



The Good News

January 21st, 2018

Volume 18, Issue 3

The Fruit of the Spirit

By Michael McCleary

As students of God's Word, we often find great comfort in knowing that His words are just as applicable today as they were when they were written. We read in the New Testament regarding Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and we have hope that what we read is accurate so that we may one day be resurrected as He was. We also understand that to obtain that resurrection, we must live in accordance with what Christ has commanded in the Scriptures. Living lives of faithful obedience and living according to the godly character described in the Scriptures is essential if we hope to attain to the resurrection unto salvation. However, being a Christian is not just about adhering to certain rules or commands...it's also about the attitude and motivation behind obeying the Father. We see in the example of Christ that His entire focus was on fulfilling His Father's will, but He was motivated out of love for the Father and love for the sinners of the world. We find that this same principle is taught to us in the Gospel, specifically in Galatians 5. Let us consider this context and glean from it some lessons to help us in our lives.

Galatians 5:1-15 – Just because we have been “set free” does not mean we are free to do what we will with our lives – There are many beliefs in this world regarding salvation, and several of them include the concept that once a person is in a saved condition they can never fall out of that condition. Yet, as Paul writes to the Galatians, he specifically addresses this concept in **5:4** by stating that the Galatian Christians had become “estranged from Christ”. The specific term in the Greek here for “estranged” means “rendered to no effect”. In other words, after these individuals had come to a

saved state they were able, by sinning and following after the Old Law, to “estrangle” themselves from Christ. Paul goes on to say in **5:13-14** that while the brethren were “called to liberty”, they were not to use “liberty as an opportunity for the flesh.” In other words, there are still standards of conduct and character that must be adhered to after coming to a saved condition.

Galatians 5:16-18 – If we focus on the spiritual aspects of our lives, we will be less likely to commit sin – Paul says very clearly, “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Walking in the Spirit can be defined by **Rom. 8:13** when Paul writes “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Therefore, if we will focus on being godly and obedient people we will naturally fill our minds with obeying God and not the lusts of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-26 – The fruit of the Spirit can only be manifested in the life of one who lives according to the Spirit – Notice that the context of this entire passage is about characteristics, born naturally from a holy and obedient heart, that have a direct impact upon another person. In pointing this out Paul not only helps us to understand that all our actions can have an influential impact upon other people, but that we should be obedient because of being motivated to please God in all things, having a character that naturally bears the fruit of the Spirit for the benefit of all.

Let us always seek to be pleasing to God, motivated by a pure and true heart, and producing the fruit of the Spirit.