

10 Fruitbearing

At the beginning of this course we talked about Jesus' analogy of the gardener, the vine, and the branches. In this analogy, God the Father is the gardener, Jesus is the vine, and we who abide in Him are the branches. The branch receives its source of life from the vine as long as it is attached to the vine. The branch must draw from this life-giving source in order to grow and bear fruit. When necessary, the gardener prunes the branch so that it will bear much fruit. The branch that does not remain attached to the vine is cut off and burned.

God's plan for you and me is that we be fruitbearing Christians. He wants us to manifest the characteristics of Christ in our daily lives, just as a branch manifests the characteristics of the vine to which it is attached. He makes this possible by giving us His Holy Spirit, who dwells within us and produces in us the characteristics which are called the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23.

In this final lesson we will review the ninefold fruit of the Spirit and look at the relationship between the Old Testament law, Christian liberty, and the fruit of the Spirit. There are laws against many things, but there is no law against fruitbearing, or Christlikeness. Let the Holy Spirit work in your life, so that it will be like a healthy branch, bearing much fruit.

lesson outline

The Law and Christian Liberty

The Fruit in Review

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Identify phrases which express the meaning of freedom from bondage.
2. State the two aspects of the law of liberty, and explain what makes them possible.
3. Evaluate evidences of the fruit of the Spirit in your life and needs you have for Christian growth.

learning activities

1. As background for this lesson, read all six chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians.
2. Work through the lesson development in the usual manner. Read all Scripture texts indicated, and answer all study questions. Your personal application of the basic principles of this course is the major emphasis of this lesson.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers.
4. Review Lessons 7 through 10, then answer the questions in Unit Student Report 3. Follow the instructions given in the unit student report.

key words

atonement	fostered	moral conduct
atoning	justified	progressive
bondage	legalism	unrestrained
consequences	license	yield

lesson development

THE LAW AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Freedom From Bondage

Objective 1. *Identify phrases which express the meaning of freedom from bondage.*

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22–23)

Have you ever stopped to consider why we have laws? What would your community be like if there were no laws? If we had no laws, everyone would be doing as he pleased. There may be no problem with this, as long as the choices of one person did not conflict with the choices of another. But would every citizen conduct himself in such a way that there would never be a conflict? I think not!

The apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Galatian church because of some false teaching in the church. Some people were teaching that after a person had received salvation he must still follow all of the rules and regulations of the Old Testament law. Paul wanted to correct this teaching. He wanted the Galatians to know that their salvation was based on faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and it was the free gift of God's grace. They could not receive salvation by works, and they did not have to do certain works in order to keep it.

The Old Testament law could not prevent people from doing what was wrong, but it did let them know what was wrong. The decision to obey or disobey the Law was the responsibility of each person who received the Law. If someone chose to disobey the Law, he could expect certain consequences.

If you have read the story of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, you know that God's chosen people disobeyed the Law many times, and they suffered because of their

disobedience. God knew that humans of their own efforts could not obey every part of the Law. That is why He provided for them to make sacrifices as an atonement for sin. But when Jesus offered Himself as our atonement once and for all, He fulfilled the Law. The Old Testament law was the Old Covenant; Christ's sacrifice for us made way for a New Covenant between God and man. That New Covenant provides forgiveness from sin by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a free gift. No longer are men under bondage to the old Law. Through Jesus Christ, we are set free from the Law. (See Jeremiah 31:31–34.)

What does this mean? Does it mean that because men are free from the Law, they can live as they please? Certainly not! It means that the Spirit of Christ now dwells within them, and their new, spiritual nature is in control. This new nature is not concerned with satisfying evil or selfish desires, but it is concerned with pleasing God. The new nature makes it possible for the believer to obey God and live pleasing to Him.

In all six chapters of the epistle to the Galatians, Paul's emphasis is that we are justified before God by our faith in Jesus Christ, apart from the works of the Law. The Holy Spirit dwelling within us is the principle of the new life in Christ.

F. F. Bruce said, "Freedom from the law does not by any means do away with the obligations of moral conduct. But henceforth the obligations of moral conduct are fostered [promoted, encouraged] not by the dictates of the law, but by the operation of the free Spirit . . . The freedom of the Spirit was the antidote alike to legal bondage and unrestrained license" (1982, 239–240).

Let us summarize what this means:

1. The person who is saved by faith in Jesus Christ is no longer under bondage to the Old Testament law.
2. At the time of salvation, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, and he receives a new spiritual nature.
3. As long as he yields control of his life to the Holy Spirit, the believer lives an overcoming Christian life.

4. The believer's conduct is now determined by the degree to which he yields to the Spirit's control. He is no longer in bondage to the Law or to his old nature and its desires.

Application

1 What is the principle of the new life in Christ?

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2 What is the answer to the problems of bondage to the Law and bondage to sinful desires?

.....

3 Which phrases express the meaning of freedom from bondage to the Law or to sin?

- a)** Life in the Spirit
- b)** Freedom to do as I please
- c)** Freedom from obligations of moral conduct
- d)** Salvation by faith in Christ
- e)** Satisfying personal desires
- f)** Operation of the Spirit within me
- g)** Obedience to every part of the Law
- h)** Manifesting the fruit of the Spirit



The Law of Liberty

Objective 2. *State the two aspects of the law of liberty, and explain what makes them possible.*

Galatians 5 sums up Paul's teaching on the subject of law and liberty. In verse 1 Paul again warns the Galatians against going into bondage to the Law. He compares the observation of the rituals and ordinances of the Law to a yoke of bondage. If one goes back to keeping the Law, he is under obligation to keep the whole contract. If one part of the Law is broken, it is the same as all parts being broken. But Christians, by faith in Christ, are under the New Covenant, and so we are free from any observance of the ceremonial rites and the special days related to the period of the Law. The New Covenant, made possible by Christ's blood, is one

of freedom, righteousness, and life. The gospel is called the “law of Christ” in Galatians 6:2, but it is a law of liberty to serve God and not to sin. Because together with our spiritual liberty comes the responsibility to live right—and we are able to live right only by the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

The Galatian Christians were trying to please the Law and Christ at the same time. That is what Paul is talking about in this Epistle. In another letter to the church in Rome, he speaks on the same subject:

So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. (Romans 7:4–6)

So step by step, Paul instructs the Galatians concerning life in the Spirit. He mentions the basic truth of being born of the Spirit (4:29); then he talks about living by the Spirit (5:16); and finally, he exhorts the Galatians concerning walking by the Spirit (5:25).

The climax of this Epistle comes when Paul contrasts the life in the flesh (Galatians 5:19–21) and life in the Spirit. Find the two lists you made in Lesson 1 and compare them again. Paul’s teaching is not that there is a continuous war within us, which makes us helpless to live right. He is simply describing the results of living in legalism, seeking perfection through self-efforts. Those who belong to Christ, Paul tells us, have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Their lives are now directed by the Holy Spirit: they are born of the Spirit, they live by the Spirit, and they walk in the Spirit. This is the law of liberty.

Application

4 The law of liberty means that by the power of the Holy Spirit we have the liberty to and not to

5 Explain the process which makes the law of liberty possible.
.....
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THE FRUIT IN REVIEW

Objective 3. *Evaluate evidences of the fruit of the Spirit in your life and needs you have for Christian growth.*

A Progressive Development

Merrill C. Tenney, in his commentary on the epistle to the Galatians, said, “The obvious purpose of this epistle was not to prepare the Galatians for passing an examination, but to prepare them for living a life” (1979, 208). We might say the same thing about this course on the fruit of the Spirit. The most important purpose of this course is to create in you a desire for the fruit of the Spirit to be abundant in your life. Remember that the fruit of the Spirit is the progressive development of the life and nature of Jesus Christ in the believer.

Our goal is to be like Jesus. C. S. Lewis says, “Our model is the Jesus, not only of Calvary, but of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions. For this . . . is the Divine life operating under human conditions” (1976, 11).

It is sometimes easier to bow at the altar and make a commitment to follow Jesus than it is to put that commitment into practice. Is the character of Christ in evidence when unreasonable demands are made upon you, when people oppose you, and when trials overtake you? Do you manifest a Christlike life in the midst of

confusion and interruptions? We have a powerful Helper with us in every situation. As we walk in the Spirit, He will help us to live as Jesus lived.

Principle Themes

Let us review the ninefold fruit of the Spirit and consider once again the principle themes of this study.

1. *Love*. The first dimension of the fruit of the Spirit is *agape*—a selfless, deep, and constant love which finds its greatest expression in the love of God and in the love that Jesus manifested on the Cross. It is the love described in 1 Corinthians 13 as patient, kind, and unselfish. It is not envious, boastful, proud, or rude, nor is it easily angered. It rejoices with the truth. This love keeps no record of wrongs and does not delight in evil. Can you see how many of the definitions we have given for other dimensions of spiritual fruit also apply to love? It is the characteristic of Christ from which flows all of the other characteristics.

2. *Joy*. This characteristic is a divine grace which results in an attitude of cheerfulness, calm delight, and great gladness based on life in the Spirit. It is a result of faith in God and is not affected by the circumstances of life. This joy comes from salvation, from an awareness of God's power to act in our behalf, and from the blessings of a daily walk with God and communion with Him through His Word and in prayer. There is a strong bond between suffering and joy for the Christian. The joy of the Lord gives us strength in difficult times.

3. *Peace*. The peace that the Holy Spirit gives includes tranquility, quietness, unity, harmony, security, trust, shelter, and refuge. It is a sense of spiritual well-being, of the knowledge that we are right with God, and it is the assurance that we can trust God to supply all our needs. We experience peace with God at the time of salvation. The peace of God is an inner peace which replaces anger, guilt, and worry. The Bible exhorts us to do our best to live at peace with everyone, to seek peace and pursue it.

4. *Patience*. This dimension of the fruit of the Spirit speaks of being long-suffering, having a disposition that is even-tempered,

having self-restraint. Patience is perseverance, or endurance, which does not surrender to difficult circumstances or fall apart under sustained trials. It is manifested in the attributes of God as described in Exodus 34:6—He is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, faithful, He maintains His love for us, and He is forgiving. These are all descriptions of one who is patient.

5. *Kindness*. The person who manifests kindness has a gracious disposition which encompasses tenderness, compassion, and sweetness, flowing from inner purity. He has a willingness to do that which is good. Kindness is closely associated with goodness, which is the acting out of the inner quality of kindness.

6. *Goodness*. This characteristic is the practice or expression of kindness—doing that which is good. It includes service or ministry to others, and generosity. Goodness can be both kind and strong, and can even include rebuke and discipline for the purpose of leading to repentance and forgiveness.

7. *Faithfulness*. This is the virtue of a person who has faith, and it is related to trustworthiness, integrity, fidelity, loyalty, honesty, and sincerity. Faithfulness is based on our trust in Jesus to save us, and our absolute surrender to Him as our Lord and Savior. The faithful person is reliable—he can be counted on to do what is right, and to keep his promises. He is faithful in stewardship—He can be entrusted to do God's work according to His will. He recognizes that his time, talents, and possessions all belong to the Lord, and he is reliable in his management of these things.

8. *Gentleness*. The three main ideas of gentleness are 1) submission to the will of God; 2) teachableness; and 3) being considerate. Gentleness includes control of anger—knowing when to be angry and when not to be angry. The analogies of Christ as the Lamb of God, of the Holy Spirit as a dove, and of believers as sheep illustrate the significance of the characteristics which indicate gentleness in the Christian life.

9. *Self-control*. The final dimension of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control, or mastery over self. It is illustrated by the strict training and discipline of athletes who are striving to win the prize. Self-control involves mastery of sensual passions, and moderation

in daily habits, as opposed to over-indulgence. The Christian is exhorted to live a balanced life, not given to excesses. Specific areas of self-control are control of the tongue, of sexual desire, of the use of time, control of the mind, and temperance in such things as eating and drinking. Self-control is made possible by the new nature within us, which yields control of our lives to the Holy Spirit. Self-control is essential to living holy. It is, in effect, Spirit control, or a voluntary yielding of ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit.

Application

6 Match the list of the fruit of the Spirit (right) to the brief description of each (left).

- | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------|
| ... a | The practice or expression of kindness, including service to others and generosity | 1) Love |
| ... b | Involves submission, teachableness, and consideration | 2) Joy |
| ... c | An attitude of great gladness which is based on faith in God rather than circumstances | 3) Peace |
| ... d | Involves strict training, temperance, moderation, and balance | 4) Patience |
| ... e | Tranquility, unity, harmony, security | 5) Kindness |
| ... f | The characteristic which encompasses all of the others and is demonstrated by Christ's death on the cross | 6) Goodness |
| ... g | An inner quality of tenderness, compassion, and sweetness | 7) Faithfulness |
| ... h | Trustworthiness, honesty, sincerity, good stewardship | 8) Gentleness |
| ... i | Perseverance, quality of being longsuffering and even-tempered | 9) Self-control |

7 In your notebook, practice writing Galatians 5:22–23 until you can write it from memory. Then quote it aloud to someone.

8 Copy the following headings in your notebook, and take time for a thorough self-evaluation of evidences of the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Think of ways that you can practice the things you have learned in these lessons. Consider needs you may have in regard to the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

The Fruit of the Spirit			
Characteristic	Brief description of characteristic	Evidence of this characteristic in me	Needs that I have for growth



After you have completed the chart, commit yourself to earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit will produce more abundantly in you these characteristics of Christ. Remember that the fruit of the Spirit is a progressive, day-by-day development of Christlikeness in you as you grow in grace and obey the prompting of the Spirit. You may fail many times, but the Holy Spirit will help you to become a branch that bears much fruit as you continue to give Him control of your life.

We conclude with this reminder from the apostle Paul:

So I say, live by the Spirit. . . . Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. . . . The one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life (Galatians 5:16, 25; 6:8).

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. If the statement is TRUE, write T in the blank space. If it is FALSE, write F.

- ... **1** In speaking of spiritual fruit, we refer to one fruit with nine dimensions or aspects.
- ... **2** The terms fruit of the Spirit and characteristics of Christ refer to the same concepts.
- ... **3** Christian liberty means that the Christian can disregard the commandments of God and do as he pleases.
- ... **4** Salvation is received by faith in Christ, and is maintained by good works.
- ... **5** The purpose of the Old Testament law was to make it impossible for people to please God.
- ... **6** The guiding principle of the new life in Christ is the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.
- ... **7** Freedom of the Spirit provides the answer both to the bondage of law and the bondage of sinful desires.
- ... **8** The New Covenant is a law of liberty to serve God and not to sin.
- ... **9** Christians are still required to observe certain rites and ceremonies of the Old Testament law.
- ... **10** As long as one surrenders the control of his life to the Holy Spirit, he gives evidence to the fact that he serves God by choice and not by law.
- ... **11** The fruit of the Spirit is the progressive development of the life and nature of Jesus Christ in the believer.
- ... **12** The fruit of the Spirit is fully produced in every believer at the moment of salvation, when he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

answers to study questions

5 To be born of the Spirit, to live by the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit.

1 The Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

- 6** **a** 6) Goodness
b 8) Gentleness
c 2) Joy
d 9) Self-control
e 3) Peace
f 1) Love
g 5) Kindness
h 7) Faithfulness
i 4) Patience

2 Freedom of the Spirit who dwells within us.

7 Your answer.

3 **a)** Life in the Spirit. **d)** Salvation by faith in Christ. **f)** Operation of the Spirit within me. **h)** Manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

8 Your answer.

4 serve God, sin.

Be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 3 and return Answer Sheet 3 to your GU instructor.

