs 17:17** – A friend is born for adversity.
- G. Love is the new law for the new covenant and our new life.
1. **John 13:34-35** – Jesus gave ONE new commandment.
 2. We often fall into the religious trap of trying to keep all the laws and rules; but if we would walk in love, we would fulfill all the rest.
 3. **Galatians 6:1-2** – Bear with the weaknesses of others to fulfill the law of Christ.
 4. Love must be the keynote of the new life in Christ – our main theme, what we major in.
- H. Love is merciful.
1. Mercy is good to those who don't deserve it.
 2. **Luke 6:28-36** – First we show mercy, then **our** reward is great.
 3. God could in no way require this of us if He had not equipped us with the power of the Holy Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit.

4. We have the love of God in us – but if we **CLOSE OUR HEART OF COMPASSION**, it cannot flow out.

V. Don't Let Selfishness Win The War.

- A. **II Timothy 3:1-2** – People will be lovers of self.
 1. Love is not selfish.
- B. **Romans 14:15, 19-21** – Restrain your liberties if it offends your brother; otherwise, you are not walking in love.
- C. **Matthew 24:12** – Don't let Satan win the war.
 1. Keep your love stirred up and **ON PURPOSE** reach out to others.
 2. **Develop the Fruit of the Spirit in your life.**

The Fruit Of Faithfulness

Foundation Scripture: Matthew 12:33

I. God Is Faithful.

A. I Corinthians 1:9 – *God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on); by Him you were called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1. If we are to be godlike, then we must be faithful.

B. God never expects us to do something He has not equipped us to do; therefore, He has given us the fruit of faithfulness.

1. It must be developed by coupling it with self-control and using that self-control to discipline ourselves to stick with things – not to give up easily or not give up at all.

2. **Don't be a quitter!**

C. God never gives up on us.

1. I Corinthians 13:7-8a – *Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under **all** circumstances, and it endures **everything** [without weakening]. **Love never fails** . . .*

2. Philippians 1:6 – He Who began a good work in you is well able to complete it and bring it to its finish.

3. Hebrews 12:2 – God is the Author and the Finisher of whatever He begins.

4. Even when we get discouraged and give up on ourselves, we find the Holy Spirit encouraging us to go on: “Try again,

don't be condemned, don't be negative; I love you, you'll make it, press in, press on; tomorrow's a new day."

D. **Proverbs 24:10** – *If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.*

1. We do not have small strength; we have The Greater One living inside of us.

E. **Psalms 89:1-33** – Speaks many times of the faithfulness of God.

F. **I Corinthians 10:13** – God will never allow more to come on us than we can bear, but with every temptation He is faithful to show us a way out.

II. What Is Faithfulness?

A. **Faithful** (defined/Webster's 1828) – Firm in adherence to the truth and to the duties of a relationship with God. Firmly adhering to duty; loyal, constant in the performance of duties or services; exact in attending to what an authority has given you to do. Individuals should be faithful to their word; governments should be faithful to their constitutions; and faithful to a marriage partner. Constant – not fickle, as a faithful lover or friend. True, and worthy of belief.

B. **Faithfully** (defined/Webster's 1828) – *In a faithful manner; with good faith. With strict adherence to allegiance and duty; with strict observance of promises, vows, covenants or duties; without failure of performance; honestly; exactly. Sincerely, with strong assurances.*

C. **Faithfulness** (defined) – Fidelity plus many of the definitions seen above.

D. **Proverbs 16:6** – *By mercy and love, truth and fidelity [to God and man – not by sacrificial offerings], iniquity is purged out of the heart, and by the reverent, worshipful fear of the Lord men depart from and avoid evil.*

1. We are cleansed from a sinful lifestyle, and our lives completely change AS WE ARE FAITHFUL and as we operate in fidelity.

2. Fidelity (defined) – See faith, faithfulness, careful and exact observation of duty. We expect fidelity in a public minister, in an agent or trustee, in a domestic servant (or employee), or in a friend. **The best security for the fidelity of men is to make interest coincide with duty.**
- E. If we are truly interested in what we are doing, we are more likely to be faithful to it.

III. Where Have Faithful Men Gone?

- A. **Psalm 12:1** – *Help, Lord! For principled and godly people are here no more; faithfulness and the faithful vanish from among the sons of men.*
1. **Psalm 12:2** – *To his neighbor each one speaks words without use or worth or truth; with **flattering lips** and **double heart** [deceitfully] they speak.*
- B. I believe one of the saddest things in our society today is we have very little loyalty, commitment, integrity, and faithfulness. Patriotism has all but vanished. We cannot feel patriotic toward a government or leaders that don't exhibit honesty, fidelity, integrity, loyalty, commitment, and faithfulness. Everywhere we look it is hard to find faithful men.
1. There are a few more among Christians than in other people, but even the church is sadly lacking in these qualities.
- C. How can we become faithful?
1. By understanding the importance of it and being determined to develop that fruit in our lives.
- D. People get too concerned about spiritual gifts – they should be more concerned about fruit. Gifts without fruit are of no real value and can even be dangerous or detrimental to the spreading of Christianity.
1. Once a fruit has matured, it can then be given as a gift. In other words, once my fruit is fully matured, then my gifts can fully come forth.

2. Someone gave me the “fruit of the month club” as a gift.
The fruit is great because it is allowed to ripen (fully mature) on the vine before picking.
 3. I have heard that most fruit in the supermarkets are picked green and then gassed to give them color – no wonder they are often tasteless.
- E. **Numbers 12:7** – Moses was faithful in all the household of God.
1. Example: He was faithful in the execution of all of his duties.
 2. He remained faithful to Aaron and Miriam, even when they judged him and rebelled against his authority.
 3. **II Timothy 2:13** – If we are faithless, He remains faithful.
- F. Joseph was faithful – during trials, innocent imprisonment, and tremendous temptation.
1. Just because Joseph did not give in to the seduction of Potiphar’s wife, that does not mean he was not tempted. He was a healthy young man with normal desires.
 2. Joseph was promoted and given great power and wealth because he was faithful.
- G. Samson was not faithful – he did not resist the seduction of Delilah, and he experienced “**power gone sour.**”
1. **Judges 16:1-22** – Samson had a problem with lust. He ended up blind, in prison, and with no strength.
 2. **Verse 22** – But the hair of his head began to grow back (his strength was in his hair).
- It is good to know people can grow again after they make these kinds of mistakes, but the price Samson paid was too high.

3. Remember that “**sinful pleasures**” only last for a moment, but the results of sin can last a lifetime.
- H. **Proverbs 20:6** – *Many a man proclaims his own loving-kindness and goodness, but a faithful man who can find?*
1. It is not what we say of ourselves that proves our character, but what we do!

IV. Elijah And Elisha

- A. Elisha was very faithful to Elijah.
- B. **I Kings 19:16, 19-21** – Elisha receives his call to ministry. He was told to serve and learn under Elijah.
1. It appears that Elijah wasn’t even too polite to him in the beginning. I believe he was testing his faithfulness and willingness to obey God even if it was hard.
- C. **I Kings 19:1-10** – In these verses, we see that Elijah had some problems. He was not a perfect prophet.
1. He was fearful.
 2. Depressed to the point of talking about wanting to die
 3. Negative
 4. Filled with self-pity
- D. Elijah was not always like this, but the point I am making is that he had some problems. **Elijah’s problems did not stop Elisha from being faithful to him.**
- E. Elisha was called to **SERVE** Elijah.

1. **We are never promoted by God until we faithfully serve someone or serve somewhere. It will usually be someone that at times can be a thorn in your flesh, or it will be in a place that you don't want to be in.**
2. Some people don't wait for God's promotion; they promote themselves – they never stay on their self-made throne for very long.

F. While I worked at LCC for Rick and Donna Shelton, I did many things that I did not feel was “THE CALL” on my life. And I went through things that I did not think was fair and that did not feel good. Rick was twenty-six years old and I was thirty-six when we first joined up together; and I can tell you for sure, we have both come a long way.

1. I answered their phone calls when they were out of town.
2. I cleaned their house once. I cooked food and took it to them.
3. I was Rick's secretary for one day, and he fired me.
4. I was allowed to make the announcements at the first LCC camp meeting.
5. I was in charge of entertainment for the Christmas parties.
6. I answered Rick's mail.
7. I prayed for him.
8. I was submissive to him. If he did not want me to do something, then I did not do it. I did not always like it or think it was fair, but I did submit!
9. I did not always get raises when I thought I should have, and they were not always what I thought I deserved.
 - a. Once another pastor and myself were both believing for a raise, and Rick gave him one and not me. I cried so hard that I had to leave the office and go home. God spoke to me and said, “I'll give you a raise.”

The other person had gotten \$50.00 a week raise; and every week after that for months and months, God supernaturally gave me at least \$50.00 extra income and often much more than that.

- b. Sometimes God won't let a person give us what we want because He is teaching us to look to Him.
10. Sometimes I would work very hard on a job for him and never hear "you did a good job."
 11. Sometimes he got angry with me.
 12. Donna and I went through a very rough period trying to adapt to one another.
 13. When God did clearly call me out into my own ministry, we went through a **very difficult** transition.
 14. **But almost twenty years later, I AM STILL HERE! We are still friends and co-laborers together.**
- G. There were also many things that Rick and Donna helped me with; and they opened a door of opportunity for me that launched my ministry, which is now worldwide.
1. Rick **trusted** me in his pulpit and gave me an opportunity to teach every week at his church.
 2. When he was out of town, I was almost always the one he asked to minister.
 3. He let me help him do a Friday night healing service for several months.
 4. He put me on my first radio station and paid the bill.
 5. He gave me my first job in full-time ministry.
 6. I learned a lot about "how to minister in the pulpit" from watching him.

7. We enjoyed fellowship – he trusted me to tell me things and share things with me.
 8. He let me teach in his Bible college.
 9. My first tape album was done in his radio room at the little church in the valley.
 10. He let me sell my tapes each week – even though I sold a lot more tapes than he did.
 11. He put up with my often “overly aggressive” personality.
 12. He believed in the call on my life, and he trusted me!
- H. How should we treat someone who trusts us?
1. We should not betray that trust; we should be faithful.
- I. When it is time to leave your Elijah, there is a **right way** and a **wrong way** to do it.
1. If you leave one place in a wrong way, you cannot enter the next one right.
 2. Don't leave bitterly or resentfully. Don't leave gossiping about people or telling things you know that you are not supposed to be telling.
 3. Don't let a critical, murmuring spirit get on you. Don't stir up strife.
 4. Don't go to the next place telling them everything that was wrong with the last one.
- J. **Don't listen to someone who has that spirit on them; and realize if their fruit is bad, something is wrong with the tree (them).**
- K. How did Elisha finally get promoted?

1. He served faithfully, even when Elijah was rude to him and acted like he did not want him around.
2. **II Kings 2:1-6** – Three times Elijah tried to get rid of Elisha, and Elisha refused to leave him.
3. Elisha ended up with a **double portion** of Elijah’s anointing.

V. Be Faithful In Every Area Of Your Life.

- A. You cannot just be faithful in your ministry and not be faithful in your personal life.
- B. Be faithful in prayer, in giving, in serving, and in Bible study.
- C. Be faithful on your job.
 1. Get to work on time or early. Do a little something extra.
 2. Don’t sit at work and play around on the Internet during working hours.
 3. Don’t handle your personal phone calls during your working hours.

Make your appointments during your lunch hour.
 4. Don’t do things behind the boss’s back. If you need to do something outside the company guidelines, get permission.
 5. Don’t use company postage for personal letters.
 6. Don’t use their copy machine to run off fifty copies of your Sunday-school lesson each week.
 7. Don’t show up at work looking like you just fell out of bed five minutes ago.

- D. Be faithful with your possessions.
1. Even if you have an old car, keep it clean.
 2. Even if you have a small house, keep it clean and in good repair.
 3. Iron your clothes if they need to be ironed. Don't take them out of the dryer after they sat there all night and just put them on.
 4. Keep your clothes clean; fix your hair.
 5. Pay your bills on time.
 6. Balance your checkbook so you're not bouncing checks.
 7. Don't show disrespect of the things God has blessed you with.
- E. Be a faithful friend.
1. Don't tell things you're asked not to tell.
 2. Do what you say you will do – be where you say you will be when you say you will be there!
 3. Don't expose your friend's faults and weaknesses to others.

When you get close to someone, you find out things about your friend that everyone does not need to know.

VI. The Reward Of The Faithful

- A. **Psalm 101:6** – The faithful of the land shall dwell with God.
- B. **Psalm 31:23b** – *The Lord preserves the faithful . . .*
1. **Preserve** (defined) – Keeps, seals, and protects.
- C. **Matthew 25:21** (KJV) – . . . *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

The Fruit Of Patience

I. Patience Please! God Is Not In A Hurry!

- A. Patience (defined) – Long spirited, long-suffering with mildness, gentleness, moderation, and constancy.
 - 1. Patience is not waiting; it is how we act while we are waiting.
- B. **Luke 21:19** (KJV) – *In your patience possess ye your souls.*
 - 1. If you don't possess your soul, it will possess you.
- C. God moves two ways:
 - 1. Quickly/suddenly
 - 2. Slowly/little by little
 - 3. First **slowly**; and then in HIS timing, **suddenly**
- D. He is not slow according to our conception of slowness.
- E. **Deuteronomy 7:22** – God delivers us little by little.
- F. **Proverbs 16:2, 9, 25** – There is a way that seems right to man, but the end of it is death.
- G. God moves according to the law of sowing and reaping.
 - 1. **James 5:7** – See how the farmer waits.
 - 2. He plants his seed, keeps weeds from choking its growth, keeps enemies from destroying it, waters it, lets it get sunshine, and **WAITS** for the harvest. He keeps up his patient vigil (routine).

- H. **Mark 4:27** – After doing his part, the farmer gets up and goes to bed, gets up and goes to bed until God does His part. **THE FARMER KNOWS NOT HOW.**

II. Impatience Causes Works Of The Flesh.

- A. **Genesis: Chapter 16** – Abraham and Sarah got impatient and lengthened their wait.
- B. **I Peter 5:5-7**
1. God frustrates and defeats the proud.
 2. “Due time”
 3. Cast your care, let Him take care of it – and **YOU ENJOY THE WAIT!**
- C. **Isaiah 30:1-3** shows what happens when we move in the strength of our own flesh (our plan).
1. **Verses 13-16** – God **will** deal with the flesh; He **will** break it!
- D. **John 9:4** – We must “work His works” and avoid working our own works.
- E. **Romans 9:16** – God’s gifts are not a matter of our works, but of His mercy.
- F. **Matthew 7:22-23** – God chastens those who do their own works and disregard His commands.
- G. What do we get into concerning “works”?
1. Basically, anything we want that is not happening **when** we want it to
 2. Our own spiritual growth and changes we desire to see in ourselves

3. Changes in family and friends
 4. Changes in circumstances
- H. Example: God may tell someone to save money to buy a certain thing – He says, “Don’t get into debt to have it.” They get tired of waiting; get it, make payments, have financial pressure, and lose their joy.

Example: God may tell us to wait on Him and refrain from nagging people about things they do that are wrong – we get impatient and try to **TALK** them into changing. We often ruin a relationship and end up lonely.

III. Faith Is For The In-Between.

- A. There is always a beginning, an end, and an in-between.
- B. **Hebrews 10:36** – We need faith and patience to receive the promises.
- C. At the APPOINTED TIME, God moves.
 1. God has an appointment with our breakthrough or manifestation.
 2. Example: If I had an appointment at three o’clock today and showed up at one o’clock, I would be wasting my time. I can stomp around the room impatiently, get upset, and make myself miserable; but it will not help! I MUST WAIT FOR THE APPOINTMENT TIME.
- D. **Acts 1:6-7** – It is not for us to know the appointed time.
- E. Only two things stop faith:
 1. Giving up your faith or bowing to doubt and unbelief.
 2. The manifestation

IV. Untimely Births

- A. Premature (or before everything is totally ready)
- B. Babies that are premature always require special care and are more costly.
- C. Sometimes they don't make it at all, depending on how premature they were.
- D. Sometimes they are weak and sickly because certain things didn't develop right.
- E. **James 1:4** – The patient man is **fully developed**, lacking in nothing. He is perfect and entire.
- F. When we are patiently waiting and enjoying the rest of God, Satan always says, **“YOU NEED TO DO SOMETHING.”**

V. At The Right And Proper Time

- A. **John 7:1-8** – My time has not yet come.
 - 1. **I Timothy 2:6** – At the right and proper time, Jesus died.
- B. **Psalm 31:15** – *My times are in Your hands . . .*
- C. **Ecclesiastes 3:11** – *He has made everything beautiful in its time . . .*

VI. Put On Patience.

- A. **Colossians 3:12** – Clothe yourself with patience.
 - 1. Something we choose to do – **IT IS A DECISION!**
- B. **I Peter 5:5** – Apron yourself with humility.
- C. Pride causes impatience.

1. We get irritable with people because they don't do things our way or as quickly as we want them to.
2. **Ecclesiastes 7:8** – The patient in spirit is better than the proud.
3. We try to MAKE THINGS HAPPEN that we have seen in our heart (our dreams and visions).

Habakkuk 2:3-4

- D. We may not initially be able to prevent ourselves from **FEELING IMPATIENT**, but we can choose to **BEHAVE PATIENTLY**.
1. Following feelings is a dangerous thing to do.
- E. Bring forth fruit with patience.

VII. Patience Is The Beginning Of Love.

- A. **I Corinthians 13:4** – “Love is patient.”
- B. One of the greatest ways to show love to others is to be patient with them.
1. Patient with their weaknesses and faults
 2. Patient with their slowness
 - a. Slow clerks, new clerks, no clerks, clerks in training, clerks who run out of change; clerks who have to replace the tape in the register and don't know how to; clerks who are rude, clerks who talk on the phone the entire time they are waiting on you, or clerks who ignore you and don't wait on you at all because they are on a personal phone call
 - b. Two or three clerks standing around laughing, talking, and **not** helping you find what you need; clerks who charge you the wrong amount and have to void the transaction and start over;

clerks who won't give you a shopping bag when you ask for one; and clerks who don't tell you the item is going to be fifty percent off tomorrow!

- c. Clerks who leave the metal detectors on your purchase causing you to have to either get embarrassed because people think you may be a thief; or if you do get out of the store, you must return to the store the next day to have it removed
3. Patient with their different opinions
 4. Patient with their personality
 5. Patient when they tell you a story for the third time – even though you mention, “You’ve already told me that.”
 6. Patient when they tell you every minute detail of a story that you’re not interested in anyway
 7. Patient when people interrupt you, and you don’t want to be interrupted
 8. Patient when people call you at 6:00 a.m. and say, “Oh, weren’t you up yet? I’ve been up for an hour.”
 9. Patient when people goof around and act silly while you’re trying to be serious
 10. Patient when you’re sick or going through a really rough time, and people seem to be clueless concerning your needs
 11. Patient when people push in front of you in line or take a parking space that you’ve been waiting for someone to pull out of
 12. Patient when a department store heavily advertises a certain item on sale; and when you get there, it’s on back order
 13. Patient with clerks when you have to return an item two times because it fell apart

14. Patient when you buy a pair of shoes and get home with two different sizes in the box
 15. Etc., etc.
- C. Practice patience with things, or you will never be patient with people either.
1. Patient with the television when it doesn't have a clear picture and has a buzz in the sound
 2. Patient when someone in your neighborhood has a ham radio that messes up the picture on your television
 3. Patient with the mayonnaise jar lid

Calling it a stupid jar won't help it come off.
 4. Patient when someone sends you a cassette tape, and you never can find the beginning of it

Or your car tape recorder keeps flipping it over when it doesn't need to be flipped over – all while you're driving and nearly have a wreck trying to fix it!
- D. Each time we give our emotions over to the pressure of impatience, we feed an area that is hostile to God and strengthen it for another time and place.
- E. There are many facets of love, but they all require patience.
- F. **BE PATIENT!** Patient is something we become, not something we strive to do.

The Fruit Of Kindness

I. What Is Kindness?

A. Mercy is kind/kindness is merciful.

1. It gives others blessings they don't deserve.
2. Withholds punishment that is due

B. How can God be so patient and long-suffering?

1. He is kind.
2. **Matthew 11:28-30** – He is not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing.
3. **Lamentations 3:19-25** – It is because of God's mercy that we can have hope. His mercy is new every morning.

Each evening we can go to bed with a soul cleansed from the mistakes of the day. We can rest, wake up refreshed, and look forward to the day because of His mercy.

4. **I Chronicles 16:34** – O give thanks unto the Lord, for HIS MERCY ENDURES FOREVER.

C. **Matthew 9:13** – Go learn about mercy.

1. Two aspects of this Scripture should be examined:
 - a. Learn how God wants to be merciful to us; He isn't interested in our sacrifices when we sin. He wants us to repent and receive mercy for our failures. Therefore, righteousness is given by God's grace, not our works.

- b. Learn how to show mercy to others, which I believe is impossible until we learn how to receive mercy for ourselves.

We cannot give away what we don't have.

- D. **Colossians 3:12** – Have behavior full of mercy.

II. God Mightily Uses People Who Are Meek, Patient, and Kind.

- A. **Moses** – He was patient and kind to the Israelites, even though they blamed him for all their trials and constantly murmured, complained, and found fault with everything.
 - 1. **Numbers 12:1-13** – Moses was kind to Aaron and Miriam when they rose up against him with accusation and rebellion.
- B. **Joseph** – He was kind to his brothers who had been unkind to him.
 - 1. **Genesis 50:18-21**
 - 2. A person who is kind has a difficult time behaving any other way.
- C. **Abraham** – He was kind to Lot.
 - 1. **Genesis 13:1-11**
- D. **Ruth** – She was kind to Naomi even though it meant personal hardship.
 - 1. **Ruth 1:14-18**
 - 2. **Ruth 2:16** – God arranged for her to have “**handfuls on purpose.**”
- E. **Paul** – Taught all the churches to be kind and merciful. He said they worked among the churches with all gentleness, which is kindness.
- F. **David** – Great men are kind, merciful, and gentle.
 - 1. **Psalm 18:35** (KJV) – . . . *thy gentleness hath made me great.*

III. Fear Chokes The Fruit Of Kindness.

- A. Fear of being taken advantage of
 - 1. Moses, Joseph, Abraham, Ruth, Paul, and David all showed kindness; and God took care of them.
 - 2. God honored them, and **HE** dealt with their enemies.
- B. **Hebrews 10:30-31**
- C. **Romans 12:19**
- D. Fear drives us to take care of ourselves.
 - 1. **I Peter 5:7** – Cast your care on Him for He cares for you.
- E. **When we spend our lives taking care of ourselves, we limit what we can have.**
 - 1. **Ephesians 3:20** – God does exceeding and abundantly.
 - 2. For those who are in His hands, He leaves handfals on purpose.
- F. Excessively trying to prevent ourselves from being taken advantage of clearly shows our trust is not in God.
 - 1. For years I was determined that nobody was going to take advantage of me, and it resulted in me continually getting hurt by someone.
 - 2. When we are focused on ourselves, our selfishness draws all kinds of problems to our lives.
 - 3. Being kind to those upon whom we desire to take revenge **clearly** shows we trust God.
- G. **Matthew 5:43-45** – We must **show** the world something, not just **say** something.

1. **I John 3:18** – *Little children, let us not love [merely] in theory or in speech but in deed and in truth (in practice and in sincerity).*
 2. We must practice love – practice until we get it right.
 3. Example: Sandy grabbed my coffee cup to wash it; at the same time saying, “Are you finished with this?” I screamed, “NO!” Then I tried five times to get my voice levels to a kind tone. She asked what was wrong with me, and I told her I was teaching on kindness. She said, “And you had to try five times to get it right.”
- H. **Luke 6:35-36** – Be kind to enemies and reap a reward.
- I. **Proverbs 31:26** – The law of kindness is in her mouth.
1. This **Proverbs 31 woman** was greatly blessed, respected, and loved. The law of kindness being in our mouths will produce great rewards in our lives.

IV. We Must Receive Mercy To Give It Away.

- A. **Remember, we cannot give away what we don't have.**
1. **Romans 5:5** – God has shed His love into our hearts to heal us, and so we have some to give away to others.
- B. God does not expect us to do anything for others He doesn't do for us.
1. Forgiveness
 2. Mercy
 3. Patience
 4. Love
 5. Long-suffering

- 6. Always believes the best
- C. Get out of works and receive mercy.
- D. Mercy must precede healing.
 - 1. **Matthew 20:30-32** – *And behold, two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, Lord, have pity and mercy on us . . . The crowds reproved them and told them to keep still; but they cried out all the more, Lord, have pity and mercy on us . . . **Jesus stopped** and called them, and asked, What do you want Me to do for you?*

A cry for mercy stopped Jesus and caused Him to take notice of the men.

- 2. **Luke 17:12-15** – Ten lepers cry out for mercy. They receive healing – and only one returned to give thanks.
- 3. **Matthew 15:22** – *And behold, a woman who was a Canaanite from that district came out and, with a [loud, troublesomely urgent] cry, begged, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is miserably and distressingly and cruelly possessed by a demon!*
- 4. **Matthew 17:15** – *Lord, do pity and have mercy on my son, for he has epilepsy . . . and he suffers terribly; for frequently he falls into the fire and many times into the water.*
- 5. **Mark 10:46-47** – Blind Bartimaeus cried out and shouted, “Jesus, have pity and mercy on me (**NOW**)!”

V. Mercy Sees The Why Behind The What!

- A. Hurting people hurt people.
- B. Resist a critical, judgmental spirit.
 - 1. People who are sour and grouchy are usually hurting.

- a. Physically sick
 - b. Emotionally wounded
 - c. Financially stressed
 - d. A child in trouble
 - e. Marriage gone sour
 - f. Etc., etc.
- C. I was the same way once, and I did not see much mercy from anybody until I met Dave.
- 1. **Romans 2:1** – We judge others for what we do.
- D. **I Timothy 1:13** – Paul received mercy because he acted out of ignorance.
- E. **Luke 23:34a** – *And Jesus prayed, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*
- 1. I was in a pit. I was ignorant of how I got in it, and certainly did not know how to get out.
 - 2. People are under such stress today that most of the time they truly don't know what they are doing.

VI. Release People From Their Debts.

- A. My daughter lost some things and ruined some things.
- 1. She lost a prescription I had just gotten her.
 - 2. She burned the chocolate chips for the cookies, and we had to buy more.

3. I told her she had to pay for them. **WE WANT PEOPLE TO PAY!** A few days later, I found \$12.00 on my dresser with a note from her telling me it was for her mistakes. I happened to be teaching on mercy that evening and told her she could have it back. I said, “This is your lucky day. I am teaching on mercy tonight.”
- B. **Matthew 18:25-27** speaks of a man who could not pay.
- C. Stop trying to collect from those who cannot pay and let God pay you.

LOSE THE “YOU-OWE-ME ATTITUDE.”

VII. Being Merciful And Kind Protects Us.

- A. **Psalm 37:23-26** – There is special care for those who walk in God’s ways.
- B. **Matthew 7:1-5** – Being merciless opens the door for personal attack.
- C. **James 2:12-13** – There is mercy for those who show mercy.

The Fruit Of Goodness

Foundation Scriptures: Galatians 5:22-23 and Matthew 12:33

I. God Is Good.

A. Psalm 25:8 – *Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will He instruct sinners in [**His**] way.*

1. If He will instruct us in His way, and His way is **good**, then He must instruct us in goodness. He must teach us to allow His goodness to flow through us.

B. Psalm 31:19 – *Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear, revere, and worship You, goodness which You have wrought for those who trust and take refuge in You **before the sons of men!***

1. God is set to be good to and bless those who **OPENLY** love Him and serve Him. Too many people want to be “**closet Christians.**”

C. Psalm 23:6 – Only goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life.

D. Exodus 33:19; 34:6 – God made His goodness to pass before Moses.

1. Moses had been praying for God to show him His ways.
2. We cannot just want the goodness of God, but we must also want His ways.

E. Believe in and expect God’s goodness.

1. Psalm 27:13 – What would have happened to me had I not believed to see the Lord’s goodness in the land of the living?

- a. It is next to impossible not to give up on life if we cannot believe for something good to happen in the future.
 - b. This is why a negative person is usually depressed and sometimes even suicidal.
 - 2. **Isaiah 30:18** – God is waiting to be good to those who are waiting for and expecting His goodness.
- F. God even intends good to come from situations that start out bad.
- 1. **Genesis 50:20** – Joseph said, “What you intended for my harm, God meant it for good.”
 - 2. **Romans 8:28** – All things work out for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

GOD IS GOOD EVEN WHEN OUR SITUATION IS NOT!

II. Do Good To Others.

- A. **Romans 2:4** – The goodness of God leads men to repentance.
- B. **Galatians 6:10** – Don’t miss an opportunity to do good to people.
- C. **I Timothy 6:17-18** – The rich are charged not to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God – and to remember to do good to others and be rich in good works.
- D. **Psalm 34:14** – *Depart from evil and do good . . .*
- E. **Psalm 37:3** – To those who were in trials, the instruction was **TRUST GOD AND DO GOOD.**
 - 1. Many people lay aside being good to others when they are having personal struggles.

2. It is easy to get focused on ourselves during trials and expect everyone else to be focused on us too.
 3. Part of our breakthrough is found in sowing seeds into the lives of others.
- F. **Luke 6:35** – Love your enemies and do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great.
1. **Job was not blessed with a double portion of what Satan had stolen from him until he prayed for his friends who had hurt him badly, judged, and criticized him.**
- G. Being good to others requires sacrifice on our part.
1. **Hebrews 13:16** – *Do not forget or neglect to do kindness and good, to be generous and distribute and contribute to the needy [of the church as embodiment and proof of fellowship], for such **sacrifices** are pleasing to God.*
- H. **James 4:17** (KJV) – *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*
- I. **Acts 10:38** – See how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, **Who went about doing good** and, in particular, curing all who were oppressed of the devil.
1. His **GIFT** of healing operated, and His **FRUIT** of goodness also operated.
 2. **Many want to operate in the Gifts of the Spirit, especially healing and miracles. But not all are willing to do what is necessary to also operate in the Fruit of the Spirit.**
 3. I believe our individual anointings will be released as we choose to operate in the Fruit of the Spirit: **LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, HUMILITY, and SELF-CONTROL.**

III. Good Works (The Positive And Negative Side)

- A. The Bible obviously tells us to do good works.
1. **Matthew 5:16** (KJV) – *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*
 2. **Hebrews 10:24** – Provoke one another to good works.
 3. **James 2:20** – Faith without works is dead.
- B. We should do good works in obedience to God and to show His character, but we are not to depend on them to earn us anything with God.
1. We are to beware of boasting about good works or even drawing attention to them.
 - a. **Matthew 6:1-3** – Jesus instructed His followers to be sure they did not do their good works to be seen of men.
 - b. They were told not to even let their left hand know what their right hand was doing. They were not to even spend a lot of time thinking about what they had done themselves.
 2. **Romans 12:8** instructs us that whatever we do, we are to do it with **simplicity**, zeal, and singleness of mind.

If we do a good deed, we just do it and not make a big deal out of it.
 3. We don't DESERVE something now that we have done a good deed. We could not have done it anyway had the Holy Spirit not been flowing through us.
- C. Our good works are insufficient to secure salvation.

1. **Matthew 7:22-23** – Jesus told some people who boasted of their good works, “Depart from Me; I never knew you.”
2. **Ephesians 2:8-9** (KJV) – *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*
3. **Titus 3:5** (KJV) – *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . .*

D. The difference in the **old covenant** and the **new covenant**

1. Pleasing God under the **old covenant** was dependent upon one keeping the Law – it was dependent upon what the people did and their sacrifices when they failed.
2. Pleasing God under the **new covenant** is based on believing – putting personal faith in Jesus Christ and what He did for us on the Cross.

John 6:28-29 – What must we do to please God? This is the work that God requires of you: that you **believe** in the One Whom He has sent.

IV. Learn To Discern Between Good And Evil.

- A. **Hebrews 5:14** – Have your senses and mental faculties been trained to discern between good and evil?
 1. Discerning of spirits is one of the Gifts of the Spirit. We may want it so we can discern the good and evil in others. But we should first be prepared to discern the good and evil in our own lives.
- B. **Isaiah 7:15** – We will really experience the blessings of God when we know how to refuse evil and choose good.
- C. A wise man asks for discernment before he asks for other things.

1. **I Kings 3:7-13** – Solomon asked for wisdom to discern between good and evil. God gave him what he asked, and He also gave him what he did not ask – riches and honor.

D. When we have discernment, we will often see that even things that look bad (in reality) are good.

1. Recently, I was told that three key people were leaving our organization. At first I thought, “This is horrible.” Then I realized that they did not have gifts we needed to take us into the next level of our ministry. God moved them on, I am sure, to better things for them. And it caused us to promote several people for those positions that we might not have even thought about had God not moved some people on.

E. When we have discernment, we will often see that even things that look good (in reality) are bad.

1. An unsaved man might look really good to a lonely Christian woman, but the woman with discernment looks into the future.
2. A young woman at the office with a short skirt might look good to a man who has a wife that has given birth to five children and doesn't look exactly like she did when they got married. But the discerning man remembers that God said to avoid the loose, evil woman; or it will ruin your life.

Proverbs 6:23-33 – These Scriptures clearly show what happens to a man when he falls into the trap of adultery.

3. A man working a second job so his family can have more “things” in life may seem like a good thing; but if it keeps him away from home so much that it ruins his marriage, it is not good.

F. Proverbs talks repeatedly about the need for discernment – that we should seek it like gold or silver.

V. Practical Ways We Can Operate In The Fruit Of Goodness

- A. **Philippians 4:8** instructs us to think on good things.
- B. **I Corinthians: Chapter 13** teaches us that love always believes the best.
 - 1. Love looks for the good and covers the weaknesses.
- C. **Proverbs 15:23** – *A man has joy in making an apt answer, and a word spoken at the right moment – how good it is!*
 - 1. One of the most practical things we can do with the fruit of goodness is say good things to people that build, edify, exhort, and encourage.
 - 2. Don't make people feel bad by what you say – make them feel good.
- D. When you give a gift, give a good one.
 - 1. Give good things to people. Often we only want to pass on our things that are worn out and of no value to us any longer.
 - 2. When you buy a gift, buy for others the quality of what you would buy for yourself. Don't buy cheap presents just because a person may never find out what you paid for their gift.
 - a. Getting a good deal or a sale is fine – but don't be cheap!
 - b. Give your best, whatever level that is for you.
- E. Do favors for people.
 - 1. A man at the airport was asking if anyone had quarters they could give for one-dollar bills. He needed them for the telephone. I had several quarters, but I go to a certain place once or twice a week where I park at a meter and need quarters. I gave him my quarters anyway, knowing that it would inconvenience me to have to remember to get more.

2. Pick someone up who needs a ride, even if it is out of your way.
 3. Baby-sit for a young mother who looks as if she needs a few hours alone.
 4. Go clean someone's house that has been sick.
- F. Watch for people that may be lonely and invite them to things that you are involved in. Being excluded is painful and being included is always a blessing.
- G. Talk to people who are being left out of the conversation.
- H. Pray for people.
- I. Make people feel that you understand them and their painful situation.
- J. In conclusion, let me say:

**Search for what is good and ON PURPOSE operate in it.
The fruit of goodness is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit.**

The Fruit Of Peace

Foundation Scriptures: Galatians 5:22-23 and Matthew 12:33

I. What The Bible Says About Walking In Peace

- A. **John 14:27** – Jesus said, “My peace I leave with you – stop allowing yourselves to be upset and disturbed.”
- B. **I Peter 3:4** – A peaceful spirit is not anxious or wrought up.
- C. **Philippians 4:6-7** – Be anxious for nothing. Pray and give thanks, and the **PEACE** that passes understanding shall keep you.
- D. **Matthew 6:25-34** – Don’t worry.
- E. **Psalms 37** – Don’t fret over wicked people that seem to be prospering now. Their time of defeat is coming; and in the end, you will inherit the earth.

II. Peace In Three Realms

- A. **I Peter 3:10-11** – Seek and pursue peace.
 - 1. Peace with God
 - a. Don’t be mad at God because you prayed and what you asked for did not happen.
 - b. Trust God in every situation and stay in peace.
 - c. **Psalms 31:15** – Let your times be in His hands.
 - d. Stop trying to figure out what God is doing in your life and trust Him.

- e. Realize God’s ways are not man’s ways.
2. Peace with yourself
- a. Don’t always take an inventory of what is wrong with you.
 - b. Get delivered once and for all from guilt and condemnation.
 - c. Stop comparing yourself with other people.
 - d. Stop putting your confidence in “outward” things: looks, married or not, kind of job, education, gifts and talents, friends, car, or possessions.
 - e. Stop determining your worth and value by how people have treated you.
 - f. Stop letting others run your life and learn to be led by the Holy Spirit.
 - g. Listen to what God says about you in His Word, not what others say about you.
 - h. Let go of past mistakes and press toward the future that God has for you.
 - i. **Romans 14:17** (KJV) – . . . *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*
3. Peace with your fellowman
- a. **II Timothy 2:24** – Get the strife out of your life.
 - b. Stop letting your emotions rule you.
 - c. Learn to keep quiet when God says to keep quiet.
 - d. Keep your opinions to yourself.

- e. Don't try to control others; it will only steal your peace. They will fight for their freedom the same as you would.
- f. Respect other people's rights of individuality and let them be who they are.
- g. Help your children become what God wants them to be, not what you want them to be.
- h. Forgive those who hurt you.
- i. Don't be easily offended.
- j. Concentrate on and magnify people's strengths; don't criticize them for their faults.
- k. Don't become angry each time you don't get your way. This is very hard on relationships.
- l. Learn that we are all different and develop an ability to adjust and adapt yourself to the different personality types in your life.
- m. Be a blessing to people, and your relationships will be more peaceful.
- n. **Hebrews 12:11** – Endure chastisement. It may not bring joy now; but afterwards it yields the PEACEABLE FRUIT of righteousness.

III. Enter God's Rest During Trials And Don't Lose Your Peace.

- A. **Exodus 14:14** – *The Lord will fight for you, and you shall **hold your peace** . . .*
- B. **Psalm 94:12-13** – God disciplines us by trials so we can finally **learn to stay calm in adversity.**

1. This is **HOW** we develop the fruit of peace in our lives.
 2. **We finally learn that being upset does not do any good. It hurts us and those around us, hurts our witness, and does not change the circumstances.**
- C. **II Chronicles 20:15-17** – The battle is not yours, but God’s.
1. Stay peaceful and worship God.
 2. If you do this, Satan won’t be able to handle you.
 3. **This is how to fight the devil and win!**
- D. **Ephesians 6:15** – Wear your shoes of peace.

IV. Sit Down!

- A. Have you ever told your children, **“I want it PEACEFUL in this house – stop running around and sit down!”**
1. We equate sitting down with a peaceful atmosphere.
 2. We sit down when we want to rest. Resting brings us peace.
- B. Jesus is seated.
1. **Ephesians 2:5-6** – He is seated, and we are seated in Him.
 2. **Ephesians 1:20**
 3. **Revelation 4:2-3, 9-10**
 4. **Revelation 5:1, 7**
 5. **Hebrews 1:3, 13**

- C. Seated/Seat (defined) – A foundation on which one rests, to fix firmly in place.
1. Remember that Jesus said we are to “abide in Him.” He is our place, and we should get in our place and stay there.
 2. Turn to the person next to you and say, **“GET IN YOUR PLACE AND STAY THERE.”**
- D. Rest (defined/Greek) – Not a rest from work but in work. Not inactivity but rest while being active. The harmonious working together of all your faculties because each has found its sphere of satisfaction “in Him.”
1. Our faculties would be mind, will, emotions, spirit, conscience, and intuition. When they all find their rest in God, we experience a deep **contentment, satisfaction, and peace.**
 2. To me, rest is a spiritual place (perhaps even the secret place mentioned in **Psalm 91:1**) where I sit down and cease struggling outside (in works of the flesh) and inside (being upset or frustrated).
 - a. Works of the flesh – My plan, not God’s; my energy, not God’s; my effort, trying to accomplish what I desire.
 - b. **I Peter 5:5** – God Himself will frustrate and defeat us until we humble ourselves and wait on Him.
 - c. **I Peter 5:6** – Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in **due time.**
 - d. **The humble get the help!**
- E. The Old Testament priests could not sit down in the Holy of Holies. This was representative of the works involved with the Law. This was representing the fact that they could not enter God’s rest.
1. Jesus, our High Priest, was ascended on High and sat down at the right hand of God, there to wait until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet.

2. His example is for us to follow!

F. **Hebrews 4:3, 10-11** teaches us how to enter the rest of God.

1. Through believing

Romans 15:13 – Joy and peace are found in believing.

2. Striving to enter rest

In other words, really try to walk in peace. Each time an opportunity for upset comes up, realize it is the devil **SETTING YOU UP TO GET YOU UPSET!**

The Fruit Of Humility

Foundation Scripture: **Matthew 12:33**

I. What Is Humility?

- A. It is the opposite of pride.
 - 1. **Proverbs 16:18** – *Pride goes before destruction . . .*
- B. I personally know people who have destruction everywhere you look; many of them have a real problem with pride.
 - 1. God blesses the humble.
 - 2. He lifts up (exalts) the humble. He promotes them.
Proverbs 15:33 – . . . *humility comes before honor.*
- C. Pride destroys us, and humility promotes and blesses us.
- D. Proverbs speaks often of how wisdom brings a long life, riches, favor, honor, etc.
 - 1. **James 3:13** – *Who is there among you who is wise and intelligent? Then let him by his noble living show forth his [good] works with the [unobtrusive] humility [which is the proper attribute] of true wisdom.*
- E. Pride is something God hates.
 - 1. **Proverbs 6:16-19** – Six things God hates, indeed, seven are an abomination to Him.
 - 2. The seventh thing God hates is he who sows discord among his brethren.

3. Discord/strife comes from judgment, which comes from pride.
 4. Abomination (defined) – Loathsome, detestable. Something dangerous, sinister, and repulsive to another.
- F. Humility (defined/Webster's) – Freedom from pride and arrogance. A modest estimation of your own worth. In theology, it means lowliness of mind. Having a consciousness of your own defects.
1. Humble (defined/Vine's) – Low-lying. To stay under.

For example: Under authority
 2. Humility also means meekness.
- G. Meek (defined/Vine's) – Gentle, mild. It is said of Christ's own disposition. It is to be the Christian adornment. It is the opposite of self-interest and self-assertiveness. It is an inwrought grace of the soul, and its exercises are chiefly toward God. It is the temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings as good; and, therefore, without disputing or resisting.
1. This meekness, being first of all before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men, out of a sense that these, with the insults and injuries which they may inflict, are permitted and employed (used) by Him for the chastening and purifying of His elect. It is associated with self-control.
 2. It's meaning is not readily expressed in English; for the terms meekness and mildness, commonly used, suggest weakness. The meekness commended to believers and manifested by the Lord is the fruit of power (meekness is not weakness; it is strength under control). It is the balance of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.
- H. Pride (defined/Webster's) – Inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, rank or elevation in office, which manifests itself in lofty airs, distance from others, and often contempt of others. Insolence, rude treatment of others. Elevation or a lifting up.

1. *The Amplified Bible* translates pride as “puffed up.”

I. **Humble means to lower yourself, and pride means to lift yourself up.**

1. **I Peter 5:6** – God wants us to **humble ourselves** under His mighty hand, **that He might exalt us in due time.**

II. **Some Of The Best Examples In The Bible**

A. **Daniel: Chapter 4** – Nebuchadnezzar was **full of pride** as a leader, and God had to seriously deal with him. He was **given an opportunity to repent and change**, but **he refused**. He took credit for what God did and lost his kingdom. He finally (**came to his right mind**), **humbled himself**, and **was re-established** in his kingdom.

1. At the end of his ordeal, he said this: *Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, Whose works are all faithful and right and Whose ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to abase and humble.*

2. We should learn from Nebuchadnezzar and not have to learn it for ourselves the hard way.

B. **I Samuel 15:12** – Saul set up a monument to himself.

1. **I Samuel 15:17** – . . . *When you were small in your own sight, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed you king over Israel?*

2. Saul not only took God’s glory as his own, but he also rebelled and disobeyed God’s instruction.

3. Saul was also afraid of losing the people, and he disobeyed God. When we are afraid of what people think, it is also pride.

a. We want them to think well of us to the point we allow them to control us in order to have their acceptance and applause.

- b. You might ask, “Isn’t the fear of man rooted in insecurity?” Yes, the insecurity causes us to be so **desperate to feel important** that we will do almost anything to get it.

- C. **Numbers: Chapter 22** – Balaam the prophet was tempted by Balak’s offer of riches, promotion, great honor, and a promise to submit to his leadership.
 - 1. In his pride, he went against what God told him. God used his donkey to speak to him and get him straightened out.
 - 2. God indeed knows how to humble those who have lifted themselves up.

- D. **Luke 22:31-34** – Peter was the only disciple that was reportedly recognized at the Crucifixion. It was arranged by God for Peter’s humbling.
 - 1. He had a big call on his life and was unusable until the pride was gone and humility and meekness were in its place.
 - 2. **Matthew 16:22** – Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. **Peter tried to CORRECT Jesus.**
 - 3. After Peter’s denial, he was a broken man. He saw himself for what he really was – a man with a call and a man with weaknesses. These weaknesses make us lean on God and prevent us from being **independent**, which is another indicator of pride.

- E. **Luke 22:24-27** – **Jesus’ humility**
 - 1. The disciples were arguing over which of them was the greatest, and Jesus told them He had come to serve.
 - 2. **John 13:1-17** – Jesus put on a servant’s towel and washed His disciple’s feet.

He told them to follow His example; and He told them that knowing it, they would be blessed if they did it.

3. **Philippians 2:4-8** – Jesus and His humility

III. Be Careful How You Think.

- A. **Romans 12:3** – Don't estimate and **think** more highly of yourself than you ought to.
 1. Your talents and abilities are a gift from God given by His grace.
- B. **I Corinthians 10:12** – Let anyone who **thinks** he stands take heed (be careful) lest he fall.
 1. Tell my pantyhose story
- C. **Galatians 6:3** – *For if any person **thinks** himself to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another's load] when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and cheats himself.*
- D. Are we supposed to think badly of ourselves?
 1. No!
 2. We are not to think about ourselves at all.
 3. This does not mean that you never do anything for yourself – it means keep a modest view of yourself and keep yourself excessively off your mind.
- E. **Mark 8:34** – Taking up your cross means to forget, ignore, disown, and lose sight of yourself and all your own interests.
- F. “WHAT ABOUT ME!” is a statement that can certainly be pride based.
- G. Be careful how you think about others.

1. Each time we judge, it is the fruit of pride.
2. Each time we criticize, it is the fruit of pride.
3. Each time we show disrespect, it is the fruit of pride.
4. **Our actions originate in our thoughts – therefore, be careful what you think!**

IV. Be Careful About Comparing Yourself With Others.

- A. **Galatians 6:4-5** – Be careful about boastful comparisons. Each person has faults.
1. Make a list of your faults and weaknesses. Look it over real good and then decide to be patient with other people.
- B. Avoid thinking like:
1. I'm thinner than you. You are really overweight – you should control yourself. (**Remember, be careful when you think you stand lest you fall.**)
 2. You're not very intelligent; it is hard for me to have a conversation with someone so far below my level.
 3. I'm more spiritual than they are.
 4. I have more money than you.
 5. I got the promotion; I must be better at my job than you.
 6. I prophesied; God is using me more than you.
- C. Comparing yourself with others can only make you feel **inferior** or **superior** – neither one is pleasing to God.

V. Humble People Are Empty People.

- A. **II Kings 4:1-4** – A woman stated that she was empty (had nothing of value in the house), and then God began to use her.
- B. Humble people are empty of their own works and plans.
 - 1. They know that only God’s ways and plans will work.
 - 2. **II Chronicles 20:12** – Lord, will You judge our enemies? We have no might to stand against them. We don’t know what to do; our eyes are upon You.
- C. Humble people are empty of themselves.
 - 1. Not selfish and self-centered
- D. Humble people are empty of judgmental, critical thoughts and attitudes.

VI. Characteristics Of The Proud

- A. **Independent** – Don’t think they need anyone – and sometimes that includes the Lord
- B. **Love titles** – I remember when my pastor gave all of his staff titles many years ago. Others had very impressive titles, and I was titled Coordinator of the Women’s Meeting.
 - 1. I felt belittled – others were: Associate Pastor, Head Usher, Head of Helps, Worship Leader, and Chief Finance Officer. I was only a Coordinator.
- C. **Rebellious** – Do the opposite of what they are told and refuse to submit to authority
- D. **Unteachable** – Can’t stand to be corrected or to look wrong
- E. **Impatient** – Have difficulty being kind to those who are slow or make mistakes

- . **Frequently give opinions** – They think they know something about everything.

- G. **Interrupt others frequently** – They have difficulty letting others talk and difficulty listening. They think what they have to say is much more important than what others have to say.

The Fruit Of Self-Control

Foundation Scriptures: Galatians 5:22-23 and Matthew 12:33

I. What Is Self-Control?

- A. Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit that we are to develop and choose to operate in.
 - 1. God gives us self-control so that we can discipline ourselves. Unless we discipline ourselves, we will never have the things we desire.
 - 2. Self-control helps us make ourselves do what we should do, so we can have what we say we want and be all we can be.
- B. **SELF-CONTROL is the art of controlling oneself!!!**
- C. It is virtually impossible to show forth the other eight Fruits of the Spirit unless we are exercising the fruit of self-control.
 - 1. How can we be kind to someone when we don't feel good ourselves unless we are exercising self-control?
 - 2. How can we remain peaceful in trials unless we exercise self-control?
 - 3. How can we exercise patience when we are frustrated unless we exercise self-control?
 - 4. How can we exercise humility when we are corrected unless we operate in self-control?
- D. Please notice I am using the term **exercise**.
 - 1. We all know very well how we **feel** about exercise.

2. We also know what exercise does for us if we persevere.
- E. Self-Control (defined) – To be strong in a thing, temperance, temperance in appetite or appetites (we have more appetites than food). Moderation, avoiding extremes, within reasonable limits, mild, or calm. Self-restraint in actions, speech, etc.

II. What Does The Bible Have To Say About Self-Control?

- A. Acts 24:25 – Paul teaches Felix about righteousness, self-control, and judgment.
1. Felix became alarmed. Perhaps the thoughts of living this kind of life overwhelmed him. Perhaps he felt that to obey what Paul was saying, he would never get to do anything he wanted to again.
 2. Felix responded by wanting to put it off until another time. He **PROCRASTINATED**.
- B. I Timothy 3:1-5 – Leaders must be self-controlled and temperate.
1. How can they rule the house of God if they cannot rule their own household?
 2. We should understand that leadership is a **BIG commitment**. We cannot just commit to be a leader – we must commit to live the lifestyle that must accompany leadership.
- C. II Peter 1:3-13 – Paul teaches on self-control in order to bear fruit and be blessed.
1. We are given a good life by His grace, not by our self-control.
 2. When a person has developed self-control, they must be careful not to get into pride and give their self-control the credit that belongs to God.
 3. Remember, we get the self-control from the Holy Spirit – our part is to exercise it.

D. **II Corinthians 5:14** – The love of Christ constrains (or controls) us.

1. I do many things for the love of God that I would not do for any other person or reason.
2. **Ephesians 5:22** – *Wives, be subject (be submissive and adapt yourselves) to your own husbands as [a service] to the Lord.*
3. **Colossians 3:23** – *Whatever may be your task, work at it heartily (from the soul), as [something done] for the Lord and not for men . . .*
4. **Colossians 3:18-22** – Wives, submit; husbands, love and be sympathetic; children, obey; fathers, don't be hard on your children; employees, obey your boss.

In each of these instructions, we are asked to do them for the Lord.

LIVE TO PLEASE GOD, NOT MAN!

E. **Job 32:17-20** – Job said he was full of words to the point of feeling like he was going to burst open; but he also said, “**the spirit within me constrains me.**”

F. Restraining ourselves is biblical.

1. **I Samuel 3:13** – Eli did not restrain his sons who were sinning, and a curse came on his house. His sons died in battle, the ark of God was captured, and Eli fell over dead.
 - a. When we don't discipline our children, it says something about our own discipline.
 - b. Personal discipline is required to discipline those under your authority.

- c. I often get very weary of correcting people under my authority. But I discipline myself to help them discipline themselves – so they can be valuable to me, the kingdom, and themselves.
 - 2. **Proverbs 1:15** – Restrain your foot from the path of sinners.
 - 3. **Proverbs 10:19** – . . . *he who restrains his lips is prudent.*
 - 4. **Proverbs 19:11** – *Good sense makes a man restrain his anger . . .*
- G. People today do not want any restraints – they don’t want to be under authority because they don’t want to be restrained from doing things their own way. They want no one else to restrain them, and neither will they restrain themselves. We can readily see the results in our society today.
- 1. **The world’s motto may be “If it feels good, do it!” – BUT IT DOES NOT WORK!!**

III. People Who Are Controllers Don’t Control Themselves.

- A. There are those who want to tell everyone else what to do. They control and manipulate everyone so as to get their way all the time.
- B. They are usually loud-mouthed individuals who have bad tempers, no patience, and are very selfish and self-centered.
- C. Sometimes a controller will be overly sweet and soft-spoken, but they are always trying to convince everyone that their way is right. Even though they are sweet about it, it is still control!
 - 1. It takes longer to realize what they are doing because they are so nice and seemingly well-mannered.
- D. I was once a controller. I was not enjoying my life; and I thought if I could just get everyone and everything to do what I wanted them to do, I could be happy.

1. My problem was lack of self-control. I wasn't allowing the Holy Spirit to control Joyce.

IV. How Does The Mind, Will, And Emotions Work With And Against The Fruit Of Self-Control?

A. Emotions almost always work against self-control. Rarely does one FEEL like controlling their passions.

1. I never FEEL like exercising.
2. I never FEEL like saying "no" to dessert.
3. I never FEEL like restraining myself when I am so full of words I think I'm going to burst.
4. Sometimes I don't FEEL like going to bed at night. I would rather stay up and watch another movie, but I have learned that I also **feel sick** if I don't get enough sleep.

B. The mind can and must be trained to work with self-control.

1. **Satan knows once you make your mind up that he cannot control you;** therefore, he fights you constantly on the battleground of the mind.
2. **Colossians 3:2** – Set your mind and keep it set on things that are above, not on the things on the earth.
 - a. Set your mind on God's will, not the way you feel.
 - b. **Ephesians 4:22-24** – The mind must be renewed (set and established in a new pattern) before we will experience victory.
3. **When you sense the devil trying to get a foothold, resist him quickly so he does not get a stronghold.**

C. Things I have recently set my mind about:

1. Losing a few pounds

- a. I have gone back and forth for two years putting on and taking off the same five to seven pounds. I have said, “Well maybe I will just accept weighing a little more because I get tired of never being able to eat what I want.” This, of course, is an exaggeration and one of the ways Satan tries to put thoughts into our minds that deceive us. **It is not that I can never eat what I want; it is just that I cannot always eat what I want.**
- b. I put on a suit that I wore very nicely a year ago, and it was way too tight; and I set my mind right then. **I am going to lose this weight, and I am going to keep it off – I don’t care how long it takes or how hard it is.**
- c. I have a new book entitled *Eat & Stay Thin*. It would not be good to start gaining weight myself and trying to sell everyone else my book.
- d. Just because I wrote a book does not mean I am not tempted, neither does it mean that I don’t have to practice what I preach.
- e. The second day I was on my new eating plan, I suddenly got so hungry I thought I would fall over. I immediately said out loud, “Flesh, you’re not getting anything else to eat until lunch. I don’t care how you feel or how loud you scream. I am going to lose this weight.”
- f. I could instantly feel the pressure let up and the feeling of starvation subsided.
- g. I had been using the excuse for too long that I was afraid to cut my eating back because of my health, my blood sugar, my travel schedule, etc. **WE NEVER RUN OUT OF EXCUSES!**
- h. **THE TRUTH IS, WE DON’T WANT TO SUFFER!!**

- i. Once you or I make up our minds – once we genuinely set our minds – the victory is imminent.
- j. Remember that setting your mind means for the long haul – not for one or two days.

2. Exercise

- a. I hurt my back about two years ago, and since that time I seem to hurt myself every time I try to exercise. However, I desperately need to exercise – not only just to keep muscle tone and a healthy cardiovascular system, but also just to feel good. I sit a lot in my studies, in planes, at airports, in meetings, etc. **I NEED TO EXERCISE!!**
- b. I finally set my mind – **I AM GOING TO EXERCISE!**
- c. I am hiring the chiropractor that worked on my back to personalize an exercise plan for me and work with me for a few weeks until I get established in it. He can develop things for me that will not hurt my back. My back got bad because I had no muscle strength in it or in my legs, which support the back.
- d. This will cost me some money and some time. To be honest, I absolutely hate floor exercises or equipment exercises. I love to walk, and I like to play golf; but more and more the last couple of years, both of them are becoming more difficult due to weather, schedules, etc.
- e. **I HAVE SET MY MIND – I DON'T CARE HOW I FEEL ABOUT IT – I AM GOING TO EXERCISE!!**

3. The remodeling of our house

- a. We needed new carpeting, new wallpaper, paint, and some drapes. I hated the thoughts of the mess. I wanted to move and just get a new house. Dave said, “Not for three years.” I knew if I waited three more years, the condition of the inside of the house would hurt the sale of it – **I NEEDED TO DO THIS!**

- b. I finally made plans, but I was dreading it!
 - c. Several times I almost changed my mind – redecorating around a house full of furniture is extremely messy.
 - d. I finally set my mind in this way – this won't take forever. Yes, the house will be a huge mess for about six weeks. But by March it will all be over, and the house will be beautiful. **I am not going to let it bother me. I know the mess will be there, but I am NOT going to let it bother me at all. I am going to look to the END RESULT, not the journey.**
- D. The **WILL** can work for or against self-control.
- 1. Once we learn the strength of our will – if we turn it in God's direction – we will walk in victory.
 - 2. Once we make our minds up and get determined, nothing can stop us.

V. What Did The Apostle Paul Say About His Own Personal Discipline?

- A. **I Corinthians 9:24-27** – He conducted himself temperately; so that after proclaiming the good news to others, he would not be found unfit, unapproved, and rejected as a **counterfeit**.
- B. **I Corinthians 6:12** – Paul said he would not allow anything to control him.
- 1. This requires “**regular**” and “**early**” restraint and resistance of things we know are not good for us.
- C. **The development of the fruit of self-control is vital to the kingdom of God and its advancement.**
- 1. **Romans 5:18-19** – By one man's disobedience (Adam), many were constituted sinners; and by one Man's act of righteousness (Jesus), many were acquitted and made righteous.

It is truly amazing what one person's right choice can accomplish!

The Fruit Of Joy

Foundation Scripture: Matthew 12:33

I. What Is Joy, And What Is It Based On?

- A. Joy (defined) – A shout, proclamation, singing, triumph, cheerful, cheerfulness, calm delight.
- B. Joy is not to be totally based on our circumstances. Happiness may be based on what is happening, but not joy.
 1. Joy is like a deep well inside us. It is a Fruit of the Spirit. It is not a fruit of our circumstances.
 2. While I was working on this message and putting it on the computer, I lost it and had to start over. That has NEVER happened before. I believe it was a test for me.
- C. Joy is based on **RIGHT** relationship with Jesus.
 1. **Psalm 16:11** – In His presence is fullness of joy.
 - a. This is why we feel joy when we are in a conference like this one. The presence of God is here, the Anointing is here, and it makes us feel joyful.
 - b. Even people who have serious problems feel joy in the right atmosphere.
 2. **Romans 14:17** (KJV) – . . . *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*
 - a. One cannot experience joy without peace and one cannot have peace without righteousness.
 - b. It is impossible to sense joy and be under condemnation.

3. **RIGHT** relationship with God requires facing our sins and true repentance.
 - a. **Admit** our sins, **repent**, and **receive** forgiveness.
 - b. **Psalm 32:1-7** – This is an excellent example of how a person feels before and after repentance.

- D. The (uncompromisingly) righteous have joy.
 1. **Psalm 32:11**
 2. **Psalm 33:1**
 3. **Psalm 5:12** – They are blessed. When we are blessed, it usually increases our joy.

- E. Many Christians have a relationship with God, but not a **RIGHT** relationship.

II. It Is God's Will That We Have And Express Joy.

- A. **John 10:10** – Jesus came that we might enjoy our lives. We cannot enjoy unless we have joy.
 1. **We might enjoy some segment of our lives, but we cannot enjoy every phase of life unless we let the fruit of joy mature.**

- B. Fruit must ripen on the vine to be really good fruit.
 1. **John 15:1-2, 4-5** – Jesus is the Vine; we cannot bear excellent fruit unless we dwell in Him.
 - a. Our fruit matures; it ripens as we stay on the Vine no matter what happens. Fruit picked too early is green and hard and tasteless.

- b. Have you ever bought an orange that “looked” beautiful; and when you cut into it, it was dry, tasteless, and full of seeds?
- C. We, as believers, are all full of seeds.
 - 1. The Fruit of the Spirit begins as a seed and must be developed.
- D. **John 15:11** – I have told you these things that your joy may be full.
 - 1. To abide in Him and bear excellent fruit
- E. **John 16:24** – Ask and keep on asking, and your joy will be full.
 - 1. Ask instead of struggling, trying to make things happen ourselves; and we will experience joy.
 - 2. **Hebrews 4:3, 10-11** – Those who have entered rest have finished with the weariness and pain of their own labors.

ARE YOU A LABORER OR A BELIEVER?

- F. **John 17:13** – Jesus wants His own joy filling our souls.
 - 1. That has to be a lot of joy and a quality of joy beyond our understanding.

III. The Joy Of The Lord Is Our Strength.

- A. **Nehemiah 8:10** – . . . *be not grieved and depressed, for the joy of the Lord is your strength and stronghold.*
 - 1. A stronghold is a place where you can be protected from enemies.
 - 2. **II Corinthians 10:4-5** – It speaks of mental strongholds in our minds. These are areas dominated by Satan – they are places where he hides himself and brings torture to our lives.

B. The Israelites had a certain number of days that they were allowed to mourn when someone died. After that, they were to get back to living.

1. **Deuteronomy 34:8** – *And the Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.*

a. God knew that excessive mourning would zap their strength.

b. When we are weak, the enemy likes to attack.

2. **Joshua 1:1-3** – God told Joshua to press on.

3. **I Samuel 16:1** – God asked Samuel how long he was going to mourn for Saul.

God had a new plan.

4. God does not get depressed – He simply gets a new direction.

I am sure He had many things planned for people that never mature because they will not cooperate with Him.

C. There is a time for mourning; but since it zaps your strength, don't let it last too long.

1. **Psalms 30:5, 11-12** – David admitted that he mourned, but he also said that God turned it into joy.

D. **Romans 15:13** – The God of hope will fill you with joy.

E. **Get practical – Depression and discouragement do not change your circumstances, but they do change you.**

1. Dave used to tell me when I was mad at him, “You might as well get happy now because this time next week you won't be mad at me any longer – so why waste the week.”

IV. We Cannot Have Joy Until We Fix Our Focus.

- A. **Hebrews 12:2** – Looking away from all that will distract unto Jesus, Who is the Author and Finisher of your faith.
 - 1. Satan does not want us to finish anything – he attacks in the hopes we will focus on his attack instead of our call, hopes, dreams, visions, etc.
- B. **I Timothy 4:12-16** – Even though Timothy was being attacked and dealing with many serious things, Paul told him to keep his focus on his calling.
- C. **II Corinthians 4:8-18** – Paul and his followers had many oppressing troubles; yet, he stated that they did not get discouraged because they considered and looked not to the problem (what was seen) but to God (who is unseen).
- D. **The best thing to do during trouble is whatever you would do if there were no trouble.**
 - 1. In this way, you don't permit the trouble to control you or your destiny.

V. How To Be Positive In A Negative World

- A. **Colossians 3:1-2** – Set your affections (mind) on things above, not on things upon the earth.
 - 1. SET your focus and be determined to keep it on the positive.
- B. **Being positive and speaking positively is what gives you EMOTIONAL and MENTAL victory while you are waiting for the circumstantial victory.**
- C. **Philippians 4:4-8** – Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice.
 - 1. Paul wrote this from prison.

2. The prison he was in was not like ours today. I was in it; and it was about the size of a bathroom with rock walls – cold, damp, and dark. One report actually stated it was where their sewage from the city went, and he was standing in sewage.
 3. Think on good things to stay joyful.
- D. God is not negative at all – not in any way. Negativity is not even part of His nature.
1. **John 16:33** – Jesus said during tribulation to CHEER UP!
 2. We can have fun with almost anything if we look for a way.
 3. We were laughing about David buying twenty-nine one-gallon cans of lantern oil in preparation for our family to have light in case we lose power in the year 2000.
 - a. The situation is very serious, but we don't have to lose our joy.
 - b. David has been assigned to get a lot of the things we will possibly need for the entire family; so when he goes, he is buying quantities that cause people to look at him strangely.
 - c. My friend and General Manager (Roxane) found thermal socks on sale and bought fifty pairs. She was getting them for our family and hers.
 - d. Our family talked about going to the grocery store together to get stocked up for this possible emergency; but we decided if we did, we would probably get thrown out for causing a disturbance. I know we would be on the floor laughing.
- E. **Acts 23:11** – In the shipwreck between prison sentences and beatings, the Lord appeared to Paul and said, “Take cheer (take courage) for as you have borne faithful witness concerning Me at Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

1. Cheer up Paul, you have more of the same coming in the next city!
- F. David said, “I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD.”
1. It is a decision. You can look at the problem, the possible disaster, the lack, the pain, the past, or the mistake you made; or you can **FIX YOUR FOCUS AND STAY JOYFUL.**

VI. Joy Is A Witness To Others.

- A. The Bible says that “we are the salt of the earth.”
1. My life won’t make anyone thirsty if I am sad and negative.
- B. **Make people jealous of your joy – maybe they will ask where you got it!**
- C. Dave’s disposition, always being joyful and happy no matter what was going on, was one of the main things that drew me into a relationship serious enough with the Lord to really get my life straightened out.
1. If Dave had been a sad, depressed, and discouraged Christian, I might not be here today.

