

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

GALATIANS LESSON 4 (Chapters 5-6)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Kevin Pendergrass.

Welcome to the Gospel of Christ. This is the last lesson in our study of the Book of Galatians. In this lesson we will be talking about the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:16 Paul said, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." He then went on to talk about the different types of "lusts of the flesh." He talks about the different kinds of sin in which people can participate, and how we as Christians are not to be a part of that. He also went on to talk about what the fruit of the Spirit is. In Galatians 5:22-23 he said, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." These are the things by which we are to live. These are the things we need to produce if we are living a faithful Christian life. Now let us talk about each of these fruits of the Spirit so that we can better understand what it means to have the fruit of the Spirit.

The first of these is love. Christians must love. If we are going to be faithful to God, one of the things we must have is love. As Christians, we must have love for other human beings. In James 2:8 James said, "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" We must love everybody. In Matthew 5:44 we see that we even must love our enemies. We are even to love those who do not love us (Mt. 5:46). Sometimes this can be very hard. In the context of Matthew 5, Jesus is talking about how even "the worst of the worst" love their own. Everyone loves somebody. But the difference between that and those who follow God is that Christians must love all. Christians cannot have a distinction that says, "I love this person because he fits my style, and I can see him becoming a good friend of mine. But I don't really like that person, so I won't try to share the Gospel with him. I don't really love him; he's my enemy, so I'll seek revenge and try to get back at him somehow." The Bible does not teach that. The Bible teaches that we must love our enemies. We must love everybody. It is easy to love those who love us. Suppose someone has done something for you in your life. Maybe a person took you out to dinner, cooked you a meal, or bought you something nice. It's easy to love those kinds of people, isn't it? When people do good things for us, it is easy to love them. It doesn't take much to like or love those kinds of people. But it is those who do bad to us, who say bad things about us, or who stab us in the back whom we also must love if we are going to be faithful.

You may be saying, "You just do not understand. I'm thinking of someone right now, and you do not understand what this person has done to me. Don't tell me I have to love that person." I may not understand. But **Christ** understands. In John 3:16 we read that Jesus went to the cross even for those who hated Him. Jesus went to the cross even for those who crucified Him. While you may be thinking of someone who has done so much harm and has done so much wrong to you, you still must love that person. But this does not mean that we simply accept such a person as he is. It does not mean that we allow that person do anything he wants to do. It does not mean that we accept that person regardless of his lifestyle. What it means is that if we truly love that person, we will look out for his interests.

Philippians 2:4 says that we are to look out not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others as well. We must truly love them. This is not the type of love found in the world. It is easy to have the type of love that says, "I love you and will accept you as you are." But that is not the type of biblical love that we must have for each other. We must have the type of love that looks out for the interests of others. And it must look out not just for their worldly interests, but also for their eternal interests. We must make sure that we are doing all we can to see to it that people make it to Heaven. In 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Paul said,

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

When we look at people, we are not to look out only for their interests here on Earth (physically speaking), but we are to make sure that we are looking out for their eternal interests—those things that we really can't see. We need to make sure that people make it to Heaven. I've heard people say, "If you really love a person who is a homosexual, you should just accept him as he is." The Bible does not teach that. The Bible teaches that if we really love that person, we will correct him, rebuke him, and show him from the Scriptures that he is lost and on the road to Hell, and that we do not want him to go there because we want him to go to Heaven. "Love" does not mean that we "accept someone as he is." If you know someone who is living any type of lifestyle that is contrary to the Bible, love does not mean that you accept him. It means that you do everything you can to make sure that that person goes to Heaven. This would include rebuking and correcting him. The Bible teaches that it is the love of Christ that causes us to evangelize and hold one another accountable (2 Cor. 5:14). We must go out, seek, and save those who are lost.

But not only must we love ourselves and one another. We also must love God. In John 14:15 Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." We must have a true love for God. In the same way that people have twisted the concept of love for one another, they have done the same thing regarding love for God. Just as people have said that loving a person means that we accept that person as he is, they also say that loving God simply means that you say you love Him. It means that you have a bumper sticker on the back of your car that says, "Honk if you love God" or "Honk if you love Jesus." That is not love. That is not what the Bible teaches about love. The world teaches that, but that is not what the Bible says. In 1 John 5:3 we see what love is when it comes to loving God. John said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." The love of God is that we do what He says. I've heard people ask, "Can't you just preach the love of God without having to preach so many commandments regarding the things that we should or should not do?" According to 1 John 5:3 it is impossible to preach the love of God, and what it means to love God, without preaching the commandments of God. The only way we can truly love God is by following Him and by keeping His commandments. In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Paul says that we can have everything, but if we do not have love, it will profit us nothing. We must have a true, biblical love—for ourselves and for each other (a love that does not accept sin, but that rebukes and corrects sin and that holds each other accountable because that is true love). We also must have a true love when it comes to God. We must make sure that we are following Him and keeping His commandments. In 1 John 3:18 John said, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." We cannot love just by saying with our mouths that we love. Rather, we must love in truth. We must have "love in deed." I saw a commercial once that that spoke of a man who had forgotten to bring flowers for his wife.

It said that he had forgotten to make dinner reservations on their anniversary. It then told about how he had bought her a gift, but it had not come in on time. So he looked at his wife and asked, "Wouldn't it be nice if it was the thought that really counted?" That's how it is with love for God. We can say, "I was going to do this for God" or "I was going to do that for God," or "I thought about doing this," but it is not about what we say or think, or what we **were** going to do. The Bible teaches that it is about what we **are** doing to ensure that we are keeping the commandments of God. That is how we have a true love for God. So, the first thing we see when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit is that we must have love.

The next thing that Paul discusses is joy. We must rejoice. This is not a temporary happiness, but is a joy that we can have at all times. Many times people are happy in certain situations. Put someone in a good situation, and he may be happy for a short period of time. But this is not what Paul is discussing. He is talking about a true joy—a joy that we can have even times of tribulation or persecution. In Matthew 5:12, Luke 6:23, and Acts 5:41 we see that when we are persecuted for doing the right thing, we can have joy even in that. When most people would ask, "How can you be happy during such times?," it is because we are faithful Christians and because we know that we will have Heaven as our eternal home. When it comes to rejoicing, a good time to rejoice is when one becomes a Christian (Acts 8:39). What a wonderful time it is when a person has his sins washed away in the watery grave of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). That is a great time to rejoice. We know that angels rejoice. When someone becomes a Christian, how wonderful it is that he has had his sins washed away. We need to understand that that is a time when we need to rejoice with that person, who is now a new Christian. In Romans 12:15 Paul wrote, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Sometimes we have the mentality that if a brother or sister in Christ does something good, or something great comes their way (such as getting a new job, or coming into some money, or doing good on some sort of schoolwork), we hesitate to rejoice with them. Sometimes I've seen situations in which something good happens to a brother or sister in Christ, and instead of rejoicing we get jealous. We say, "Well, I bet they didn't really earn it fairly anyway. I know they cheat a lot. I bet they didn't do it the way they should have." Instead of rejoicing with that person, we end up backbiting and gossiping. This is something that is missing in the Lord's church today. We need to rejoice when other people do good. Someone might say, "Well, that should have been me. I've been looking for a job for three years. I'm not getting paid a whole lot. That fellow has more than enough, yet he just found another job and is making more money." That should not be our mentality. Our mentality should be that we will rejoice with him. Paul went on to say that we are to weep with those who weep. This means that if someone else is sad, we should not be happy that they are sad. We should weep when bad things happen. In 1 Corinthians 13:6 we learn that we are to rejoice in truth. We are to have great joy in truth. Sometimes we rejoice more in worldly things than we do when truth is taught. We need to be people who rejoice in truth. We need to be happy that the truth is being taught and presented, especially when people obey the truth. Christians should be the happiest people on Earth. This is an excuse that some people offer for not becoming Christians. They say, "I work with so-and-so, and he's a Christian. But he seems to always be sad. He always has a frown on his face, and always complains about his day, his work, or his family. I'm much happier living this life. Why would I want a part of that?" That won't be an excuse on the Day of Judgment. That person will be lost just the same. But we need to make sure that we are showing others how happy we are and that we have great joy. We need to be happy. I've heard people say, "Preachers shouldn't be happy and should not have a good time because they are preaching the truth, and the truth is so important that they should never have a smile on their face. They should never joke or have a good

time.” The Bible teaches that we are to be happy and to have joy. We are not to be miserable. The Christian life—even though trials will come our way—is still the greatest life to live if we live it the way we’re supposed to. We must have joy.

We also must have peace. Only as faithful Christians can we have a true peace. In Luke 1:79 we see that the truth can guide our way into peace. Our hearts are guarded by the God of peace. In Philippians 4:7 Paul said, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” God is the God of all peace. Only through worshiping Him can we have true peace. The whole point of peace is that even though the Christian life will be a life of persecution (2 Tim. 3:12; Mt. 10:22) and will be a tough life from a worldly standpoint, the Christian can still have peace because he knows that he has Heaven as his eternal home. No matter what happens here on Earth, if we are faithful to God, then we will be with Him for eternity. That is one of the main themes in the Book of Revelation. John wanted the saints to know that there would be a lot of persecution and trouble coming their way, yet they still could have joy in such times. Think about Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16). They were worshiping God. They were singing songs and praying to God. Even in times of trial, they had peace with the Lord because they were living the faithful Christian life. We, too, can have that same kind of peace.

Another thing that Paul mentions in reference to the fruit of the Spirit is patience. We must have patience (or longsuffering). This does not mean that we have patience with sin in such a way that we continually allow people to live in sin without doing anything about it. Rather, it carries the idea that we are enduring. We must “keep on keeping on.” In Hebrews 6:15 we read, “And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.” We need to have patience and longsuffering. What does that mean? It means “to suffer long.” There will be times when we have to keep on enduring, no matter what. As a Gospel preacher, a man must endure. As Christians, we must endure. We must keep on keeping on. In 2 Timothy 4:2 we see that we are to “convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” It may be tough to continue doing that. Many preachers quit because it is such a tough fight. Many Christians quit being faithful because it is such a tough fight. They forget to have patience and “suffer long.” Hebrews 6:12 says, “Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Sometimes preachers will preach for a long time, or Christians will be faithful for a long time. Then they will say, “I’ve done my part. I’m done what I’m supposed to do. And I just can’t do this any more. I’m sick of it. I’m just not going to do it.” Or maybe they do it, but they don’t do it with the same kind of zeal they once had. Paul says that we must be longsuffering. We must keep on keeping on, no matter what comes our way. We must have true patience until the day we die so that we can be like Paul, who said that he had fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith.

Another fruit of the Spirit is kindness. We are to be kind to one another. This is the idea of being caring toward one another and looking out for each other’s needs. In Ephesians 4:32 we read, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.” We are to be kind to one another. When those who have sinned decide to repent (and repentance must come before forgiveness—Lk. 17:3-4), we are to forgive them. It is the kind, right thing to do. It is looking out for their needs. God was kind to us by sending His Son to die for us. What great love and kindness that was. He looked out for our needs and cared for us. We must do the same for others today if we are going to be faithful. Think of some people in the congregation where you worship. Perhaps their husbands or wives have died. Are you kind to them? Are you spending time with them? Are you helping them by doing what you can? We must have kindness toward one another. This is not a worldly type of kindness, but is a true, biblical kindness that makes us pleasing to God.

Goodness also is a fruit of the Spirit. This simply means that we must do good. We must practice what is right (Lk. 6:9; 1 Tim. 6:18). We must continue to practice what is right and what is good. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul said, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." We must do good to ourselves. We must do good to our family. We must practice in our everyday lives and businesses what is good. We must be honest, and must not deal with people in an unfair way. We must do good to God. We must practice good works (Jas. 2:24-26). We must do works of obedience. As faithful Christians, we must continue to do good, and we must always practice that which is right.

Another fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. We are to have faithfulness. This refers to trust, and something that is genuine. In Acts 6:5,8 and Acts 11:24 we read of men who were full of faith. They had a genuine trust in the Lord. In Hebrews 11 we see that faith is active and obedient. Being faithful is not just saying, "I believe in God." It is acting upon that belief and doing something with that belief. If we have faith without works, our faith is dead (Jas. 2:26). To be faithful, we must be active. We must do the things that God commands and live a faithful life. In James 4:4 we read that we must be faithful to God through our relationship with Him. We cannot be faithful to the world and faithful to God at the same time. We must be faithful to our relationship to God. There is a difference between "thinking" that we are faithful and "knowing" that we are faithful. In 1 John 5:13 we learn that we can know that we have eternal life. We know this if we do what Matthew 7:21 says—"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." We must be faithful to God, according to Galatians. We must have the fruit of the Spirit, which includes faithfulness.

It also includes meekness and gentleness. In Proverbs 16:18 we read, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Why are there so many people in the world today who are not willing to do what the Bible says? It is because of pride. Why are there so many people who once were faithful Christians, but who fell away? They know what they need to do. Why are they not coming back? Many times it is because of pride. People do not want to change because they are too prideful. They have the mentality that says, "I will not change, no matter what." I was talking to a man one time. He knew he had been in sin. He said, "I'm not going to change, no matter what. I know I'm wrong, but I'm not going to change. I'm not going to change. I'm not going to change." He said it three times. How prideful that is. The Bible says that we are to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord (Jas. 4:10). Then He will lift us up.

Of course, we can be proud that we are Christians. We do not have to go around all the time with our heads hung low, thinking that we cannot boast in our Christianity. In Romans 1:16 Paul said that we are not to be ashamed. In Romans 3:27 and 2 Corinthians 1:12-14 we see that we can boast in the Gospel. We can be proud—because we are not being proud in ourselves. We are being proud in the sense that we understand that without God, we cannot have salvation. Without God, we cannot truly enjoy life in Heaven for eternity. We can boast, but we must boast in the right thing. And we must not boast beyond our measure. In 2 Corinthians 10:13 Paul said, "We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you." We can boast in one another's faithfulness, understanding that if you are doing the right thing, we can be proud of you for that because it encourages others to do the right thing. Boasting in and of itself is not wrong. It depends on what we boast in. It has to do with the thing in which we place our confidence. We must make sure that we do not boast beyond the limits that we have been given.

The last thing that Paul says is that we must develop self-control. We need to have self-control. People today try to justify just about every sin that they commit. They say, "Well, I just can't help it." There are pills today for just about everything. The truth is that we need to get back to self-control. We learn from 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 that we can and must have self-control. Anyone can have self-control, but it is a choice. We must choose self-control.

The same thing is true regarding salvation. In order to have the true fruit of the Spirit, we must understand that we have to obey the Gospel before we can have the fruit of the Spirit. We must do what the Word of God says. We must be baptized in water (1 Pet. 3: 21) for the forgiveness of our sins before we can have the true fruit of the Spirit. If you have yet to obey the truth, we pray today that you will obey the Gospel of Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR GALATIANS LESSON 4 (CHAPTERS 5-6)

1. According to the material discussed in this lesson, what is the main topic being addressed in Galatians 5?
2. What, according to Galatians 5:22-23, is the fruit of the Spirit?
3. According to James 2:8, what is the “royal law”?
4. In Matthew 5:46, what did Jesus urge us to do?
5. What does Philippians 2:4 tell us **not** to do, and **to** do?
6. How would you summarize Paul’s message in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18?
7. What, according to 2 Corinthians 5:14, should be a compelling factor in every Christian’s daily life?
8. What did Jesus say in John 14:15?
9. How, according to 1 John 5:3, do we show God that we love Him?
10. How, according to 1 John 3:18, are Christians to love?
11. In Romans 12:15, what did the apostle Paul urge us to do?
12. According to 1 Corinthians 13:6, in what should every Christian rejoice?
13. According to Philippians 4:7, what is one blessing that Christians have, but non-Christians do not?
14. What important message for Christians is found in 2 Timothy 3:12?
15. In Hebrews 6:15 we find an interesting commentary on the patriarch Abraham. What is the important message of this passage?
16. What important point is made in Hebrews 6:12 concerning Christians?
17. What does Ephesians 4:32 admonish us to do?
18. What does Luke 17:3-4 tell us about forgiveness?
19. How does 1 Timothy 6:18 describe people who would be faithful Christians?
20. According to Ephesians 2:10, why were we created?
21. What important point did Jesus make in Matthew 7:21?
22. What important message is found in James 4:10 for Christians?