

GOD'S REVIVALIST

January / February 2019

and Bible Advocate

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness,
faith, meekness, temperance: against such
there is no law. —Galatians 5:22-23

FRUIT OF



THE SPIRIT

...a yearlong emphasis





Harry and Kenny Farmer

about this issue

EARLY RECOLLECTION

I still have a distinct memory of that day. I was probably about five or six years of age. I was making my way up the stairs to the second floor apartment at 1817 Young Street, which was home for the Farmers while Elmer and Betty were completing their education at GBS. But a strange thing happened. As I reached the top and turned left around the banister, I paused at the door. A thought came to my mind: "If I trip over the threshold and fall, Mother will rush to me, pick me up, and hug me." For some reason I decided against this ploy—a bid for an expression of love and comfort from my mother. However, I did give it serious consideration.

Why did I do that? It definitely wasn't because my parents needed some circumstantial prodding before they would display love. Their love for their children was natural and effortlessly given. So, it wasn't because of them. The reason was in little Kenny. *He* needed love.

Years later while completing graduate studies, I read materials on early childhood recollections. A suggestion proposed by the authors was this: an adult's personality could be understood by examining several of his or her earliest recollections. Their rationale was that if an early childhood event made enough of an impression to last into adulthood, it had become an important driver in the adult's motivations. Yes, little Kenny needed love...and so did big Kenny.

The bottom line is this—we all need love. God made us this way. We all need the love of family and friends. We also need God's love; and, I might add, we don't have to stumble over His threshold to get it!

We also have a need to *express* love. God lets us know that we are to love Him with all our heart and mind and soul. That is primary. God follows up by informing us that we are to love our neighbor; and for God, "neighbor" covers just about everybody—spouse, children, family, friends, and even enemies. It includes people nearby and those far away; those we are close to, and those we don't really know. Love is God's primary requirement of us.

So this need is not just an idiosyncrasy of little Kenny. It is how God made us. We all need to be loved and to show love—even though it may not be reciprocated. When you "run out of love," ask God to continue loving through you! —KF ■

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the president's page



KNOWN BY THEIR FRUIT

by Rodney Loper, President

When Paul last talked with the Ephesian elders, he gave them a warning: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). He warned Timothy of a similar danger: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Notice the two dangers identified in these passages. The first danger is that there will be people who come into our midst who look like sheep but are actually wolves. The second danger is that our selfish ways—looking for a church, pastor, or set of beliefs that “appeals to us”—encourages false teachers.

As Christ’s disciples, we must discern the true from the false. Let me propose two actions that Scripture suggests for us in this regard. First, we are to practice vigilance—“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves” (Matt. 7:15). Second, we are to sharpen our minds and maintain sensitivity in our hearts to recognize false teachers—“you will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16). Let’s look at them in this order.

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

This implies constantly being on spiritual guard. It suggests a life-focus or attentiveness that causes the Christian to be sensitive to false teaching. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). In other words, we must discipline our minds, sharpen our intensity, and strengthen our hearts to be attentive to the Word of God. This is the same idea conveyed by the translation of the word “beware.” Lazy minds and dull hearts lack what is needed to

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202, or emailed to revivalist@gbs.edu. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of God's Revivalist nor those of the administration of God's Bible School. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.

The November issue was outstanding! Larry Smith's writing of Sergeant Alvin York was exceptional and revealed a depth of spirituality that the encyclopedias do not cover. My father-in-law served in WWI under Sergeant York in France. Harry Plank's story was also touching! "The People called Methodists" was great, too.... Keep up the good work.

ELTON L. MOOSE, PhD
Springfield, OH

Excellent job in adapting "Hope of a Happy Reunion" from my father's [Harry Plank's] sermon. We are all very happy with it. Thanks!

JON PLANK
Mifflinburg, PA

I'd like to thank you for the Veterans Day issue of *God's Revivalist*. The layout was great and the editor helped me find the right words. Again, from myself, family, and those who have served, many thanks.

DAVID MILLER
Cincinnati, OH

Just a short note to express appreciation for the focus of the November issue.... Very nice publication.

MELVIN ADAMS
Bedford, VA

The November issue was nicely done.

DAVID DeSTEFANO
Lewisburg, PA

"beware of the false prophets." Those who fail to do so often fall prey to "having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4:3), resulting in their listening to teachers who suit their passions.

Was this an overreaction by Jesus? Or was this possibly just a first century problem that we have been able to tame by the multiplied resources we have today? No and no! The use of the present tense verb in this command confirms that vigilance must be used by every generation in order to stand firm against the devices of false prophets. We are "to watch" and "keep on watching." If we are going to have a heart and mind to discern false teaching, we must keep as close to Christ as possible.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW THEM?

"Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16). The word used for "shall know" implies an "exact knowledge" or "full knowledge." It is comforting to know that instead of this being a complicated process, Jesus assures us that we will be able to identify false prophets—right away. They are recognizable by their lives and their doctrine.

We hesitate to label someone a false prophet or false teacher, and rightly so. Additionally, to do so simply because the person disagrees with a position we hold on something may say more about our own egocentric blind spots than anything else. Extreme care and prayer must be involved when we make judgments on the viewpoint of others.

The Bible doesn't leave us clueless as to what to look for in a false prophet. Consider how Jesus describes the false prophet—they "come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt. 7:15). They approach the Church looking like "sheep" and giving every impression of wanting to be part of the Church—wanting to be helpful to the Church. Their deceptive approach masks their real motives and intentions. Jesus warns that they are "wolves in sheep's clothing."

But what is this "sheep's clothing?" I would suggest to you that it is mimicking the language of Christianity and pretentiously participating in Christian activities. A wolf may appear to be a very nice person who has a strong sense of morality. He may speak out on subjects of social justice. He may appear to be an expert in the growth of the Church. He may talk about God, Christ, and even the cross of Christ. He may be a very motivating speaker who makes us feel good every time we hear him speak. Outwardly, there may be very little to grab the attention of true believers and warn them that a wolf is in their midst. It is the inward reality that shows up in the fruit of his life, exposing the wolf in sheep's clothing. Jesus declares that while false prophets parade in sheep's clothing, they "inwardly are ravenous wolves."

"Ravenous" implies wrong motives, destructive behavior, and teaching that intentionally moves people away from the claims of Scripture. There are ulterior motives in everything false prophets do. They seek to capti-

vate the weak and use them for their purposes—to build a power base, get attention, garner fame, pursue immoral behavior, gather wealth, or even destroy the work of the gospel.

WHERE ARE THE WOLVES?

I am convinced that the problem of wolves among the sheep is much larger than we could ever imagine. The wolves are not just in pulpits. They teach in Sunday school classes, lead youth groups, sing solos during worship services, write articles and books, work with children, and lead mission trips. I am not trying to be an alarmist, I simply hope that the Lord will sober our thinking in this area.

So, how do we recognize false teachers? The simple images that Jesus gives help us to discern what the eye cannot grasp. After declaring, “You will know them by their fruits,” Jesus gives us some illustrations of what He means. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles (Matt. 7:16).

False teachers cannot help producing bad fruit. “A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil [bad] fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matt. 7:17-18). There is never middle ground or a place for straddling the fence in the teachings of Christ. The nature of a person eventually shows up through the fruit he produces.

How do you recognize “good fruit” and “bad fruit”? First, look at what is evident in the person’s life. Is there a love of holiness, humility, godliness, and faithfulness? Does he play loosely with God’s law? Look at the aim and result of his teaching. “Bad fruit” leads men away from the narrow gate and narrow way of Christianity. “Good fruit” leads men into the narrow gate. This may not be the most popular preaching, but it is scriptural.

The warning for false teachers is clear. “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire” (Matt. 7:19). Notice that it is not the tree bearing bad fruit that is condemned, but rather the tree failing to produce good fruit. Jesus is making it clear that discipleship means a great deal more than religious activity and appearance.

CONCLUSION

These warnings are for all generations. False prophets continue today, attempting to destroy the flock of God. This warning demands that we remain vigilant, guarding our lives and doctrine. We do this best when we so love the truth of God’s Word, and so love obeying Him, that our senses are sharpened to distinguish good fruit from bad fruit and true teachers from wolves.

In a world where we place much emphasis on the outward, let us be careful to guard against those whose outer-world is not a reflection of an inner-world that produces godly fruit. ■



by Sonja Vernon

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE

“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’” —Matthew 25:40 ESV

This verse comes from the familiar “sheep and goats” passage which contains some of Jesus’ most sobering words. But I believe in the midst of separating sheep and goats, Jesus was making a deeper point. ***If we live without love, we’ve missed everything.*** Why did Jesus bring up visiting the prisoner or ministering to the sick? Why did He bother to mention feeding the hungry or clothing the naked? Because that’s what we do when we love people. When we see a fellow image-bearer of God in need, we act...because love compels us. Without love, we’ve missed the whole point (Matt. 22:34-40). God’s love is not all warm fuzzies and “feel good” theology. It is well-rounded and robust. It tells the truth, even when it is unpopular, but refuses to use that truth as a club to hurt and maim. It is a love that touches people who won’t respond in kind, associates with those who may threaten its reputation, sheds its comfort zone, and gets its hands dirty. Love forgives, is willing to be inconvenienced, and draws people to the greatest Love of all. Goats don’t understand this love. Goats are preoccupied with a form of religion, getting the outside right but neglecting the heart. Sheep don’t throw away the form, but their first priority is the heart. And a heart that loves God will work out His love by passing it on to everyone it touches. “The fruit of the Spirit is love...” (Gal. 5:22a). Are you bearing this fruit today? ■

Sonja Vernon is Director of Student Affairs at GBS.

“That Ye Bear Much Fruit”

John 15:1-8

by Leonard Sankey

The challenge to be fruit-bearing Christians is not to be ignored, since it is Jesus Himself Who says that “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (John 15:5), and “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8). *But what does this actually mean?*

I admit that I have been convicted when I read material or hear preaching about being fruitful Christians. Usually being “fruitful” is equated with being successful in bringing others to the knowledge of Christ. That the New Testament Church is charged with the responsibility of building God’s kingdom, none will deny. And that this growth of the Church involves the constant addition of new members to the body, we acknowledge. And that the Church, in general, is failing, we confess. It is to our shame that we acknowledge this lack.

It is true that when a Christian abides in Christ and Christ abides in him, the natural result is fruit-bearing. No matter how uncomfortable it makes us feel and how much we would like to retreat from its implications, we must face the fact that *if* we are Christians, we *will* bear fruit. Across the years of serving the Lord in missions, pastoring, Christian education, evangelism, and writing, more times than I like to admit, I have sensed defeat and chagrin as I looked at what seemed to be too little fruit in my own life.

But, is this the true sense of “bearing much fruit?” A closer study of this passage suggests another conclusion. The picture of the vine that Jesus draws here is against the backdrop of Israel’s own history. Old Testament narratives of God’s chosen people being compared to a vine are found in Psalm 80, Jeremiah 2,

Ezekiel 19, and Isaiah 5. There is also a possibility that Jesus draws on the symbolism of the vine because of the celebration of the supper in which wine was used to represent His blood that was soon to be shed “for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). Yet again, because John’s gospel does not give us a clear trajectory of where Jesus and the disciples went after He said, “Rise, let us be going” (John 14:31), it is possible that the group paused in front of the temple where the national symbol of Israel, the vine, was engraved.

Wherever the incident occurred, Jesus makes it forcefully clear that the old, degenerated vine—the nation of Israel—has been superseded by Himself: “I am the True Vine.” The quality of the fruit to be borne is dependent upon the character of the Vine, so the New Testament Church springs not from a wild grapevine, but from the person of Christ Himself.

“And my Father is the husbandman” (John 15:1). Yes, the Viticulturist, the Horticulturist, the Farmer, the Vinedresser, the Gardener is the Heavenly Father, and He gives close attention to those branches connected to the Vine. He inspects each branch for one thing: does it bear fruit? “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away” (John 15:2). The Vinedresser clears out the branches that are not bearing fruit. Frankly, this verse is one of the most stunning in Scripture, for it is saying that if we who profess to be Christians are connected to the Vine and are not bearing fruit, we come under the judgment of the Father. We will be cleared out. Taken away.

However, this Scripture passage informs us that true Christians receive their spiritual life from connection to, and abiding in, Christ. If my direct connection is to Christ,



then the first fruit normally and naturally produced in me is Christlikeness. The character of Christ—His holiness, His meekness, His justice, His compassion, His servanthood—is the natural fruit of abiding in Christ.

That this Christlikeness is possible is verified by Paul's statement in Philippians 2:5, where he exhorts, "Let this mind [this same attitude and purpose and humble mind] be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." That is, His mind of goodness, of benevolence, of healing, of prayer, ought to be naturally reproduced in us as a result of our abiding in obedience to Him.

When Christ lived among us, He demonstrated all the fruit of the Spirit. His entrance into His earthly ministry was ordained by the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove settling upon Him at His baptism. It was the same Holy Spirit that drove Him into the wilderness to be tested by the devil, and it was in the power of the same Spirit that He returned from His 40-day fast and His days and nights among the wilds of the country. His scriptural resistance to every trial Satan laid on Him was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit, as Paul lists it in Galatians, can be traced in what we know of the life of Christ as He lived on earth. Did Christ love? Did He ever! (John 3:16). He also rejoiced (Luke 10:21), had and gave peace (John 16:33; 14:27), suffered long (2 Peter 3:9), was gentle and meek (2 Cor. 10:1), went "about doing good" (Acts 10:38), lived and expressed faith in His heavenly Father (1 Pet. 2:23), and had self-control (Matt. 4:1-11).

If we are abiding in the Vine, and Christlikeness is the first and normal demonstration of that abiding, then Christ in us should produce the fruit of the Spirit, even as it was

The ultimate outflow of the life of Christ in us, coming from our direct connection to the Vine, will be a life manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

manifest in Christ in His earthly life. The life of Jesus, transmitted through the Vine and into the life of the Christian, is demonstrated by the fruit of the Spirit in us. The question "Am I bearing fruit?" therefore is better understood as "Am I Christlike? Does my life manifest the fruit of the Spirit?"

Are you Christlike? Does your life manifest the fruit of the Spirit? Do you love as Christ loved? Do others around you know you by the joy you exhibit, the peace that you manifest, the longsuffering you show, the gentleness of your spirit? Is the goodness of the Lamb evident in your life? Is your faith active? Do you bear what God allows into your life with meekness? Is there a steadiness, a self-control, a temperance about you?

The ultimate outflow of the life of Christ in us, coming from our direct connection to the Vine, will be a life manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, and dedicated to the advancement of His Kingdom on earth and its growth until time is swallowed in eternity.

Are you bearing much fruit? ■

Dr. Leonard Sankey (ThB '60), along with his wife Janet (Ferguson) (HS '59), has been involved in ministry for 58 years. He has served on the GBS Board of Trustees for 40 years, including 25 years as chair. He has been associated with the Interchurch Holiness Convention since 1955 and was its General Secretary for 19 years. The Sankeys also served as missionaries in Guatemala with Evangelistic Faith Missions for 17 years. All three of their children attended GBS: Beth Stetler (BA '85); Lavonne (Vonnie) Bryan (1987); and Marc Sankey (BRE '95), current GBS Vice President for Constituent Relations. A number of their grandchildren have attended or currently attend GBS, and two have served on staff: Kent Stetler as student recruiter and current registrar; Maria Stetler as Director of Institutional Advancement and current Vice President of the GBS Alumni Association.



WHAT A JERK!

by *Laura Bailey Ferguson*

We were on our way to violin lessons. My little girls sat in the van seats behind me.

“What a jerk!” I exclaimed without a thought. A Camaro had cut me off despite my efforts to close the gap in front of me. “I can’t BELIEVE he just did that! We’re going to be late!”

Silence. I paused in thought. What did I just say? What example am I setting? What spirit just came from me? Joy? Patience? Gentleness? Self-control? Ugh! Why do I react this way? “God, please help me be more patient! I want to be like You, but my response is so quick sometimes, and it isn’t like You.”

For several years I tried to fix these thoughtless responses by prayer and sheer willpower. I was always trying to be more patient, more gentle, more self-controlled when I was presumed upon or taken advantage of—but these efforts did not transform me into one characterized as a patient person like Jesus.

When Christians talk about the fruit of the Spirit, a debate along the following lines almost inevitably ensues: Are these fruits produced for us by the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, or are they aspects of our Christian character that we are responsible for monitoring and strengthening? The question is essentially one of agency. If they are the fruit of the Spirit, then surely it is the Spirit’s job to produce them for us, one side argues. On the other hand, say others, common sense tells us that we don’t grow in joy, patience, and self-control simply by sitting around waiting for the Spirit to “zap” us with these traits.

To complicate matters further, however, when we do try to be pro-

active about cultivating the fruit of the Spirit, we are almost always met with frustration. Take my Camaro incident. Every time I exploded with exasperation at a driver cutting me off in traffic, I would pray in repentance and ask God to help me be more patient, more loving, more gentle. Things would be better for a week or two, and then the pattern would return. At times I would despair of ever being able to show these fruits consistently in my life; all I knew to do was to pray more and try harder, hoping that one day the Spirit would give me the divine backing I needed to sustain my well-intentioned willpower.

Yet this way of thinking about the fruit of the Spirit, as common as I believe it is, fundamentally misses the meaning of the metaphor that Paul has chosen. Fruit is produce. It springs from planted seed. Naturally then, the fruit of the Spirit must be that which is produced by the Spirit planted within our hearts. But how does the Spirit work to produce the good fruits like those Paul names in Galatians?

Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit would point us to Him. Conversely, we are best able to recognize the Holy Spirit when we look at the spirit of Jesus. Paul, in fact, regularly uses the language of “Holy Spirit” and “the spirit of Christ” interchangeably.¹ In Galatians 4, he points us to the defining mark of the spirit of Jesus when he tells us that as children of God, we receive “the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

What is it about that cry, “Abba! Father!” that sets us apart as those who share the Holy Spirit we see in Christ? The one recorded instance

that we have of Jesus using the expression “Abba! Father!” comes in the Garden of Gethsemane, where, in the face of His imminent crucifixion, Jesus prayed, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”² This prayer epitomizes the spirit that defined Jesus throughout His life on earth: “Not what I want, Father, but what You want.”



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Similarly, the defining mark of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives today is our new ability as Christians to echo Jesus' prayer: Paul writes that it is Jesus' own spirit speaking through us, enabling us to respond to our gracious Father with love and trust, to let go when we see a conflict between our will and His. This is the seed of life which God plants in the hearts of His beloved children; and it is this Spirit, marked in us by trusting surrender, that will inevitably bear fruit in our lives.

What does this look like in practice? In his final sermon, "A Slip of the Tongue," C.S. Lewis reminds us, "What God does for us, He does in us. The process of doing it will appear to me (and not falsely) to be the daily or hourly repeated exercises of my own will." My own struggles with patience, self-control, gentleness, and so on, point fundamentally to willfulness. I

don't like it when I don't get what I want. The immediate response of impatience is exactly the fruit you would expect from a spirit defined by, "I want what I want"!

A new way of thinking emerges as I begin to realize the heart of my problem—a seed of willfulness that is producing fruit I do not want to produce. When feelings of impatience arise, I no longer try to use prayer and willpower to drum up patient feelings. Rather, I prayerfully consider what underlying desire I am clinging to and why I react when it is thwarted.

When the Camaro cut me off, I wanted to be in front. I wanted to get where I was going without obstacle and without disrespect. Is there anything "wrong" with that? Well, the fruit of impatience that sprouted in indignant words shows

me that something indeed was wrong under the surface. My willful spirit bore no resemblance to the Spirit of Christ. As my Abba helps me to understand myself, I come before Him in surrender once again, and the fruit of love and patience grows from that surrender.

As Christians in an ever-developing relationship to God, we often discover new areas of our lives in which, unknowingly, we are clinging to our own will instead of surrendering our desires to Him. Patience might not be as hard for you as it was for me. Perhaps you will find it more challenging to cultivate gentleness, to carry out your commitments faithfully, or to control some appetite. But whatever ugly fruits you recognize in your life, the good news is that those very fruits serve as signals for us, marking places in our hearts that, in ignorance, we have not yet submitted to God. When we find a bad fruit growing where a good one should be, that is our opportunity to dig down to our roots, question our desires and expectations, and gladly hand them over to Him.

Once I have seen my need of surrender and released my hold on what I want, I can make room for the Camaro driver and wish him well. When I embrace the spirit of Jesus, we travel in peace. ■

Laura Bailey Ferguson of Salem, IL, is a musician (www.lubifproductions.com) and blogger (www.fergyfamforum.blogspot.com); wife of Curt Ferguson, an estate planning attorney (www.tlclplanning.com); and mother to LaRae (24) and Rachelle (22). Laura home-educated her daughters, both of whom graduated from Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI. LaRae is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Oxford, England. Rachelle is a playwright who runs her own script-publishing company (www.kittywhamproductions.com).

Laura wishes to thank her husband and daughters for their help with this article.

1. Cf. Romans 8:9 and Galatians 4:6.

2. Mark 14:36; see also Matt. 26:39 and Luke 22:42





CHRISTMAS PROGRAM REPORT

Guests arriving on campus for this year's Christmas Program, December 7, 8, and 9, walked through a tunnel of Christmas lights and were welcomed by other festive decorations. These included a Victorian carriage, fire pits with seating, and candles in the windows of both the Administration Building and Music Hall. Under a large tent, costumed students and staff served the new, official, campus blend of coffee: "1810"; while The Commons offered hot chocolate.

Live, festive, prelude music began 45 minutes prior to each performance. At the designated time, the house lights dimmed, signaling the beginning of "Worthy Is the Savior That Was Born," a musical drama written and produced by Music Division Chair Dr. Jana Pop.

The setting was London in 1860 following two cholera epidemics. The storyline involved the pastoral family of a small Methodist Church, a Sunday school teacher, orphans, a letter carrier, and an aloof church member. Those who embraced the message of Christmas found hope and healing, redemption and renewal.

The cast totaled approximately 180 people and included members of the College Choir, High School Choir, Elementary Honors Choir, Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble, and two drama casts. Assisting Dr. Pop were Tim Crater and David Hartkopf, music directors; Michael DeStefano and Nicolae Pop, drama directors; and support staff: Martha Miller, Rachelle Wolf, Jessica Smith, and Dustin Muir.

Each performance was well received by those who packed the 700-seat chapel. Chuck Chapman (AA '15 and current BA student), Outreach Pastor at GracePoint

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

BIRTHS



To **Kyla (Tichenor) (BA '15) and Tim Lanigan (BA '16)**, a daughter, **Cora Jane Marion**, born October 6, 2018, at Community South Hospital, Indianapolis, IN. Tim is the Associate Pastor at Southport Church of the Nazarene, Indianapolis, and also the Assistant Director for Public Relations at GBS, scheduling the traveling music groups. Kyla is a homemaker. Cora Jane is welcomed by her older sister, Charlotte (2). The Lanigans live in Indianapolis, IN.



To **Jessica (Flick) and Stephen Smith (BA '02)**, a daughter, **Sarah Beth**, born December 20, 2018, at Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, OH. Dr. Smith has been a member of the GBS ministerial education faculty since 2012. Sarah Beth is welcomed by brothers Isaac (10), Joshua (8), and Seth (4), who have quickly fallen in love with her and argue over who gets to hold her! The Smiths live in Cincinnati, OH.

DEATHS

Larry Richard Womelsdorf, 80, was called home to be with his Savior on August 18, 2018. He was born in 1938 to Oakland and Esther (Johnson) Womelsdorf of Clatskanie, OR, the oldest of seven children.

Community Church of the Nazarene, Erlanger, KY, brought a **large group of men from the City Gospel Mission's Exodus Program** for those struggling with addiction.

He said, "Due to our past, most of us associate holidays with drinking, drug-use, the loss of loved ones, and pain in general. These men were in need of a mental, emotional, and spiritual transformation.... Many of them...told me that they were deeply moved by the events of the evening.... I believe that [the Christmas Program] helped these men to establish new and God-honoring activities for the holiday.... As one of their own (a former alcoholic), and as one of your own, I just wanted to say thank you.... I am proud to be a student at God's Bible School and College!"

Another notable attendee was Ken Ham, president of Answers in Genesis, a creationist apologetics organization that operates the Creation Museum and the



Ark Encounter in northern Kentucky. He posted: "Mally and I, and my brother David from Australia, attended a spectacular Christmas music drama at God's Bible School and College (a college standing with AiG on infallibility of Bible beginning in Genesis). We joined Dr. Mark Bird (professor) and Dr. Kristin Bird. We were all VERY impressed with the program!"

We thank all those who helped make our Christmas celebration so special. Make plans to attend next year when we hope to unveil even bigger and better lights and decorations! 📌



Larry joined the Air Force in 1957, and gave his heart to Jesus while in basic training. Sensing a call into ministry, he received an early release to attend GBS. While there he met Carolyn J. Wilson (GBS 1958), and they were married in 1963. After his graduation (ThB '66), he pastored Wesleyan churches in Indiana, Oregon, and Washington. Shortly before his passing, Larry was recognized for beginning his 50th year of ministry at Hazen Chapel Wesleyan Church, Amboy, WA.

Larry is survived by his wife Carolyn; two brothers and one sister; four children, all of whom attended GBS between 1983 and 1994, seven grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held at Hazen Chapel Wesleyan Church.



Rev. Clarence Eugene White, 87, of Temperance, MI, left this earthly life peacefully on September 15, 2018. He was born in Princeton, WV, in 1934 to Clarence and Ruby (Johnson) White. After high school, he joined the U.S. Navy, serving during the Korean War (1948-1952). Upon his return home, he met and married Evelyn Louise Barrett. For more than 60 years he pastored Wesleyan churches in West Virginia (where he served as Assistant District Superintendent), New York, Kentucky, and Michigan.

Rev. White is survived by his wife, Louise; three children, Steven, Sharon, and Jonathan; five grandchildren; five step-grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; sister, Maxine; and many other loving (p16) ➡



The Journey to Maturity:

GROWING THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

by Caslyn Rice

Fresh, juicy, sweet, luscious—we all search for the perfect piece of fruit that appears to have the finest texture and composition. Unfortunately, it's not until we bite into it that we find evidence of its true quality. In Galatians 5, we are admonished by Paul to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Is it really possible to live out this long list of traits, or is Paul simply giving us a lofty goal?

The piece of fruit you choose to eat didn't just appear on a plant one day fully grown and ready to be harvested for someone to enjoy. It underwent a process in which it grew from a blossom and eventually developed into the desired food. When we become Christians, God transforms our life and brings us from darkness into light. This, however, doesn't immediately change us into a perfect person. As we walk with the Lord, we imitate His character and grow in Him. Through this process, He continues to mature the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

How is this accomplished, and in what ways can we daily show the maturation of the fruit of the Spirit? It is helpful to consider each fruit separately and think about how Christ exhibited them in His time on earth. How do we measure up? This may seem a bit discouraging or daunting as we compare ourselves to the perfect example of Jesus. Remember, we are on a journey with the Lord, and the longer we walk with Him, the more we'll become like Him and exhibit His character. Some areas may be easier than others. Perhaps you're a naturally patient person and having to wait 30 minutes to check out at the store doesn't bother you. You may be a peacemaker and the thought of conflict, confrontation, or unrest is unsettling because having peace is of utmost importance to you. On the other hand, perhaps your past, culture, or circumstances have brought things into your life that make it difficult for you to show kindness to the challenging people in your life. Or perhaps you struggle to be self-controlled in your entertainment, eating habits, or relationships. As we walk with the Lord, we ask Him to show us ways we can grow in His likeness. Let's look at each of these fruit more closely:

LOVE

When was the last time you went out of our way to love someone who seemed unlovable? Maybe we need to give sacrificially of our time or resources to someone in need even if they don't "deserve it."

JOY

Sometimes "life" happens; we feel overwhelmed; and we lose our focus on what brings us true contentment and satisfaction. Instead of wallowing in self-pity or frustration, we can choose to renew our joy found in the Lord by focusing our hearts on Him.

PEACE

There are many different personalities, opinions, and preferences which can easily cause dissonance within relationships. Will we allow those things to bring separation, or will we exhibit peace and take the appropriate action to restore unity?

PATIENCE

Most of us know someone who is consistently needy or is always nearby asking endless questions. Instead of pushing them aside or ignoring them, we have the opportunity to show them patience in the way we respond to their needs.

KINDNESS

Next time someone says a harsh word or acts rudely, what if we would respond in a way that shows a spirit of kindness and concern?

GOODNESS

Are we people of integrity? Or do others question what happens in our lives behind closed doors? Do we seek others' highest good rather than our own? Showing goodness is so much deeper than the things that others see us do, although that matters a great deal as well.

FAITHFULNESS

Making commitments is a common part of our everyday lives. When we change our mind or it's more convenient to back out, do we find an easy way out, or are we faithful? Becoming a person of loyalty and faithfulness to our word, even when it's inconvenient, is an important step in growing the fruit of faithfulness.

GENTLENESS

When dealing with difficult situations, rather than lashing out, developing an attitude of gentleness enables us to respond in an appropriate manner.

SELF-CONTROL

We all have areas in which it is easy for us to indulge. Perhaps it's the irresistible chocolate chip cookie that we shouldn't eat after already having eaten ten, or maybe it's

a good, pleasurable entertainment that's vying for another hour of our time. Healthy boundaries help us to become disciplined, structured, and self-controlled.

These examples may or may not be specific things you deal with in your life, but you know the areas that tempt you. If we are going to allow the fruit of the Spirit to grow, ripen, and abound in our lives, we are going to have to take practical steps daily to encourage the process to happen. It's easy to put on a smile, dress in the right way, and say the right things to the right people; but what do our lives look like in the daily grind? True evidence of our fruit will be seen where the rubber meets the road of our daily interactions and exchanges. We shouldn't allow just the outside of our lives to look appealing. May God help us to manifest the genuine life of Christ that produces the fruit of the Spirit.

In my own life, I see areas in which God wants to grow and mature me. Instead of comparing my walk with the Lord to that of others, it is helpful to remember that they are on a journey, too. As a young person, it can be easy to view older Christians as having it all together, but they are still works in progress as well! Yes, they may be wonderful examples of how the fruit of the Spirit is shown, but it's taken them years to get to where they are. And they're still growing. Older believers may think they should be more mature spiritually and the fruit in their lives should be much riper. We must never forget that God leads each of us at a different pace. As we continue to draw closer to Him, He will grow us in the perfect time and way. Our job is simply to take the next step.

Each fruit of the Spirit may look slightly different in our lives, but we must fight the tendency to set unreachable standards or be overwhelmed by the changes we still need to make. Our relationship with the Lord is a journey. As we know Him more intimately and become more like Him, our fruit will ripen. A relationship with the Lord is practical, so let us look for opportunities to daily grow in Christ and allow Him to mature the work He has begun within us. ■



Caslyn Rice grew up in Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA. While a student at GBS, she was a resident assistant for three years. After graduating with a BA in Elementary Education in 2017, she taught in Aldersgate Christian Academy for one year before accepting her current position as GBS Dean of Women. She is also currently working on a Master's degree in Exceptional Student Education through Southeastern University.



the FRUIT of the SPIRIT:

a PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Ryan Watters

Are some people born more like Christ than others? I don't mean without inherited depravity, or the need for salvation. Rather, are some people born with a disposition that more closely aligns with the attributes Christ calls for in Galatians 5:22-23 known as the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, etc.)? The answer is both complicated and (I hope) thought-provoking.

It will be helpful to lay a bit of groundwork for this discussion. In no way is this article intended to imply that some people are born less in need of salvation or the work of God in their lives. There is a universal need for the atoning blood of Christ for every human heart. Further, this article intends to maintain the clear assertion of this passage that the fruit listed in Galatians 5 is the work of the Spirit in us as we cooperate with His grace.

I do believe, however, that a discussion about two facets of human existence could be helpful—nature (genetic predisposition), and nurture (early childhood development in particular).

Genetics has become a byword in our society, and for good reason. We hear regularly about breakthroughs in understanding the complexity of our genetic makeup, as well as the behavioral results linked to those genetics. For example, a study from UC Berkeley in 2009 explored the role a hormone called oxytocin (nicknamed the “cuddle” or “love” hormone) plays in people’s ability to connect socially.¹ In the study, those with a particular variety of oxytocin were noticeably better at experiencing empathy, showing compassion, accurately reading the body language of other people, and were more adept at social connections. Everyone has some degree and variety of oxytocin, but these folks exhibited those behaviors more intuitively. In a similar vein, does it come more naturally for some people to experience and show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? Could influencers like oxytocin play a role in our ability to exhibit kindness, goodness, gentleness, etc.? While the research is still emerging, it does seem to be the case in some situations.



To be clear, we are talking about a matter of degrees. Everyone is capable of exhibiting these traits, but it likely comes more naturally for some folks than others.

Take for example another recent study completed at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam that explored the genetic links to happiness in human beings.² After conducting research on 300,000 individuals, the study highlighted genetic structures that were similar in happy versus unhappy people. In other words, there were similarities in the genetic structures of happy folks. While there are important distinctions between happiness and joy, the similarities are significant enough to make one ponder the link between genetics and joy.

Some may fall into a ditch here and believe that because a certain trait does not come naturally, then effort is futile or failure is expected. Not so. That is neither what the research shows, nor what Scripture purports. We must never lose sight of the fact that the Spirit is actively at work in our hearts cultivating and enabling His fruit to show through us. In other words, it is not all up to us, and it is not all about how we are wired genetically. We have personal choice and God works directly in our lives. This synergistic approach is one of the distinguishing aspects of Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine.

Aside from genetics (nature), there are environmental influencers (nurture). One of those factors, early childhood development, leads us into the second part of our discussion—what role does nurture play?

Our experiences growing up have a profound impact on us. In fact, it may be hard to overestimate the impact. It alters (either positively or negatively) how our brains are wired; it shapes our worldview; it helps or hinders our ability to engage in healthy relationships; it either equips us with the capacity to deal with stress or leaves us relying on unhealthy coping skills. Could our childhood experiences and early relationships shape the way we experience the fruit of the Spirit? Could it make the process of growing in these fruits easier or more difficult? Let's look at some of the research.

In a now famous study³ conducted by Stanford University in 1972, children between the ages of 4 and 5 were placed in a room and given two choices involving marshmallows: (1) they could eat the marshmallow now and enjoy a single marshmallow, or (2) they could

refrain from eating the marshmallow until the instructor came back (in around 15 minutes) and receive an additional marshmallow. This broke the participants down into two groups: those who can delay gratification and exhibit self-control, and those who favor instant gratification. These children were tracked for many years, and those in the first group (those able to exhibit self-control) went on to live happier, wealthier, and higher achieving lives compared with their counterparts. But there's a catch.

A follow up to that study conducted in 2013 introduced a twist.⁴ When the experiment was conducted in an environment the kids could not trust (e.g., promises were made by the instructor that were never kept, the child could not predict the instructor's behavior, etc.) the level of self-control exhibited by the participants dramatically decreased. The clear implication is that when we are able to predict that the world is safe, stable, and reliable, we do a better job at making wiser choices. By extension, we build in our kids the capacity to exhibit self-control when we create environments that are safe, stable, and reliable.

The late David Seamands once wrote, "The home is like a skylight through which we get our first pictures of God."⁵ In a very similar way, our capacity to understand, receive, and give the fruit of the Spirit will be helped or hindered by our early experiences of them (or lack thereof).

Further, a child's ability to feel safe and cared for by his or her caregivers (parents in particular) allows for the child's brain to grow and develop in ways that will better equip the child to exhibit kindness, goodness, patience, and love. Such children have personally experienced these qualities from those they love and can more easily mimic that behavior in other relationships.

Here's another way of looking at it—we are all marred by the Fall and face brokenness on a profound scale (including genetically). The ways in which brokenness has been woven into our lives (either through abuse, neglect, or even personal choice) are experiences that affect where we fall on the spectrum of our ability to grasp innately the fruit of the Spirit. Take, as an example, a boy who grew up in a home with extremely harsh and demanding parents. Experience has taught him little of what

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true kindness (one of the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit) is really like, and thus kindness may not come as naturally and will be an area in which the Spirit may need to apply special grace. That boy is still fully capable of growing in this fruit, however, because of the Spirit's enabling grace.

Now, what do we do with all of this information? Let me highlight a few things:

First, all human beings are capable of exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. I say that definitively for a few reasons: (1) I believe in the optimism of grace and power of the Spirit to work in the lives of His creation; (2) I believe that every command in Scripture is a veiled promise that God will enable us to fulfill that command (the Wesleyan Hermeneutic); and (3) I believe it is self-evident that though we may struggle, humans have an ability to exhibit these traits to some degree.

Second, regardless of whether or not we excel or struggle (because of nature or nurture) to exhibit these traits, God is still fully capable of being glorified. If we excel, then we glorify Him by showing a broken world the beauty of the kind of life He has called us to live—a life characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. If we struggle, we embrace one of the Holy Spirit's titles, *parakletos*, meaning He is our Advocate, the One who comes alongside and methodically builds His character within us—even when it's hard work to do so. In so doing we model authentic relationship with Christ that is built on faithfulness and persistence instead of perfection.

Third, self-examination is a powerful thing. I would encourage you to examine your own life and look for ways in which nature or nurture has helped or hindered your ability to portray the fruit of the Spirit through your conduct and conversation. By extension, if you are in a position to influence young people (as parents, grandparents, teachers, etc.), I would encourage you to evaluate how the environment you are shaping or providing enables a child to understand love, joy, peace, patience, etc. Can they see it in your life so they can model it in their own?

My prayer is that you will deepen your commitment to allow the Holy Spirit to join you right now, in this moment, and more fully enliven His fruit within you. ■

Ryan Watters (BA '11) has served in various capacities at GBS, including Director of Student Affairs, and is currently an adjunct professor. A licensed professional counselor with the Counseling Alliance, LLC, of Cincinnati, OH, Ryan and his wife, Danielle, along with children, Grace (3) and Steven (7 months), live in Cincinnati.

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3. <http://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fh0032198>
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REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡(p11) family members and countless friends. Funeral services were held at Bible Fellowship Church, Monroe, MI, and burial followed at Roselawn Memorial Park with military honors.



Betty Lou Kendall, age 86, passed away December 7, 2018. Born in Jeffersonville, IN, to Rev. Stanley and Mrs. Evelyn Kendall, Betty lived in Indiana, Kentucky, and Florida before settling down in Selma, AL, in 1963.

A secretary prior to completing her undergraduate and graduate degrees, Betty taught for twenty-two years at Wallace Community College before retiring in 1988. She later served on the GBS Board of Trustees from 1999 to 2006 and did volunteer work for American Cancer Society, Vaughan Regional Medical Center, and Vaughan Place Senior Living Facility.

Betty is survived by a brother-in-law, Charles Harrison; a niece and great-nephew; as well as cousins, friends, former students, and her caregiver, Marie Barnett. Funeral services were held in the chapel at the Selma Funeral Home, Selma, AL, officiated by Dr. Michael Avery.



Ronald W. Moser, 76, passed away December 16, 2018, at Memorial Hospital in Savannah, GA. He was born August 23, 1942, to Harry and Lydia Eva (Maurer) Moser of Pottsville, PA, but lived in Bulloch and Evans Counties, GA, for most of his life.

When his sweetheart Evelyn Klotz decided to attend GBS (CWC '61), Ron followed her there and took classes. They were married in 1962. He worked in construction for many years and was a youth leader, music minister, and lay pastor. His son, Kevin (HS '82; BA '90), and nephew, Stephen Klotz (BA '09), as well as Stephen's wife, Mary (Hamlin) (HS '86; AA '07; BA, AA '10), are current GBS employees. His son Meredith Lee (HS '89; AA '97; BA '05) has served on the GBS faculty.

Ron was preceded in death by his first wife, Evelyn. He is survived by his wife, Earnal; mother, Lydia Eva; five sons, Kevin, Max, Joe, Jim, and Meredith; four step-children, Marsha, Warren, Jody, and Anthony; brother, Rick; sister, Carolyn; ten grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at Trinity Church of the Nazarene, Claxton, GA, Rev. James Bradley officiating, with burial in Simon Smith Cemetery. ■



TENDING TO THE GARDEN OF THE HEART:

A Partnership with the Holy Spirit

by Curtis Going

As a gardener, I am an abysmal failure. My one and only foray into the world of gardening happened on a little plot of land in sunny, southern Georgia. I assembled a raised garden bed, filled it with soil and fertilizer, planted cucumbers, green peppers, corn, and okra, and for the next few days I was an avid gardener. I pulled weeds, applied ample amounts of water, and anxiously awaited a bumper crop of summer vegetables. But sadly, the vegetables I had dreamed of coaxing out of the Georgia soil never materialized. To be sure, there were blossoms and then tiny little blooms that began to develop into the familiar shapes of the vegetables I had planted, but I was busy and soon did not take the time needed to tend to them properly. Then, while I was out of town for several days, the hot July sun beat down on my little garden, and when I returned, the plants that I had meticulously arranged months before were wilted and brown. In fact, that garden did not produce one edible vegetable.

My failed attempt at gardening provides a picture of the private garden of a human heart that has been left neglected and uncultivated. When little effort is made to nurture the soil of the soul and to promote spiritual growth in the inner sanctum of the human heart, the result is a barrenness which bears little resemblance to the abundant fruitfulness of the Spirit-filled life.

My failed attempt at gardening provides a picture of a human heart that has been left neglected and uncultivated.

In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul describes the beautiful qualities of a life that is marked by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit: *“Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance....”* Could there be any higher ideal than to express fully these sacred attributes through the conduct of our lives?

But how do we ensure that the garden of our heart is a fertile place for the fruit of the Spirit to grow? Perhaps the verses following Paul’s list of spiritual fruit provide some direction for us in our pursuit of fruitful, Spirit-filled living.

1. Cultivate a relationship with the Holy Spirit

“If we live in the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:25)

Paul presents these honorable qualities of the Spirit-filled life in contrast to the offensive works of the flesh. His use of the word *fruit* as compared to *works* is interesting. As one scholar noted, “A work is something which man produces for himself; a fruit is something which is produced by a power which he does not possess. Man cannot make fruit.”¹



Apart from the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit, there will be no spiritual fruit in our lives. While it is true that even a sinner may possess these qualities in some form, without the life of the Spirit, it is not spiritual fruit. Left to ourselves, no matter how disciplined or determined we may be, we are completely powerless to produce the fruit.

But as absolutely dependent as we are on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and as incapable as we are to produce this fruit through our own initiative, we do bear responsibility in cultivating and nurturing the garden of our heart to make it conducive to growth.

Otho Jennings aptly explained that man's initiative is necessary to acquire God's provision. He wrote, "God puts his love in our hearts, but He will never love our neighbor for us; we must do the loving. God gives us strength to resist temptation, but we must will to resist. God provides food for our souls, but we must do the eating. God has planned for us a life of growth in grace, but we must do the growing. In short, God through the death of His Son upon the cross has made ample provision that we should be holy; but the acceptance by free will of these provisions is the sole responsibility of man."²

So, what is our responsibility?

2. Consecrate your will to the leadership of the Holy Spirit

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh..." (Gal. 5:24)

Before we can enjoy the new life that results from the Spirit's presence, there must be a death, because *"they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."* Our responsibility begins with answering the Spirit's invitation to the new birth, turning from the works of the flesh, and embracing the power and presence of the Spirit.

As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit's sanctifying presence in our lives, He will lead us to a moment of deeper surrender and a cleansing of our inherited depravity. At the moment of entire sanctification, the Holy Spirit addresses the stony ground of our stubborn self-will, and in breaking up the soil, He creates an environment in the garden of the heart that is much more favorable to the production of spiritual fruit. However, while the heart may be purified by faith instantly, the development of mature spiritual fruit happens over time.

3. Cooperate with the guidance of the Holy Spirit

"Let us also walk in the Spirit..." (Gal. 5:25)

Spiritual fruit grows to maturity in our lives as we walk in the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit is to keep in step with Him, and that relationship is maintained through our continued cooperation with the Holy Spirit through discipline, devotion, and obedience.

Discipline

The word *stoicheo*, which is translated "walk" in Galatians 5:25, carries with it the idea of a military

march, suggesting that an element of personal discipline is essential for the fruit of the Spirit to mature in our lives. In his first letter to the Corinthian church Paul wrote, *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection,"* (1 Cor. 9:27); and in his second letter he wrote, *"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Cor. 10:5). The Holy Spirit never forces us to do anything, but rather His grace enables us to have the discipline to control ourselves and to maintain full submission to His will. The longer we live in full surrender to the Spirit's direction, the more sensitive we become to His leadership, thus enabling the fruit of the Spirit to mature in a greater way in our lives.³ Fruitfulness is accomplished through personal discipline lived out in complete cooperation with the Holy Spirit. *"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling..."* (Jude 1:24)—that is the Spirit's part. *"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves..."* (Jude 1:20-21a)—that is our part.

Devotion

Fellowship with God is a necessary component of our responsibility in encouraging the growth of the fruit of the Spirit. Samuel Brengle wrote, "The secret of all failures and the secret of all true success is hidden in the attitude of the soul in its private walk with God."⁴ Time spent mining the depths of God's Word gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to teach us how to live an abundantly fruitful life. A vibrant prayer life is the Spirit's means of keeping our heart and mind in agreement with Him which will, in turn, result in a maturing of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Obedience

From start to finish, the pathway to enjoying the fruitfulness of a Spirit-filled life is through complete obedience to the Spirit's guidance. If we resist the Spirit's promptings or override His checks, the growth and development of the fruit of the Spirit will be stunted. When we obey Him in every area of life and allow Him to do His work in and through us entirely unhindered, then He enables us to discover the abundant satisfaction of a fruitful life lived to the glory of God. ■

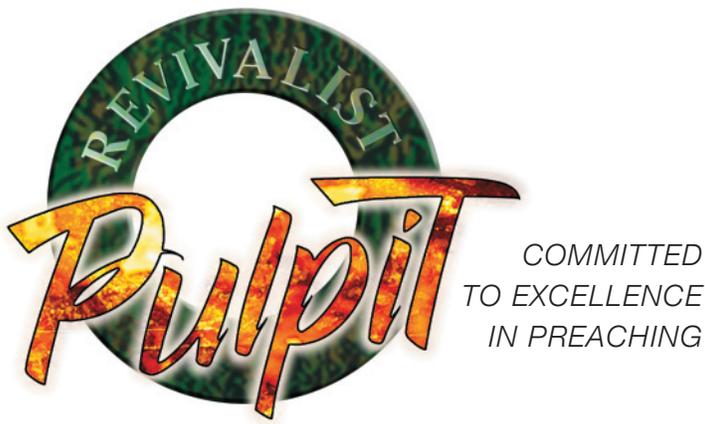
Curtis Going (BA '05) pastors Grace Holiness Church, Harkers Island, NC, and is the managing editor of Convention Herald. Curtis lives in Harkers Island with his wife Jennifer and son Jameson (6).

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LOVE: FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

by Brian Wardlaw, Jr.

Scripture: *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

—Matthew 22:37-39

INTRODUCTION

Have you noticed how glibly we throw the word “love” around? We love yogurt, thin-stuffed Oreos, and cauliflower crusted pizza. We love our spouses, our children, our homes. We love our church.... We “love” all sorts of things! However, I notice in this particular passage that the word “love” is anything but frivolous or casual.

It is worth noting that there are four different words for “love” in Greek—the language of the New Testament. Each has a distinctive meaning.

FOUR WORDS USED FOR “LOVE”

STORGE (empathy bond) – This is liking someone because of familiarity. It is most often used to show the affection parents and children have towards each other. However, this fondness may extend to others who find themselves bonded by chance, i.e., neighbors and colleagues.

PHILIA (friend bond) – This describes the warm love and affection two individuals have for each other because they share common values, interests, or activities. Perhaps it is in marriage, but it also might be a deep respect. In other words, it comes from the heart.

EROS (erotic bond) – This specifically relates to love between sexes. This invokes passion between two people. This word is not used a single time in the New Testament.

AGAPE (unconditional “God” love) – This is the greatest of the four loves, existing regardless of changing circumstances. Theologian and author William Barclay suggests that “agape” means “unconquerable benevolence” and insures that it will “never seek anything but the best even for those who seek the worst for us.”

This is the type of love that Christians must possess and proclaim through their lives to the world. Through it, others will see that we are controlled by and possess a love that is beyond ourselves, beyond our capability. Agape love comes when we are connected to the Vine, to the source of life, Jesus Christ! This love—Agape Love—leads the list of the fruit of the Spirit. Again, we are not discussing casual love, but rather our need for continuing growth and improvement in real, lasting, life-changing love.

Jesus said in Matthew 22:37, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Loving with our “whole heart” means that there can’t be anything in our heart that wants what God doesn’t want because we love Him more. There can’t be a shred of selfishness if we love Him with ALL our heart. But then Jesus continued by saying, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (v.39). Let’s look at these two aspects of this love.

LOVE GOD

One important litmus test to show our love for God is how we treat and handle God’s Word and how He speaks to us. Our love for God can be seen in our commitment to God’s Word.

As we read God’s Word and He identifies an issue in our lives that needs adjustment, our response should be: “You know what, God? If it’s important to you, then it’s important to me! With your help, I’ll take care of that!” Are we so in love with Jesus that we are willing to surrender to Him the controls of our lives? If we treat God’s Word with reverence, respect, and an attitude of surrender, the Holy Spirit will bear fruit in our lives.

Jesus taught and instructed us to obey His commandments. In fact, I would go so far as to say our failure to comply with the teaching of God’s Word says something about our love for Him. Think about it from this perspective: What does God’s Word instruct us to do, but we can’t quite seem to obey? Is it the way we dress? Is it the way we talk? Is it the way we entertain ourselves? Are we willing to obey God’s voice when He speaks to us on the issues of life? If we truly love Him, surrendering those things will not be a problem for us. But if we love self more than God, we will find ourselves in a battle of wills with God rather than bearing fruit.

LOVE OTHERS

Remember, we are talking about our love as fruit of the Spirit. Our understanding of the love that God has for us is vital to our ability to love other people. If we think we do everything right and everyone else ought to line up to us, then we are going to have a hard time loving people. But if we see that His love is of infinite measure, unparalleled to anything else, and so much more than we could ever comprehend, we are rightfully humbled and in a better position to love others as God intends.

Loving others means that we must love both Christians and sinners. The first may seem easy, but sometimes it isn't. The commandment still stands: "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

Even among our Christian brothers and sisters, there are those whom you think are "weird." Some probably see you that way as well. There are some with whom you may not see eye to eye on issues within the church; but, friends, we dare not disagree to the point at which we no longer love one another.

Do we love fellow Christians in spite of our differences? Do we love fellow Christians even though we may not agree and see everything exactly the same? In the epistles, we see that Paul encountered a lot of different people with different ideas about various issues. Some of these were very serious—contentious relationships and even immorality, such as fornication. Nevertheless, Paul didn't throw his hands up and quit. He didn't say, "Well I tried. I guess you win some and you lose some." Paul loved them, corrected them using God's word, and prayed for them!

Friends, we **MUST** be guilty of loving other Christians! Love them, care for them, and don't forget to **PRAY** for them! That means when there's tension and conflict, as well as when there's peace and joy. We **MUST** be a people who love one another! Remember, Jesus Himself told us, "By this will all people know that you are my disciples, **IF** you love one another."

LOVE SINNERS, TOO

Loving others also involves loving sinners. The Bible is very clear—we are to hate sin, but love the sinner. While we must be against sexual immorality, pornography, and addictions to alcohol, drugs, or tobacco, may it never be said of us that we do not love even those people who are trapped in those sins!

The Bible informs us that there is grace for those sins. There is healing for broken hearts and shattered

homes. The Bible also says that we are to be compassionate—quick to show mercy, to forgive, and to love. The instructions are quite clear: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.... Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:27-28, 36).

What about our love for sinners? Being friends to sinners can be messy and might mean some real sacrifices on our part. It might require us to associate with people and situations that we normally try to avoid, but Jesus clearly teaches us to love the saint **AND** the sinner. Jesus was frequently chastised by the religious leaders of the day for associating with those on the margins of society. He was accused of hanging out with wine bibbers and publicans! He even ate with the despised tax collector Zacchaeus and his whole family! That was a shock to the religious sensibilities of the day. Likewise we should, with pure intentions and in a right spirit, associate with the people Jesus associated with—saints and sinners. And love them.

CONCLUSION

Let me pose a question in conclusion. "How is our fruit of love?"

What kind of love is being produced in our lives? Do we only love those who love us? Do we only go out of the way for those who would go out of the way for us? Do we only love those who agree with us, share our interests, and empathize with our situation? If so, our love is not true agape love. It is discriminatory, and we need to ask God to help us to love as He loves.

Maybe God is asking us to do away with some things in our lives in order to bear fruit—things that have caused our love to grow cold. We need to ask for God's help and submit to his pruning and purging. Admittedly that can be a very painful process, but it may be necessary in order to restore love to its rightful place in our behaviors. Remember, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). The end result is good—more fruit, more love!

Stay connected to the Vine and watch the fruit of love flourish. ■

Brian Wardlaw, Jr. graduated from Hobe Sound Bible College, Hobe Sound, FL, in 2013. He served as an associate pastor at Mt. Tabor Bible Church, Covington, GA, for five years before moving in April 2018 to be the Senior Pastor at the Franklin Bible Methodist Church, Franklin, OH. Brian, his wife Beth, and daughter Gracelyn live in Franklin, OH.



— Called Unto Holiness —

In this space we use writers both past and present to discuss various aspects of Christian holiness.

HINDRANCES TO OBTAINING THE BLESSING

by Samuel Logan Brengle

Holiness has not legs and does not go walking about visiting idle people, as a lazy Christian seemed to think who told me that he thought the experience would “come” to him “some day.” The fact is, there are hindrances in the way of holiness with most people. This being true, it is the extreme of folly to sit down with indifference and quietly wait, with folded hands, for the blessed experience to come to you. Be sure of this, it will not come any more than a crop of potatoes will come to the lazy fellow who sits in the shade and never lifts his hoe.

Therefore, the part of wisdom is to begin at once, by a diligent study of God’s Word, much secret prayer, and unflinching self-examination, to find out what these hindrances are, and, by the grace of God, to put them away. The Bible tells us that the two great practical hindrances to holiness are imperfect consecration and imperfect faith.

Before a watchmaker can clean and regulate my watch, I must give it unreservedly into his hands. Before a doctor can cure me, I must take his medicine in the manner and at the time he requires. Before a captain can navigate me across the trackless ocean, I must get on board his ship and stay there. Just so, if I would have God cleanse and regulate my heart with all its affections, if I would have Him cure my sin-sick soul, if I would have Him take me safely across the ocean of time into that greater ocean of eternity, I must put myself fully into His hands and stay there.

This consecration consists in a perfect putting off of your own will, your disposition, temper, desires, likes, and dislikes, and a perfect putting on of Christ’s will, Christ’s disposition, temper, desires, likes, and dislikes. In short, perfect consecration is a putting off self and a putting on Christ; a giving up your own will in all things and receiving the will of Jesus instead.

The second hindrance in the way of him who would be holy is imperfect faith. All who are born of God and

have the witness of His Spirit to their justification know full well that it was not through any good works of their own, nor by growing into it, that they were saved, but it was “by grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8). But very many of these dear people seem to think that we are to grow into sanctification, or are to get it by our own works. But the Lord settled that question, and made it as plain as words can make it, when He told Paul that He sent him to the Gentiles to “open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me” (Acts 26:18). Not by works, nor by growth, but by faith were they to be made holy.

Consecration and faith are matters of the heart, and the trouble with most people is there; but, no doubt, there are some people whose trouble is with the head. They fail to get the blessing because they are seeking something altogether too small. Holiness is a great blessing. It is the renewal of the whole man in the image of Jesus.

There are other people who fail to obtain the blessing because they are seeking something altogether distinct from holiness—a vision of Heaven, of balls of fire, of some angel, etc. But 1 Timothy 1:5 teaches us that holiness is nothing more than a pure heart filled with perfect love and a clear conscience toward God and man.

Come to the Lord with the same simple faith that you did when you were saved; lay your case before Him, ask Him to take away all uncleanness and to perfect you in love, and then believe that He does it. If you will then resist all Satan’s temptations to doubt, you will soon find all your hindrances gone, and yourself rejoicing “with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:8). ■

Samuel Logan Brengle (1860-1936) was a Commissioner in the Salvation Army and a leading author, teacher, and preacher of the doctrine of holiness. This excerpt is adapted from Helps to Holiness (Schmul Publishing Co., 1984, pp.12-17).

Dear Phil

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Who produces the fruit of the Spirit in a Christian—us or the Spirit? Does every Christian have every fruit of the Spirit? What about where “fruit” is singular versus plural? —Charity

Dear Charity,

Let’s start with your last question first. Jesus tells us we know false prophets by their “fruits” (Matt. 7:20). The plural “fruits” seems to point to different kinds of behavior. However, the NT never speaks of the fruit of the Spirit in the plural. Paul uses the word “fruit” as a collective singular—a word that may refer to one item or multiple items. The word “deer” works like this. We say there is one deer out front and two deer in the back. The “fruit” of the Spirit can refer to one or all of the items listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

In Galatians 5, Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. The flesh does not produce the “works of the flesh” by itself. The flesh has desires (Gal. 5:17), but those desires must be enacted by a person who chooses to fulfill them. The same is true for the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, etc. are actions and attitudes which have their source in the Holy Spirit’s desires (Gal. 5:17). God by the Spirit works in us both to desire and to do His will (Phil. 4:13), but He does not

enact His desires apart from our choices. We, in the language of Galatians 5, must walk “in the Spirit” to avoid fulfilling the desires of the flesh (vs.16). We must be “led by the Spirit” (vs.18) and “keep in step with the Spirit” (v.25) to enact the fruit that He desires to produce in us (vs.22-23). The Spirit pours out the love of God in our hearts (Rom. 5:8), but we must choose to enact that love through obedience to God (John 14:15). The Spirit creates a desire for joy in us, but we must choose to focus our minds on God and rejoice in Him (Phil. 4:4). So, based on the context of Galatians 5 alone, the fruit of the Spirit is something we cooperate with the Spirit in producing. This conclusion is confirmed by other NT passages where believers are commanded to be joyful (Phil. 4:4), to be patient (1 Thess. 5:14), or to put on kindness and gentleness (Col. 3:12). Since commands address our will, they teach us that we must choose to cooperate with the Spirit in bearing His fruit.

Not only do we participate in producing these fruit, but all these fruit are capable of growing. The nature of the fruit metaphor itself

suggests this. Fruit does not appear full grown on plants. It moves through a process of maturation. In addition to the testimony of nature, the NT contains prayers for believers to increase in love (1 Thess. 3:12; Phil. 1:9). Paul speaks of believers’ faith growing greatly (2 Thess. 1:3). Peter challenges us to be diligent to increase in faith, virtue, self-control, etc. (2 Pet. 1:6-10). Both nature and Scripture teach us to expect the fruit of the Spirit to begin in immature form and grow increasingly mature. Further, all fruit are not always visible. Jesus wept for Lazarus; He didn’t leap for joy (John 11:35). The same Spirit who empowers patience led Jesus to rebuke unbelief sharply (Matt. 23). Jesus was not joyless or impatient. He was led by the Spirit to grieve in one case and give love’s rebuke in another (cf. Lev. 19:17).

Since the Spirit is present in every Christian (Rom. 8:9), all believers will both want to and be able to produce this fruit. The degree to which the fruit grows is a function of our cooperation with the Spirit. Personal experience teaches us that character transformation normally progresses in sequence. Parents work on helping their children develop discipline, respect, and concern for others. However, it is unreasonable to expect children to mature in every area at the same time equally. Likewise, we should expect to see the fruit of the Spirit growing in us at different rates and times as God makes us more like Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 1:6-8).

Blessings,
Phil ■

Dr. A. Philip Brown II is the Graduate Program director and a member of the ministerial faculty at God’s Bible School and College.

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student focus

RELIGIOUS PEOPLE LIVE LONGER

Ohio State University conducted a study based on 1,000 obituaries published across the U.S. in 2011. Dr. Baldwin Way, co-author of the study, concluded that there is “persuasive evidence” of “a relationship between religious participation and how long a person lives.” People whose obituaries mentioned a religious affiliation lived an average of 5.64 years longer than those whose obituaries did not. The study’s researchers insist there is merit to the connection: people with religious affiliations often volunteer and engage in social activities throughout their lives—something routinely tied to longer lifespan.

BIRTH STATISTICS SIGNAL CULTURAL SHIFT

Forty percent of all births in the U.S. now occur outside of wedlock, up from 10% in 1970, according to an annual report by the United Nations Population Fund. That number is even higher in the European Union. The data show such births are predominantly to unmarried couples living together rather than to single mothers. The average age an American woman has her first child is now 27, up from 22 in 1970. Additionally, the marriage rate has fallen in the U.S., and those who do marry do so at a later age. The number of adults in cohabiting relationships has steadily risen, with

those under age 35 representing half of all cohabiting couples. Regardless of marital status, more couples are choosing not to have children at all. The U.S. fertility rate hit a historic 30-year low last year.

PASTORS AND POVERTY

While previous Barna research indicated that only 19% of U.S. adults saw Christian clergy as very influential in their community and 21% saw them as a valued voice on important issues of the day, new research shows that pastors’ thoughts concerning the world’s poor are highly valued: 88% of the American public, including 92% of practicing Christians, trust the opinion of a pastor on the issue of global poverty, ranking above the opinions of reporters, academics, and politicians.

SHAKY ON DOCTRINE

The recent State of Theology survey by Ligonier Ministries indicates that 53% of Evangelicals believe everyone sins a little, but “most people are good by nature.” It also found that 51% believe God accepts “the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam,” while 42% disagree. On the question of justification by works or faith, 91% responded “faith alone.” The study found a majority of American adults agree with well-known doctrines of the Christian faith, but that they hold those teachings loosely. ■

BRENT LeCLERE is from the small town of Summitville, IN. He was saved when he was about three years old and has been walking with God ever since.

Brent felt that God specifically directed him to attend GBS. He reports that his Bible college training has been used by God to “change my perception of Him into a biblical one and to mature me. As a result, my ministry plans have been changed into what actually fits me best.”

What he likes most about his GBS experience is “the sense of family and community on campus among the students and staff.... No staff member or teacher is too big to have a conversation with you.”

Brent intends to graduate in May 2019 with a BA in Church and Family Ministry. After that he plans to begin leading a small group at a local church, to expand his practical ministry knowledge, and possibly to pursue a Master’s in Ministry. ■

Seventy-five percent of our students receive some form of financial aid which enables them to attend GBS. If you would like to support students with financial needs, you may send a gift to:

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The Loveliness of Love

by Glenn D. Black

Eli Stanley Jones (1884–1973), a 20th-century Methodist Christian missionary and evangelist, spent 70 years traveling throughout the world sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus. He ministered in India as a pastor, teacher, and evangelist for many years.

He once asked Mahatma Gandhi, an Indian lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India, the following question: “How can we make Christianity naturalized in India, not a foreign thing, identified with a foreign government and a foreign people, but a part of the national life of India and contributing its power to India’s uplift?”

Gandhi responded: “First, I would suggest all of you Christians, missionaries and all, must begin to live more like Jesus Christ. Second, practice your religion without adulterating it or toning it down. Third, emphasize *love* and make it your working force, for *love* is central in Christianity.”

The More Excellent Way

Love is the sum and substance of the Christian life. There is no greater or important distinctive mark of the Christian than love. In fact, Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another” (John 13:35).



Jesus summarized all 613 commandments of the Mosaic Law in the one word—*love*! He explained the Ten Commandments with only two statements: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength...” (Mark 12:30). This new commandment summarized the first four original Ten Commandments. He further instructed:

“...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself...” (Mark 12:31). This second new commandment summarized the last six original Ten Commandments. Love breathed through His teachings!

In response to an excessive, and sometimes confusing, emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, the Apostle Paul introduced to the Corinthian church a “more excellent way” to live (1 Cor. 12:31). He explained the need, nature, and nobility of love in 1 Corinthians 13! He also exhorted the Colossians, “Above all things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col.

3:14). He also urged the Romans to “owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8).

Love’s Orchard

Later in the New Testament we read in Galatians 5:22-23 where Paul explained to the Galatian church a theology of love which he describes as the “fruit of the Spirit.” This orchard of love is in sharp contrast to the gar-

den of wickedness he listed in Galatians 5:19-21. He explained to the Galatian church that the fruit [or evidence] of the Holy Spirit working within our hearts and lives is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This Spirit-fruit is a vivid picture and accurate description of the sanctified life.

Richard S. Taylor* suggested that these graces, or fruits, are actually aspects of love. He wrote that:

JOY

is the glow of love

PEACE

is the harmony of love

LONGSUFFERING

is the patience of love

GENTLENESS

is the kindness of love

GOODNESS

is the benevolence of love

FAITH

is the faithfulness of love

MEEKNESS

is the humility and submissiveness of love

TEMPERANCE

is the self-control, or discipline, of love.

The key to understanding these qualities of grace is in the name. "Fruit" is the natural result of growth. And "of the Spirit" explains exactly Who causes that growth—it's not merely our striving or straining. The source of the fruit of the Spirit in our spiritual lives is the power, presence, and purity of the Holy Spirit.

Love is the taproot of the fruit of the Spirit. It is the ingredient which makes Christianity attractive. Love is the glue that creates unity among followers of Christ. It is the driving force that generates the Church to forge ahead in its effort to win the spiritually lost for Christ.

Love is the most powerful force in the world. Love is indeed central to Christianity! Without love Christianity as a movement and ministry will become Christ-less, legalistic, and unconvincing.

The Loveliness of Love

The English language has only one word for love. The language in which the New Testament was written—Greek—had at least four words for love: *eros* (sensual or physical love); *storge* (domestic love); *philia* (friendship love); and *agape*. *Agape* love is selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. It is the highest of the four types of love in the Greek language.

Agape love is the word the New Testament writers chose to describe the unconditional love of God for us

and through us. This Greek word and variations of it are frequently found throughout the New Testament. *Agape* perfectly describes the kind of love Jesus Christ had for his Father and for His followers. It is the type and quality of love that Jesus and the Apostle Paul taught. It is the beauty of love which we should practice daily.

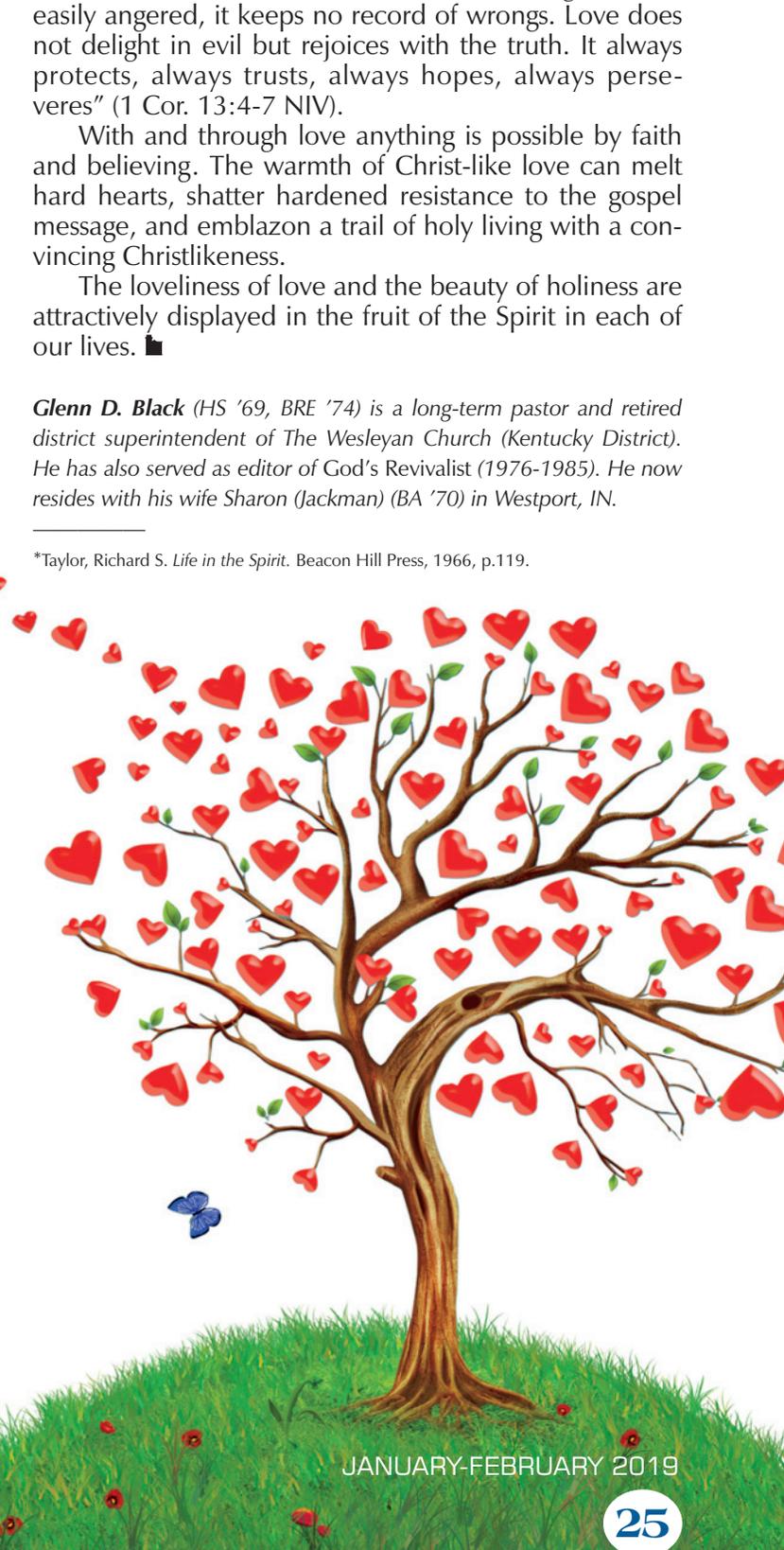
Love is lovely because "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Cor. 13:4-7 NIV).

With and through love anything is possible by faith and believing. The warmth of Christ-like love can melt hard hearts, shatter hardened resistance to the gospel message, and emblazon a trail of holy living with a convincing Christlikeness.

The loveliness of love and the beauty of holiness are attractively displayed in the fruit of the Spirit in each of our lives. ■

Glenn D. Black (HS '69, BRE '74) is a long-term pastor and retired district superintendent of The Wesleyan Church (Kentucky District). He has also served as editor of *God's Revivalist* (1976-1985). He now resides with his wife Sharon (Jackman) (BA '70) in Westport, IN.

*Taylor, Richard S. *Life in the Spirit*. Beacon Hill Press, 1966, p.119.



Love of a Mother

by Titus Byer

"I think they truly love their children," the woman said kindly.

The surprise showed on her face when I responded, "Actually, I'm not sure they do."

We were discussing young parents who had essentially abandoned their children to be raised by another so that career goals could be reached. Noticing the woman's expression, I explained my statement. "True love causes parents to make decisions that are for the good of their children."

As the fourth of six children, my mind went immediately to my own mother and what she would have done. Mom would have made time and done what she knew was right even if it had been difficult. Mom's definition of love was not only evident through her actions and choices, but it was also clearly defined by a plaque on our dining room wall that is still in her home today. It reads, "Love: An intense desire for someone else's happiness." While I have since modified that definition somewhat (sorry, Mom!), my concept of love being "other oriented" is still rooted in the definition both written out and lived out by my mother.

I have observed a trait in parents that is often mistaken for love. It is an emotional response akin to that which one has for a small puppy or kitten. Few are the people who would physically harm a cute puppy. Even chewed shoes and small accidents are often overlooked. Yet as that pup grows older and begins to gain a will of its own, the realization dawns on the owner that this cute puppy is going to require an enormous amount of training to remain in good standing within the home!

When it comes to children, parents can have this same sort of shallow affection. Children have a way of reconfiguring our time unlike anything else. The saying,

"Love is a choice" has never been truer than when it comes to spending time with (or on) our children. Even though the desire and intention to spend time with my children comes easily for me, actually taking the effort to set apart the time is often challenging. However, love demands that I do so.

The parents mentioned at the beginning of this article had many personal goals that could only be reached at the expense of their children. Their kids were still little and "cute," yet I doubted the children's "cuteness" would be enough to earn them the mentoring and parenting they would need in the coming teen years.



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Growing up in a town in northern Ontario, Mom would often drive us more than 900 miles to attend camp meetings and other Christian events. I remember having to transport our luggage by snowmobile from our house to our van parked at the end of our snow-blocked driveway in order to attend the Interchurch Holiness Convention. We rarely even checked the forecast before leaving because it was assumed that the weather would be bad at some point along the way. Two hundred miles of the trip were on two lane roads shared with logging trucks and a lot of snow—and my mom doesn't like driving even in the best of weather!

I had to chuckle a few winters back when I invited Mom, who now lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, to visit us in our home here in Michigan. She flatly refused.

"No way. I don't want to get stuck in a snowstorm!"

I reminded her of all those trips she made in times past from Ontario to the IHC in Dayton, Ohio, and VIP Day at God's Bible School. Her reply has stuck with me: "Yes, but now I don't have to."

While part of her response was the insinuation that I was just as capable of driving south as she was of driving north, another implication speaks volumes. When we were young and impressionable, she didn't even consider it a choice whether or not to drive us to IHC or camp meeting. She was aware that these events were vital for our spiritual well-being, and thus SHE HAD TO DO IT. This is love defined. Love makes the decisions necessary for the well being of another—and no one demonstrated that better than Mom.

Living in a town far from her extended family, I know there was a strong emotional strain on Mom when it came time for us to leave home. Her natural inclination to have her immediate family close was strong. However, if we faltered for a moment in our resolve to attend Bible college, an alternative option was not even on the table as far as she was concerned. We were going to Bible school, and that was that!

I can still remember going home for Christmas after my first semester of college only to find that my room had been cleaned out and given to my brother. This was Mom's version of an eagle nudging a baby out of its nest in order for it to learn to fly. I have no doubt that the room could have been made available to me once again

if the need presented itself, but Mom made sure I received the message that I was to be committed to a new life "out of the nest." For this I will be eternally grateful.

Love—focusing my energy on someone else's well-being—has been the goal of my life and ministry as a pastor. As I counsel young people, I am frequently faced with the choice of offering words in order to be "liked" versus saying what is true. Granted, this is really a false dilemma presented by the enemy. I have found time and again that being true to the spiritual health of an individual builds far greater rapport than trying to be a "buddy." Teens have a keen sense for discerning if we care about *them* or are in some way feeding our own egos. Put simply, one option is about them, the other is about me.

My understanding of love was forced into action just a few days ago when some new neighbor children came over to visit our boys. As a pastor, I can exploit this contact as "someone I'm reaching for the gospel," or I can consider first of all the responsibility I have to my own children to protect them from evil influences while at the same time guiding them to be "salt and light." I told the neighbor boys cheerfully, "In this home, we obey mom and dad. Do you know why?" They shook their heads suspiciously. "Because listening to dads and moms prepares you to listen to a boss someday when you're at work! And it's our goal to have boys grow up to be fine young men who are in good standing with the boss!"

I think they truly understood. The rules in our home were not about some adult's ego, they were for the children's good! The light bulb of recognition lit up a face as one boy grinned. I could be wrong, but I think he felt loved. ■

Titus Byer (BA '08) and his wife Cherie (Jones) (BA '08) have three children: Levi (9), Josiah (6), and Anne (1). They live in Vestaburg, MI, where Titus is an associate pastor at Rock Lake Bible Methodist Church. His mother, Debby Byer, is Food Services Supervisor at God's Bible School and College.

Photos L-R. Mom and all six grown children (2014): Luke, Ezra, Esther, Debby (mom), Titus, Dorcas (Hallam), and Joel; Mom and Titus on his seventh birthday (1991): Luke, Dorcas, Joel, Titus, and Mom (1985).



COLLEGE CHOIR LATE-WINTER TOUR

February 21, Thursday, 7:00 PM
Pell City Bible Methodist Church
618 Martin St. N, Pell City, AL
Rev. Don Shirk (205) 338-7118

February 22, Friday, 7:00 PM
South/Central Alabama GBS Rally
Bibb County Board of Education Auditorium
721 Walnut St., Centreville, AL
Rev. Steve Vernon (334) 624-4298

February 23, Saturday, 7:00 PM
Park Place Wesleyan Church
4400 70th Ave. Pinellas Park, FL
Rev. John Phipps (727) 526-3674

February 24, Sunday, 10:00 AM
Light and Life Free Methodist Church
5730 Deeson Rd., Lakeland, FL
Dr. Eldred Kelley (863) 858-6361

February 24, Sunday, 2:30 PM & 6:00 PM
Lakeland Holiness Camp,
Florida Holiness Campground
3335 South Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL
Rev. Glen Allison, president
(863) 646-5152 (camp office)

February 25, Monday, 7:00 PM
Avon Park Camp Association
1001 W. Lake Isis Ave., Avon Park, FL
(1200 block of US Hwy 27 North)
(863) 453-6831 (office)

February 26, Tuesday, 7:30 PM
Easley Bible Methodist Church
855 Gentry Memorial Hwy., Easley, SC
Rev. Jonathan Slagenweit (864) 395-7247

February 27, Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Eastlake Community Church
1118 Hendricks Store Rd., Moneta, VA
Rev. Troy Keaton (540) 297-0966

February 28, Thursday, 7:00 PM
Lafayette Church of the Nazarene
264 Lafayette Pkwy., Lexington KY
Rev. Dan Dorn (859) 278-7213

March 1, Friday, 7:00 PM
Locust Grove Wesleyan Tabernacle
State Route 41, Locust Grove, OH
Rev. Richard Williams (937) 587-6275

March 2, Saturday, 7:00 PM
Church of Christ in Christian Union
770 Jefferson Ave., Chillicothe, OH
Rev. Mark Clendaniel (740) 773-6747

March 3, Sunday, 10:40 AM
Southport Church of the Nazarene
920 E. Southport Rd., Indianapolis, IN
Rev. William Swesey (317) 784-4610
Rev. Tim Lanigan (812) 709-2688

March 3, Sunday, 6:00 PM
Franklin Bible Methodist Church
6000 S. Dixie Hwy., Franklin, OH
Rev. Brian Wardlaw (937) 746-1467



College Choir

GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL & COLLEGE

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