

## **The Works Of The Flesh And The Fruit Of The Spirit**

(Gal 5v16-26)

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All Scriptural quotations in this study are taken from the King James Version, unless otherwise stated. The King James Version follows the vast majority of Greek texts in the order of about 1,000 to 10, and it is also confirmed by the ancient manuscripts in other languages, like the Gothic and Peshitta. It is in my opinion still the most accurate translation from the original Scriptures, and is my preferred version, and other translations quoted in this study, are tested against the King James Version. The Hebrew and Greek texts are taken from The Interlinear Bible.

### **Introduction**

#### **The Conflict In The Soul Between The Flesh And The Spirit (Gal 5v17)**

#### **The body "soma" (Strong's NT:4983) and the flesh "sarx" (Strong's NT:4561)**

The word "soma," "body," is used to speak of a living body, of both natural bodies, and celestial bodies; 1Cor 15v35-44; and the Church as the body of Christ. 1Cor 12v12-27, Eph 1v23, 4v4,12,16. "Soma" is seldom used to speak of the evil desires of the body. Jesus said the whole body is full of darkness, when people's eyes and hearts are full of greedy ambition, love of worldly things, lust, and evil; but the whole body is full of bright shining light, when our hearts are single, "haplous" (Strong's NT:573) sound, healthy, clear. We cannot serve God and Mammon; serving Mammon destroys

marital happiness, and causes breakdowns in marriage. Matt 6v19-24. Paul says people dishonour their bodies by sin; Rom 1v24; and exhorts the Roman Christians not to allow sin to reign in their bodies. Rom 6v12. He tells us that sexual sin is a sin against our bodies; and our bodies are now the temple of the Holy Spirit. 1Cor 6v18-20. Paul instructs us to crucify and mortify the evil deeds of the body. Rom 8v13, Gal 5v24. James warns us that uncontrolled sinful use of the tongue defiles the whole body. James 3v6.

"Sarx," "flesh," is used, without any bad idea, to speak of mankind in general, "all flesh," John 17v2, Acts 2v17, Rom 3v20; and of the bodies of beasts and men, 1Cor 15v39. However, it is also used to speak of the domination of the soul by the flesh in fallen mankind. Eph 2v1-3, 2Peter 2v18. The world is full of the lust of the flesh and eyes, and the pride of life. 1John 2v16. Those who allow the desires and biochemical functions of the body to dominate the soul, should realise that this minding of the flesh is hostile to God, and the Law of God. Paul states that those who live just to cater for the appetites and impulses of their fleshly nature, cannot please God; and will die spiritually and eternally. Rom 8v6-14. Paul states that all mankind has given way to the deceitful promises of the flesh, and experienced bondage to the flesh, the temptations arising from the flesh he describes as "sin in the flesh." Rom 7v9,17,18,23, 8v3. Paul also said that Christians who are dominated by the flesh are "carnal," "sarkikos" (Strong's NT:4559) and said that divisions in the Church proved that those who caused them were carnal, "sarkikos," and spiritual babies. 1Cor 3v1-4, 2Cor 10v4. Peter warns us to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. 1Peter 2v11.

It is a wonderful fact that God the Word became flesh, out of pure love for us, and suffered and overcame the trials and temptations of true humanity. John 1v14, 1John 4v2,3, 2John v7, 1Tim 3v16, Rom 1v4,5, 8v3, Heb 2v17,18, 4v15, 5v7, 10v5. **Jesus was manifest in flesh, "sarx;" but He never allowed it to dominate Him,** He was "in the likeness of sinful flesh," "en homoiomati sarkos hamartias," just as He was "in the likeness of men," "en homoiomati anthropon," the likeness was real. Phil 2v7. "Homoioima" (Strong's NT:3667) occurs in Rom 1v23, 5v14, 6v5, 8v3, Phil 2v7, Rev 9v7. Jesus had a real humanity, not a false phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics taught. Jesus conquered the flesh that had contaminated and led all mankind into sin. Alford writes on Rom 8v3, "'in the likeness of the flesh of sin' (the flesh whose attribute and character was sin. The genitive is not 'hamartolou,' but implies far more-[not merely the contamination by, but] the belonging to and being possessed by."

The Expositor's Greek Testament gives light on Rom 8v3, here is a summary of its arguments: "In Rom 8v3, "homoioima" emphasises our Lord's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; and what Paul means by "flesh of sin," is that God sent Jesus in that nature which in us is identified with sin. This was the "form" (and "homoioima," signifies "form" rather than "likeness") in which Jesus came amongst men. This does not deny Christ's sinlessness, which is an irrefutable fact in Paul's eyes. If anyone argues that it is a contradiction to declare that Christ was sinless, and say at the same time that He came in a nature which we identify with sin, we would answer that this identification does not belong to the essence of our nature, but to its corruption, and all the New Testament declares that Jesus is one with us-short of sin. The likeness of our Lord's limitations is the point which is here affirmed, and it is an essential and fundamental qualification of our redeeming Lord." End of summary.

**Christ partook of human flesh, but did not partake of the sins of the flesh, His holy life condemned sin in the flesh and showed that it was possible to live in victory over the flesh.** In Heb 2v16-18, we read that Jesus took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that it was a moral duty and necessity ("opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo" (Strong's NT:3784) "to be obligated"), for Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren, and suffer the same temptations, so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest. To be tempted in all points like we are, He had to be made in all points like as we are. Heb 2v17 with 4v15.

### **The way to conquer and crucify the works and desires of the flesh, is by receiving life in the spirit**

Paul exhorts us not to make any provision for the lusts of the flesh, Rom 13v14; but to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. 2Cor 7v1. The law of the spirit and life in Christ makes us free from the law of sin and death. Rom 8v1-4. Walking in the Spirit means that we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; and by the Spirit's power we are able to crucify the works of the flesh, and put off the sins of the flesh. Col 2v11, Gal 5v16,17,24. We are not to allow sin to reign in our bodies, but to use them as instruments of righteousness. Rom 6v6-23. Paul says that Christians are "spiritual," "pneumatikos" (Strong's NT:4152) when they walk and live in the Spirit. 1Cor 2v15, 3v1, Gal 6v1. Our spiritual weapons are not "of the flesh," "sarkikos." 2Cor 10v4.

### **The conflict in the soul for the soul**

Two totally opposite forces seek to dominate the soul, and Gal 5v17 shows us that victory comes through the Spirit of God. Two forces lined up in conflict with one another, "allelois antikeitai," like trench warfare. When the Spirit of God dominates, moulds, and controls, it produces godly fruit of character. When the flesh dominates and controls, we find the evil works of the flesh. **The domination of the Spirit produces life, the domination of the flesh produces corruption.** Gal 6v8.

## **We Should Not Confuse The Works Of The Flesh With Possession**

Some books on demon possession name the evil spirits that possess a person as spirits of envy, of lust, of anger, of pride, etc., and in some books dozens of such names are given. There is no basis in Scripture for this. These preachers have confused the works of the flesh with demon possession, for what they call demon possession, Paul clearly calls works of the flesh in Gal 5v19-25. **The Bible clearly distinguishes between the world, flesh and the Devil, and so should we.** 1John 2v15-17, 1Pet 5v6-9. Let us now consider these works of the flesh.

### Works Of The Flesh

(Gal 5v19-21)

#### **Sexual Sins**

##### **Adultery "Moicheia" (Strong's NT:3430)**

"Moicheia" occurs in Matt 15v19, Mark 7v21, John 8v3 (and Gal 5v19 in the Majority Text); and "moichos" (Strong's NT:3432) which occurs in Luke 18v11, 1Cor 6v9, Heb 13v4 (and James 4v4 in the Majority Text); speaks of someone who has intercourse with the husband or wife of another person. "Moichalis" (Strong's NT:3428) an adulteress, occurs in Matt 12v39, 16v4, Mark 8v38, Rom 7v3, James 4v4 and 2Pet 2v14. Jesus showed wonderful mercy and grace to the woman of Samaria, John 4v1-29; and the woman taken in adultery, John 8v1-11; Christ came to save not to condemn. John 3v16,17.

##### **Sexual Immorality "Porneia" (Strong's NT:4202)**

"Porneia" is used as a general word for all kinds of unlawful sexual uncleanness, and includes homosexuality as well as fornication and harlotry. A "porne" (Strong's NT:4204) is a prostitute and "porneia" is a selfish gratification of lust. In sharp contrast to this is true Biblical love and marriage, where each partner manifests constant genuine practical care and tenderness towards the other partner. **Relationships in Christian marriage should be like that between Christ and His Church.** Eph 5v24-29, Col 3v18,19. **Lust defiles the personality, but true love, and the correct use of sexual powers, produces an enlargement of the soul and spirit and true worship of God.**

Paul's missionary tours brought him into contact with the total moral and spiritual corruption in the Greek and Roman world. Purity was the expected norm in the early days of Rome, but when Rome conquered Greece, the debased Greek moral standards corrupted Roman life, and immorality became the established custom and practice. In Greece, there was no shame over sexual immorality either before or after marriage. The Greek practice of husbands having cultured and sophisticated mistresses, and wives having extra marital male lovers, became the norm in Rome. All kinds of sexual depravity corrupted all of society from high to low. The wife of Emperor Claudius, the Empress Messalina, was notorious for her immorality; she frequently stole out of the royal palace at night to serve in a public brothel; no prostitute could match her capacity or endurance, she was always the last to leave.

In Rome sexual depravity manifested itself in the most appalling numbers of divorces and remarriages, and in men's treatment and attitude towards women. In Rome, women had no legal rights, a man could tell his wife to go and divorce her, just when he felt like it. Juvenal records that one woman had eight husbands in five years. Jerome tells of a woman who was the twenty first wife of her husband, and he was her twenty third husband. Plato said, "A bad man's fate would be reincarnation as a woman." God's Law did not allow this evil and contemptuous attitude to women, or the easy multiple divorce that was practised by the heathen, women had definite rights under the Law; and even the right of divorce for ill-treatment and partiality in a polygamous marriage. Exodus 21v10,11. See Deut 24v1-4. God is very angry with men who divorce their wives when they lose their beauty as they get older, and warns that He will not accept the offering of those who deal treacherously with "the wife of their youth" in this way. Mal 2v14-17. Peter emphasises the same point in 1Pet 3v7.

Dreadful unnatural vice in the form of incest and homosexuality was rampant in both Greek and Roman society. Caligula committed habitual incest with his sister Drusilla, and Nero even violated his own mother, Agrippina. It was common talk that Socrates and Plato were "content with the love of boys," and Plato's work on homosexual love, his "Symposium" 178 D, confirms this. The whole of Greek society was riddled and corrupted by homosexuality, and Rome became corrupted by this "national disease of Greece." Gibbon tells us that Claudius was the only one among the first fifteen Emperors, "whose taste in love was entirely correct." Nero went through a marriage service, and had a marriage procession in Rome, with a castrated youth named Sporus. Emperor Hadrian had his homosexual partner Antonius deified, after his death through drowning. The depravity in society was so appalling, that even pagan writers and historians were disgusted by it. When Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, there was only filth on offer under the tinsel and show. In Greece and Rome it was normal for prostitution to be connected with religion. In Corinth, a thousand so called "sacred prostitutes," came down each night from the Temple of Aphrodite (on the summit of Acrocorinth), to practice their

seductions; and immorality with them was looked upon as a sacred duty. It is a remarkable fact that Paul had a mighty revival in this evil and corrupt city; our Lord told Paul in a vision, "I have many people in this city." Acts 18v8-11. The Greek city of Corinth was probably the most corrupt city in the world (Hence arose the Greek word "korinthiazesthai," which literally means "to corinthianize" and meant to live with drunken and immoral debauchery); but the preaching of the Gospel brought deliverance to those held captive with sexual and moral problems. Paul's cure for the Corinthians was not exorcism, but the preaching of Christ crucified, confirmed by mighty signs and wonders. 1Cor 2v1-4, 2Cor 12v12. It is essential to note that God's restraining hand on evil spirits, has meant that only a small minority of the Heathen have been demon possessed, even though they have been so utterly depraved in their living.

**Paul warned the Corinthians, that many of them had been sick, and others had even died through divine discipline because of their unclean living.** 1Cor 11v29-32. **Paul did not practice or suggest exorcism for moral problems, for either unbelievers or Christians.** The man who committed incest with his father's wife, was disciplined by handing him over to Satan for the destruction of his body; however, a real repentance caused mercy to be shown and judgement to be withdrawn, and the man was welcomed back into Church fellowship. **The cure was not exorcism, but discipline by exclusion from the Church fellowship, and possible judgement and execution by God, if there was no repentance.** 1Cor 5v1-5, 2Cor 2v4-11. God loves and cares for His Church, and His chastenings are intended to spiritually benefit those who are under discipline, and purify and protect His Church from evil. 1Cor 11v32, 1Cor 5v5. Paul besought the Corinthians to flee from sexual impurity, because those who did such things would not inherit the kingdom of God. 1Cor 6v9-20, 2Cor 12v20,21. Paul told the Greek Thessalonians that they must totally abstain from sexual impurity, 1Thess 5v3-5; and the Colossians to mortify the sins of the flesh, and to put on the new man. Col 3v5-14. These were totally new ideas to the nations that Paul went to preach to, for pandering to the evil desires of the flesh was the norm. **Paul's message to these people was not exorcism, but salvation in Jesus. The cleansing blood, and risen life of Christ, gave them the power to live in purity, and victory over the flesh.** Rom 8v1-4.

#### **Uncleanness "Akatharsia" (Strong's NT:167)**

"Akatharsia," speaks of moral impurity. It is used in the papyri to describe the dirt in a filthy house, and pus from an infected wound. In the Septuagint it is used of an unclean immoral woman in Hosea 2v10; the ceremonial and moral uncleanness that stops a person approaching God in Lev 18v19, 22v3; and the moral uncleanness that destroys a person or nation in Micah 2v10 and Prov 6v16. **The word speaks of a corrupt person whose whole personality is defiled by filthiness in word thought and deed, and who glories in that corruption and filthiness.**

#### **Shameless Abandoned Sensuality "Aselgeia" (Strong's NT:766)**

"Aselgeia," speaks of shameless wantonness and lasciviousness. It describes someone who is audacious, insolent and violent, totally undisciplined and debased, and completely controlled by sensual desire. They have a total absence of sympathy, and are completely indifferent to the feelings and opinions of others. They have no desire to repent of their sin, or hide sin; and they openly applaud immorality. This is the shameless total abandonment to evil seen in Rom 1v32.

**NB1:** There is a progression and climax of evil in these words. "Moicheia," is infidelity in marriage. "Porneia," includes all sexual uncleanness, and unnatural sexual perversion. "Akatharsia" shows the spreading defilement and deterioration of the whole personality. "Aselgeia" speaks of shameless total abandonment to evil. **These words describe the worst of sexual immorality, and the total depravity of personality; however, Paul does not say that these people were possessed, he says that this was a result of allowing the flesh to dominate the life.** We know that Satan can use and incite the desires of the flesh; however, in Gal 5v19-21, Paul does not give the slightest hint of demonic incitement to evil, he states that this total depravity of soul is the result of people's desire to indulge in the sins of the flesh. Some people don't need much help from the Wicked One to be really evil, they just wallow in the sins of the flesh. The sexual sins that we have considered dominated the cities of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom; our Lord said the cure for this evil was mighty signs and wonders that would convict and compel them to repentance and faith. Matt 11v20-24, Luke 10v13, Rom 15v18-21.

**NB2:** **It a very serious heresy to teach Christians that their moral problems are the result of demon possession.** Paul exhorts Christians to "mortify" the flesh life, and "put off the old man and his evil deeds and put on the new man and agape love," and even "to put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Eph 4v22-25, Col 3v5-17, Rom 13v14. The putting off of the old life is an act of repentance. Paul never said that the Corinthians needed to be exorcised, but he did say that they needed to repent; and he commended them for their repentance and godly sorrow, which brought deliverance from the evil in their lives. 2Cor 7v1,8-11. Paul achieved victory over the flesh and Devil by exercising self-discipline, and through a transfigured and renewed mind; 1Cor 9v24-27, Rom 12v2; and victory over the Devil by putting on God's armour. Rom 13v12, Eph 6v11. Through the "law of the Spirit and life in Christ," we can be set free from "the law of sin and death," and the "righteousness of the Law can be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom 8v1-4.

**NB3:** Some preachers major on exorcising various kinds of evil spirits from almost everybody they pray for. These evil

spirits are given such names as spirits of anger, of lust, of homosexuality, etc.. This is **NOT** correct, for we fail to find any evil spirit being named in this way in the New Testament; and we never find anyone being exorcised of moral problems. **It is impossible to cast out the flesh, it has to be conquered through repentance, walking in the Spirit and self discipline.** Gal 5v16,24. "A spirit of divination" can be exorcised, but you cannot exorcise sins of the flesh, like adultery, fornication and homosexuality. Acts 16v16. Paul ascribes these moral problems to "the works of the flesh," and "an evil heart of unbelief." Heb 3v12. People **corrupt themselves** and wilfully go under the dominion of the flesh, and into the corruptions of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Exodus 32v6,7,25, Deut 9v12, Rom 1v18-32, 3v11-23, Eph 2v1-3.

Some people ascribe most physical sickness to demons; but only a very small amount of sickness is due to demon possession. Jesus did cast out a spirit that made a person dumb in Matt 9v32,33, Mark 9v17-25, Luke 11v14, and healed a person blind and dumb by casting out an evil spirit. Matt 12v22. The woman in Luke 13v11, with "a spirit of infirmity," was not exorcised by Jesus, He laid His hands on her and healed her. Satan had bound her with sickness for eighteen years by attacking her body with evil spiritual power; she was not possessed by a demon, no more than Job was when he was attacked by Satan in his body (Job 2v7). In Matt 4v23,24 we see that epilepsy, lunacy, and physical sickness usually arise from natural causes; and divine healing is almost always quite distinct and separate from demon possession and exorcism.

## Sins Of False Religion

### Idolatry "Eidolatreia" (Strong's NT:1495)

**Idolatry is the worship of images and things before God. Paul deliberately placed idolatry immediately after sexual perversion, because it was the desire for immoral living that produced idolatry, people want gods that condone immorality.** The idols of the heathen were often horrendously ugly, Diana (Artemis) of the Ephesians was an hideous black squat idol covered with many breasts. Israel made a golden calf so that they could run riot in the sins of the flesh. Paul tells us that sexual powers wrongly used end up in idolatry, and idolatry of sex, and the worship of the creature instead of the Creator. Rom 1v16-22. Paul states that demons are behind idolatry. 1Cor 10v20. Where idols, demons, and Satan are worshipped there is, as would be expected, more demon possession than where they are not worshipped; however, the amount is surprisingly small, considering the commitment to evil, and the seriousness of the sin. False religion in the form of idolatry and occultism, were among the major opponents of the early Church. Many Christians were executed by the Roman state, because they would not worship the Emperor as God. The world today has its idols, it worships its film stars and pop idols, sex and material things. Jesus told us not to be anxious, for life's material necessities will be added to us if we seek first the kingdom of Heaven. Matt 6v25-34, Luke 12v22-34.

### Sorcery And Witchcraft "Pharmakeia" (Strong's NT:5331)

"Pharmakon," was a drug and, "pharmakeia," the use of drugs. Plato uses "pharmakeia" in a good sense to speak of medical treatment, but states that drugs should only be used on serious diseases, or they could complicate matters. It was also used for the misuse of drugs in murder by poisoning. The noun "pharmakeia" only occurs in Gal 5v20, Rev 9v21 and 18v23. "Sorcerer," "pharmakus," occurs in Rev 21v8; and "pharmakos," (Strong's NT:5333) in Rev 22v15. "Mageia," (Strong's NT:3095) "sorceries," in Acts 8v11 and "mageuo," (Strong's NT:3096) "sorcery," in Act8v9. "Magos," (Strong's NT:3097) is translated as "sorcerer" in Acts 13v6,8; and the plural "magi," as "wise men" in Matt 2v1,7,16.

The practice of sorcery and witchcraft in Paul's time were very similar to their modern equivalents; images of people were made and destroyed, and curses were put upon people by invoking the powers of darkness. In Paul's time, magic, divination, astrology and the use of the occult powers mentioned in Deut 18v10-22, were commonly practised. People were full of fear, and used amulets and charms in an effort to protect themselves from witchcraft, sorcery, magical spells and the evil eye. The value of the books on magic burned in the revival at Ephesus was about £50,000, which shows how rife magical practices were in Paul's time. Acts 19v19. The Egyptian sorcerers Jannes and Jambres, who opposed Moses, had great evil power, and turned sticks into snakes by Satan's power. Exodus 7v11,12, 8v18, 2Tim 3v8. These evil occult practices were one of the main obstacles to the spread of the Gospel in the early Church, and this is why miracles were so essential, they were needed to confirm the truth of the Gospel. Philip and Paul compelled the Gentiles to believe in Jesus, by doing greater miracles than the servants of Satan. It should also be noted that during the last three and a half years of this age, the period known as the Great Tribulation, the Lord Jesus has warned Christians that there will be a great increase in these lying signs, wonders and miracles performed by the servants of Satan and so **NOW** is the time that the Church needs to seek the Risen Lord for His Presence and Power so as to be able to answer these servants of Satan by out-miraciling them! Matt 24v15-21,24, Acts 8v4-13, 13v6-12, 18v11-20, Rom 15v18-21, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 13 (all)

**NB1:** Paul tells us that people go into idolatry, witchcraft and sorcery, because they want a belief that will allow them to indulge in the sins of the flesh, and that if people reject God and righteousness, God gives them up to a reprobate mind and the lusts that they desire. Rom 1v18-32, **NB v24,26,28.** However, God's amazing love and protecting mercy is still around His creation, and His mighty hand restrains the powers of darkness to a great extent. 2Thess 2v7. This is why only a small fraction of worldly people have been possessed by evil spirits, even when they have worshipped idols, and been

addicted to occultism.

**NB2:** God's children are protected from curses put upon them by occultists, for God's guiding eye and power protects Christians and their homes from Satan's malice. When Balaam tried to curse Israel by sorcery, God would not allow it, and made Balaam pronounce blessing on Israel. Num 22v5,6, 23v8,23. Balaam was greedy for Balak's promise of wealth, he knew that God's anger would come against Israel if they went into evil; so Balaam told Balak to send in many of the beautiful women of Moab to corrupt Israel by immorality and idolatry. Rev 2v14, Num 31v15,16. Satan still uses the same ploy today to break up people's marriages. Balaam's plan was successful, but it did not profit him, he died under divine judgement, fighting the people of God. Jude v11, Joshua 13v22, Rev 2v14. The Egyptian sorcerers, Jannes and Jambres, even turned sticks into snakes by the power of Satan. However, they found themselves out-miracled by Moses and on the receiving end of divine judgement, when they tried to resist and oppose God. 2Tim 3v8, Exodus 7v11,12,22, 8v7,18,19, 9v11. Witchcraft and sorcery are repeatedly condemned and forbidden in the Scriptures; God warns that eternal punishment awaits all occultists who do not repent of their evil practices. Exodus 22v18, Deut 18v10-22, Isaiah 2v6, 47v9,12, 57v3, Jer 27v9, Dan 2v2,27, Mic 5v12, Mal 3v5, Rev 9v21, 21v8, 22v15.

### Sins Related To Personal, Social, And Church Life

#### Enmities "Echthrai" (Strong's NT:2189)

"Echthros" (Strong's NT:2190) is an enemy, "echthrai," is enmity, personal animosities and quarrels. It only occurs three times in the New Testament, all of them in Paul's writings. Paul writes in Gal 2v20, that it is one of the works of the flesh. In Rom 8v7 he states, "The mind which is only interested in carnal things is hostile to God." Finally Paul tells us in Eph 2v14-16, that the Law of God was the reason for the enmity between Jew and Gentile, and the cross of Jesus the means by which God has reconciled Jew and Gentile, and put to death the enmity between them. **Enmity is the driving force behind class and racial prejudice**, and the Jews were badly polluted by it, they said that the Gentiles were on a level with the forbidden unclean animals, and were fuel for the flames of Hell, and hated by the Almighty. Peter, like all Jews, was poisoned by these evil ideas, and would not even eat with a Gentile. God taught him differently through a remarkable vision, in which He commanded Peter not to call God-fearing Gentiles unclean, because they were acceptable to Him. The lesson was completed by meeting the remarkable godly Gentile Cornelius, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon him and his godly praying friends. Acts 10v1-48, 11v1-7.

#### Variance, Fightings, Strife "Ereis" (Strong's NT:2054), plural in the Majority Text

"Eris," speaks of contention, variance, strife, and dissension. Enmity, "echthrai," is a state of mind; whereas, strife, "eris," is the product and manifestation of that hostile mind. "Eris," occurs in Rom 1v29, 13v13, 1Cor 1v11, 3v3, 2Cor 12v20, Gal 5v20, Phil 1v15, 1Tim 6v4, Titus 3v9. It is one of the evils of the heathen world, which should not be seen among Christians. Rom 1v29, 13v13. Paul uses "eris" three times when he laments the real and deep hatred and quarrellings between the sects and parties in the Church at Corinth. 1Cor 1v11, 3v3, 2Cor 12v20. In Phil 1v15, Paul warns us that enmity can even be the motivation for preaching the Gospel. What was true then, is true today, there can be bitter rivalry and strife between denominations. Christ is often preached and uplifted in evangelism to increase a denominations membership, rather than to meet people's needs and glorify God. The same message can be preached, but the motivation can be entirely different; we can use our organisations with the pure motive to serve and uplift Christ, or we can uplift Christ with the impure motive of increasing our denominational or personal kingdoms. The parable of the workers in the vineyard shows us that our motives for serving God will be "tried by fire" at the judgement seat of Christ. 1Cor 3v10-14, Matt 19v23 to 20v16. **Jesus warns us that a hireling spirit, and wrong motives in serving God, will result in those who are first in the Church on earth, being last in God's kingdom.** Matt 19v30, 20v16.

Rivalry, "eris," manifests itself in party spirit and doctrinal bigotry, and when denominations become more important than God and people. **Rivalry is the enemy of true Christian love and unity, for it divides up the body of Christ.** The cure is not denominational organic unity, but a true unity of the Spirit and love between all Christians. The powers of darkness are much more concerned with fostering party spirit in the Church than with demon possession, for they know that this will effectively destroy the power of the Church. **The impending terrible end time trials will compel many Christians to forget their bigotry and party spirit, and make them fellowship in love and unity together.**

#### Jealousies "Zeloi" (Strong's NT:2205)

It is used in a good sense.

In the Septuagint in a good sense of God's zeal; "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this;" Isaiah 9v7; and the jealous dedicated love of God. Ezek 16v37,38, 23v25. It describes Christ's passionate zeal for God and righteousness. Psalm 69v9, John 2v17. Paul uses it to describe the zeal of the Corinthians for him in 2Cor 7v7; and his godly jealousy for them, 2Cor 11v2; and the zeal in their repentance, 2Cor 7v11; and their zeal for the poor at Jerusalem. 2Cor 9v2. The verb "zeloo" (Strong's NT:2206) is used for zeal for spiritual gifts in 1Cor 12v31 and 14v39.

**It is used in a bad sense.**

Paul uses "zelos" of his own and the Jews misguided "zeal for God," and the Law. Rom 10v2, Phil 3v6. Paul warned the Corinthians that jealousy is an evil work of the flesh; and a proof of the domination of the old nature, and told them that he feared that it could return. Rom 13v12,13, 1Cor 3v3, 2Cor 12v20. Jealousy cannot stand the light and glory of Christ's holy presence.

**Passionate Explosions Of Anger "Thumoi" (Strong's NT:2372)**

"Thumos," occurs in Luke 4v28, Acts 19v28, Rom 2v8, 2Cor 12v20, Gal 5v20, Eph 4v31, Col 3v8, Heb 11v27, Rev 12v12, 14v8,10,19, 15v1,7, 16v1,19, 18v3, 19v15. It speaks of "stirring emotions," then, "a flair up of temper," or "passionate explosive outbursts of anger. "Thumos" anger is "great but transient anger," and is "like fire in straw;" which distinguishes it from "orge" (Strong's NT:3709) anger; which is a long-lasting anger and cherished in the memory. "Orge" is used to speak of God's weighed judicial verdict; His anger of justice. Rom 1v18, Eph 5v6, Col 3v6, Rev 6v16,17, 11v18. etc.

**"Thumos" can be used of anger in a good sense, of righteous indignation**

"Thumos" is used to speak of God's explosive righteous anger in His judgmental acts in the Great Tribulation, and on the great day of His wrath at Christ's coming. However, Paul states that anger ("orge") and wrath ("thumos"), are now resting upon all those who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness. Rom 2v8. **Our Lord's anger in Matt 23, shows that it is very necessary to be angry at injustice and evil; anger can be an instrument of God's purposes; indeed, it is a sin not to be angry at times.** God's "thumos" anger springs from His love; and gives us a revelation of His heart and mind, and His great concern and care for His creation.

**"Thumos" can speak of outbursts of uncontrolled harmful rage**

"Thumos" anger, and "orge" anger, and bitterness, clamour, evil speaking and malice, are to be put away from us; and are to be replaced by tender-hearted forgiving love. Eph 4v31,32. The "thumos," explosive temper; and the "orge," brooding anger; are to be "put off," with the other evil works of the flesh. Col 3v8. In Matt 5v22, Jesus said that those who are angry with their brother without cause, are liable to judgement. "Without cause," is in the Majority Text. **We can be angry, and yet not sin.** Eph 4v26. In 2Cor 12v20, Paul states his fear that he would find outbursts of anger in the church at Corinth, along with other works of the flesh. Paul warns them that violent outbursts of "thumos" anger and bitter smouldering "orge" anger, injure the weak and innocent, and destroy homes and churches.

**Strife, Selfish Ambition "Eritheia" (Strong's NT:2052)**

"Eritheia," means literally, "working for hire," and is from "erithos," "one who works for hire;" it speaks of one who can be bought, or bribed. Some say it speaks of a self-seeking person, and selfishness. Others think it speaks of intrigue, factions, and party rivalry, a person whose allegiance can be bought for advantage. "Eritheia" occurs in Rom 2v8, 1Cor 12v20, Gal 5v20, Phil 1v16, 2v3, James 3v14,16. Bible translators translate "eritheia," in many different ways, they translate it as strife, contention, selfish ambition, personal rivalry, selfishness, the partisan spirit; divided loyalties, for private ends, etc. Wordsworth says; "The word "eritheia" is from "erithos," "a labourer for hire" (from root "erdo"), 1) "a mercenary;" and 2) one who "hires himself" to a cabal for "party purposes:" and therefore signifies, 3) "a venal partisan;" such as the "factions" of gladiators, and other ruffians hired by rival candidates at elections to intimidate the voters in the Roman forum. Hence "eritheia" signifies "venal partisanship." Aristotle uses the verb "eritheuesthai," to mean canvassing for office through hired partisans; it speaks of a man who seeks power for himself and his party for the very worst of motives, love of power and personal ambition, without any concern for the welfare of the people. Aristotle said that this practice could lead to revolutions.

Paul uses "eritheia" five times, Rom 2v8, 2Cor 12v20, Gal 5v20, Phil 1v16, 2v3; he uses it in the context of party spirit and divisions within the churches. In 2Cor 12v20, Paul feared that party spirit was a sin that defiled the Corinthian Church. In Phil 1v16,17, Paul criticises the competitive party spirit of some preachers. In Phil 2v3, Paul exhorts us not to do anything from ambition, or vainglory, but to follow Christ's wonderful example, of self-renunciation and humility. In Rom 2v8, Paul uses "eritheia," of worldly people, whose self-seeking unrighteous ambition, stops them from obeying the truth. This scrambling after wealth, honour, position, and power, has disastrous effects in churches and homes, as well as the world. Rackham says the meaning is "election intrigue;" which would well describe the power politics and attitudes of the world, which have corrupted church organisations. Paul is speaking of a self-seeking ambitious person, who seeks after power and office, not with the thought of loving service, but for personal and party, profit and prestige. **The self-seeking sinful ambition that ruined Satan, is the sin that has ruined so many Christians, churches and denominations, and destroyed many marriages.** Isaiah 14v12-20.

**Divisions "Dichostasia" (Strong's NT:1370)**

"Dichostasia," means "splits in two," or "a standing apart," from "dicha," "asunder," and "stasis," "apart." It speaks of a state of acute and settled division, which destroys the unity of Christ's body, or a marriage. In the New Testament, "dichostasia" only occurs in Paul's writings. In Rom 16v7, Paul warns the Roman Christians to mark and avoid those who cause divisions. In 1Cor 3v3, of the divisions in the Corinthian church due to carnality and spiritual infancy. In Gal 5v20, of the divisions due to domination by the flesh. The outward cause of division in the Church, may seem to be theological controversy, personal animosity, class or race hatred, or denominational affiliation; however, the real cause is domination by the carnal nature, and failure to mature spiritually.

### **Heresies "Haireseis" (Strong's NT:139)**

The English word "heresies," is a transliteration of the Greek word "haireseis;" the English word speaks of false doctrine which is opposed to orthodox truth; whereas "haireseis," means "choosings, preferences," and is derived from "haireomai" (Strong's NT:138) or "haireo," "to choose, to select." (See Phil 1v22, 2Thess 2v13, Heb 2v25) It can be used either for a good or bad choice, or preference. In the New Testament, "hairesis" usually speaks of a form of opinion, and is used in the sense of a sect; of the sect of the Sadducees in Acts 5v7; of the sect of the Pharisees in Acts 15v5 and 26v5; of Christians, as the sect of the Nazarenes in Acts 24v5, which Paul says his opponents contemptuously called heresy, "haireisin," in Acts 24v14; in Acts 28v22 the Jews at Rome said to Paul, "concerning this sect, "hairesis," we know that it is everywhere spoken against."

The plural "haireseis," is also used to speak of preferences or choosings, which cause division in the church. In 1Cor 11v19, "heresies," could be "sects," separating on doctrinal lines. **Christians can have different preferences and different doctrinal views, and yet remain in perfect love and accord. However, intellectual differences can lead to the actual separation of Christians from one another, and this is what Paul is thinking of in Gal 5v20 and 1Cor 11v19.** This difference of opinion, "hairesis," can lead to actual schism, "schisma," in the body of Christ; and even to "damnable heresies," that destroy the soul, and fragment the Church. 2Pet 2v1.

### **Envyings "Phthonoi" (Strong's NT:5355)**

Envy is more destructive and malignant than jealousy. **"Zelos," casts hostile grudging looks; "phthonos," "envy," has arrived at the stage of hostile acts.** It is grief at another person's good fortune, it is not just the pain that they do not possess their good fortune or blessing, but the bitterness that the other person does. It is not so much the desire for what another person has; it is the desire to take away from them what they have, or prevent them from possessing it. "Zelos," "jealousy," can sometimes speak of noble ambition, and desire for something good, as well as a covetous evil desire; whereas. "phthonos," "envy," can only speak of a bitter ill will. It is not just the pain over an enemy's good fortune; it is the grief over a friend's good fortune. The jealousy, "zelos," of the Jews led to the active opposition of the more malignant "phthonos," "envy;" and caused them to murder Jesus. Though Judas became possessed by Satan, it is not recorded that any of the leaders of Israel became possessed, the evil jealousy and envy in their hearts drove them to oppose and murder Jesus. Mark 2v5-7,16,23,24, 3v1,2, 15v10, Matt 27v18.

"Phthonoi," occurs in the Majority Text, here in Gal 5v19-22, in Rom 1v29, it is one of the sins people are filled with when they choose not to retain God in their knowledge; and in Phil 1v15,16, of some who preached Christ to spite Paul, and to hinder his ministry. Ahab's covetous envy of Naboth's vineyard led to the murder of Naboth, it is a very dangerous sin. 1Kings 21v1-19, 2Kings 9v21-26, 1Tim 6v4, Titus 3v3, 1Peter 2v1, (Gal 5v26 "phthoneo"). The envy that leads to keeping up with the Jones's can lead to tragic circumstances.

### **Murders "phthonoi" (Strong's NT:5408)**

Envy and strife has led to large numbers of murders throughout the centuries. In Gal 5v21, the alliterative reading, "phthonoi phthonoi," "envy, murder," occurs in a large majority of texts and versions; A, C, D, F, G, K, P, Psi, the Byzantine manuscripts, the Lectionaries, most Old Latin manuscripts, the Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta and the Harklean, the Coptic Bohairic, the Gothic, the Armenian, the Ethiopic, Cyprian, etc.. Paul uses "phthonoi phthonoi," envy, murder, together in Rom 1v29; and with good reason, for envy has often caused murder and war, as we see in the case of Cain and Abel, and world history. Gen 4v1-10, James 3v14-4v6.

### **Drunkenness "Methe" (Strong's NT:3178)**

Paul warns us that drunkards will not inherit God's kingdom, and we are not even to eat with them. Luke 21v34, 1Cor 5v10,11. Untold millions of marriages and homes have been destroyed, and are still suffering today from drunkenness. It causes physical and psychological injury to wives, husbands and children, financial deprivation, stress, anxiety and fear. Paul said he would not drink wine if it caused anyone to stumble, this is an important principle. Prov 20v1, Rom 14v21, 1Cor 8v9,13. Social drinking with unbelievers is very dangerous. 1Cor 6v9 to 7v1. **It is true that Jesus drank wine with perfect self-control.** Matt 11v19, Luke 7v34. **However, Jesus warns us that drunkenness will stop us from**



**being prepared for His coming, and will end in eternal punishment.** Matt 24v48-51, Luke 21v34. Also see Prov 20v1, Isaiah 28v7, Ezek 23v33, 39v19.

### **Riotous Orgies And feastings "Komos" (Strong's NT:2970)**

Paul uses "methe," "drunkenness," and "komos," "riotous feasting," in Rom 13v13, the only other place where they occur together in the New Testament. Paul was not thinking of a celebration, he was speaking of total debauchery, orgies and riotous blasphemous feasting; like Belshazzar's feast. Dan 5v1-31. Peter warns against this "revelling and banqueting," in 1Peter 4v3.

### **And Such Like**

Paul states that the list could be extended, it is it is comprehensive but not exhaustive.

### **Conclusion**

**The works of the flesh cannot be exorcised. Paul tells us that the cure for the works of the flesh, is repentance, the crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts, living and walking in the Spirit, and the growth of the fruit of the Spirit. Rom 8v1-4, Gal 5v16-26. Those who replace this teaching of Paul with a false Christian exorcism; lead Christians into a quagmire of self-deception, unscriptural fantasies, demonic dominance, and serious psychological and spiritual damage!**

### **The Fruit Of The Spirit**

**(Gal 5v22-23)**

The word "fruit" (Greek "karpos" Strong's NT:2590) is in the singular, God looks at them all as one whole, He does not look at them as different things in any way. The fruit or abounding harvest all comes together in the character of God. The Lord Jesus said that He wants us to bear much fruit (John 15v1-17) and it is wonderful that the transforming grace of God can produce fruit in our character. (2Peter 1v3,4) God can put into Christians His divine nature, already through the new birth it has partly taken place, we have become partaker of the divine nature, we are sons and daughters of the living God (1John 3v1-3). God is changing us!

God has come down to change us: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom 8v29) What a wonderful promise! Those whom He foreknew would respond to the truth. God the Father said, "I'm going to make them like Jesus." It says "conformed to the image of His son," we are going to be just like Jesus. We are in the process of being changed.

Donald Gee reported how on one occasion he was preaching on the fruit of the Spirit and people came out to be saved as they wanted a character like that. There is a real Gospel message in saying that the Spirit of God and Jesus can change us so that we can become into Their likeness. In the "Ages of Ages" (Rev 22v5 Young's Literal Translation), which starts immediately after the Great White Throne judgement (Dan 7v9,10, Rev 20v11-15), when we look at each other, it will be looking at Christ. We will be "conformed to the image of His Son."

God is really looking forward to having not just one Beloved Son, but untold millions of beloved sons and daughters of the Living God. This is the wonderful message that puts hope into our hearts, that Jesus is changing us. He is **NOT** going to give up on us, He made up His mind from **BEFORE** the foundation of the world. He just didn't decide when we got saved but saw us and loved us and saw us conformed to the image of Jesus. **BEFORE** the foundation of the world we were conceived in His mind.

When the Devil comes along and nags us, telling us we're never going to be any good, we've got to reply that we are going to be like Jesus. God is going to conform us to the image of His Son. We have got to stand on God's eternal purposes for us in Christ, and this gives us hope.

When we see the fruit of the Spirit, we see the character of the members of the Godhead perfectly and wonderfully manifested together. This is what Jesus is like, full of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (and faithfulness), meekness and temperance, this is also what God the Father and God the Spirit are like. This is what they are and He wants us to know it and this is how They deal with us and the creation. So when we study the fruit of the Spirit we study how God treats us.

As we study the life of Jesus we see the wonderful growth in character, it says in Luke 2v40,52, that the Lord Jesus "waxed strong in spirit" (just like John the Baptist did, Luke 1v80), He grew in wisdom and stature and the grace of God

was upon Him. He has been through the area of human development, He has gone through the growth of the fruit of the Spirit. He was always perfect, but there was a maturity of perfection Heb 2v10-18, 4v15.

God made the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Jesus came to maturity of character, in other words at the age of 30 years, He was a much more wonderful person than He was at 12 years old. At 30 He was "full of grace and truth." John 1v14

He had restricted Himself to the growth of a human being. Jesus knows what it is like to grow and mature. Luke 2v40,52, Heb 2v17,18.

Evangelists say, "what we want is love, these gifts of the Spirit (1Cor 12v7-11) have passed away. They look upon it as if there is competition between "gifts" and "fruit" and there isn't **ANY** competition as they are complementary to each other. The Lord Jesus lived a perfect and wonderful life at Nazareth for 30 years and all that He seemed to do was make people very upset when He fasted and prayed and sought God. Psalm 69v7-12,20,21, Luke 4v28,29, John 7v5. He lived a holy life and all it did was convict the people around Him of their sin.

The moment He got the power at Jordan (Matt 3v16,17, John 3v34) and His ministry came out in power, that was when the character of God was revealed to the nation of Israel. The character of "goodness" in Jesus at Nazareth only made them feel bad. But when they saw God's acts of power it was as Isaiah 26v9 states, "...for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

**It is VERY important to learn this most essential necessity: Love needs Power and Power needs Love.**

Love without Power and you are helpless (being unable to meet the needs of a needy world and church) and if you have Power without Love, you're a nuisance, you can be hard, very nasty and difficult. **The primary aim of the gifts of the Spirit (1Cor 12v7-11) is to reveal the character and goodness of God.**

Some people say we need love and not the gifts of the Spirit, but how are you going to manifest God's feeling for people if you don't have the gifts of the Spirit? **The gifts of the Spirit are the manifestations of divine love and power.** So we need **BOTH** the character of God revealed and the Powers of God revealed. The Powers of God reveal the character and nature of God.

(This is the real glory of the Lord Jesus, when everybody went down under the temptation from sin in the flesh (their souls and spirits becoming corrupted and so dying spiritually, Rom 6v23), the Lord Jesus beat it from the same level of our humanity and so condemned sin in the flesh. Rom 8v3)

The way for Christians to receive life against the flesh life is described in Rom 8v2-4: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

We can have this kind of victory in our lives if we have the energy and power of God coming into our personalities. The Lord can give us victory! **The way to conquer the flesh is by receiving life in the Spirit.** In his early 60's Paul didn't say he had no problems with the flesh, but he said he beat his body under. 1Cor 9v27.

Gal 5v17 says that the Spirit and the flesh "are contrary to one another" giving the picture of trench warfare. So there is a constant battle between the flesh and the Spirit. In his early 60's Paul didn't say he had no problems with the flesh, **BUT** that he had to discipline his body! He said "I have to make sure my body does **NOT** dominate me, **BUT** I must dominate it! I am the boss of my body." The picture in the Greek means, "I hit myself under the eye." In 1Cor 9v27, "I keep under" is in Greek, "hupopiazō" (Strong's NT:5299), which means literally "to hit under the eye," the part of the face under the eyes, a blow in the face, to beat black and blue. This word is also used in Luke 18v5. Paul was saying, "I give myself two lovely black eyes." We've got to dominate our flesh.

Revival comes in the Church when it has got itself into a spirit of self discipline, welcoming the Holy Ghost but walking in holiness and purity. Paul says in Gal 2v20: "...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Paul says "Christ lives in me," we get the victory by Jesus living us, that make **ALL** the difference.

When we look at the fruit of the Spirit, some people are inclined to pop 1 or 2 extra in, some would say a couple of things missing are wisdom and knowledge. But Paul says, "No there're not!" That is quite striking, we should ask, "why are they missing?" Paul gives us the answer in 1Cor 13v12, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." When we get to Heaven God will give us His knowledge

and wisdom in abundance. But there is one thing we can't have put in us and that is the fruit of the Spirit. That has got to grow in our response to life. The wisdom and knowledge of Heaven are infinitely beyond ours.

But there is one thing that is the same upon earth as in Heaven and that is the fruit of the Spirit, the quality of character. That is the thing that God is putting in us **NOW!** Our lives down here are really in the end to produce the fruit of the Spirit, the character and quality of love and God in our very souls. It starts of with the fruit of the Spirit as love and you could really say that the rest of them are the expansion of that one thought, because Our Lord and the Apostles said love was the fulfilling of the Law. (Rom 13v10) In other words, if love is the fulfilling of the law it includes all the fruit of the Spirit. Paul starts of with love and then expands on the attributes of what love is like. Quite a few attributes of the fruit of the Spirit manifest in just love itself. (1Cor 13v4-7)

Christian love is to do with an attitude of mind as well as a warmth of heart. We love someone **BUT** not like them! (1Thess 5v21) Christian love is a love for enemies, it doesn't mean that you like your enemy, it says "I hate what you're doing, but I'm going to do my very best for you. I'm going to be kind to you and do you good, I'm going to repay evil with good." (Rom 12v21)

We come to the truth of "agape" love: "It is an unconquerable benevolence of mind, that love the unlovely and wishes them well." It is the very opposite of Aristotle's thought that "love is for the lovely." **LOVE IS FOR THE UNLOVELY!** It is a gracious mind as well as a tender heart. (Matt 5v45, Luke 6v35,36)

The only way that Christian's can have fellowship one with another is with **REAL** agape love. (Eph 5v2, Col 2v2) This is how in the early Church the Christians were of one accord in one place and **NOT** fighting one another. (Acts 1v14, 2v1, 15v25) **They had unanimity of mind.**

Love can only grow by abiding in the Trinity. An example of this is Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus beholding His glory. (Luke 10v38-42, 2Cor 3v18)

Agape love is not a soft thing, there is the agape love of justice, it is the agape love of God that puts people in Hell. **God is LOVE** (1John 4v8,16) and everything He does springs out of that love! His justice springs from His love. God is going to make sure that His redeemed will enjoy peace and security for eternity and the only way He can achieve this is by putting the eternal unrepentant into Hell. When the eternal unrepentant are put into Hell they are not crying out in repentance **BUT** are wailing and gnashing their teeth with bitter anger and hatred. (Matt 25v30, Mark 9v44,46,48) Even after a thousand years in the Abyss Satan comes out unrepentant. (Rev 20v1-3)

### Love "Agape" (Strong's NT:26)

"Agape" is the word that is used in the New Testament to describe the love of God and Christian love. It is the love that God demands for Himself and our neighbour. Matt 5v43,44, 22v37,39. It is the love of the new commandment that Jesus gave. John 13v34,35, 15v12. "Agape" love is a fruit of the Spirit. Gal 5v22. It is the love that the abounding iniquity of these evil last days will cause to grow cold in the careless Christian's heart. Matt 24v12. "Agape" love caused God to send His Son to die for us, and nothing can separate us from His love. John 3v16, Rom 8v39. This is the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts after endurance in tribulation. Rom 5v5. "Agape" love is a matter of the heart as well as a benevolent and loving mind, it is not just intellectual, it is a warm and fervent love; Peter said, "see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. " 1Peter 1v22, Hosea 11v8, Luke 19v41-44. **"Agape" love, then, is not only an emotion, it is a standard of life, a warm and righteous attitude of mind, it is God's Divine principles and compassion manifested to us, through us, and in us.**

"Agape" love is usually distinct from "phileo" (Strong's NT:5368) love, the love of emotion and friendship, which could vary a great deal in intensity and sincerity. "Phileo" love is used at its lowest level to speak of the base love of the Scribes and Pharisees for prestige and position, and of Judas's kiss of betrayal. Matt 23v6, 26v48, "Phileo" is, in sharp contrast, also used to speak of the highest levels of Divine love and affection. John 5v20, 11v3,36, 16v27, 20v2. Indeed, Christian usage raises "phileo" love to a level of beauty and tenderness quite unknown among the unconverted Greeks. Christ's "phileo" love for the Laodiceans, would be quite incomprehensible to the worldly Greek. Rev 3v19. A good example of the difference between "agape" love and "phileo" love is found in John 21v15-19. Jesus twice asks Peter if he still lays claim to the constant, unfailling, benevolent "agape" love. Peter can only answer that bitter experience has taught him that his love is only the fervent, tender, but weak "phileo" love. When the Lord Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him with a "phileo" love, it breaks Peter, he said in effect, "You know my heart Lord, and my "phileo" love for you, and you know how broken I am because my warm but weak love has failed you." The Lord Jesus comforts His distraught apostle with the disclosure that his life would end in a magnificent display of "agape" love; Peter would lay down his life for his Saviour and His sheep, and until that occurs he is to follow Him and feed His sheep and lambs. Oh, the wonderful "agape" love of Jesus for us, He accepts our "phileo" love and transforms it by His grace. 1Cor 16v22. "Phileo."

The world needs the "agape" love of Jesus; worldly "phileo" love and "Eros" love can never satisfy the soul, or transform it into something beautiful, only Divine "agape" love, can do that. When the world sees Christians united by Divine "agape" love then, and only then, will it believe that Christ has the answer to their need. John 17v21.

God wants to fill our homes with "agape" love. God is love, perfect "agape" love, 1John 4v8, and the source of "agape" love. 2Cor 13v11. His love is "great love." Eph 2v4-7, Exodus 34v6,7. Love is the supreme fruit, and therefore stands first. The greatest of these is love. 1Cor 13v13. Love is the fulfilling of the Law. Rom 13v10, 1John 2v9. Love includes all the other virtues, it is the perfect bond which binds all together, it is the thing that will keep marriages intact and blessed. Col 3v14.

### **Christian thought and doctrine extended and transformed the meaning of "agape" love**

The Trinity redefined the use of "agape" love way beyond the narrow and limited thought of love of the heathen. The New Testament makes it an unconquerable, all-embracing, benevolence, it is used to describe the incomparable love of God.

### **Christian love has to do with an attitude of mind as well as a warmth of heart**

It is not a mere uncontrollable "falling in love," it is a loving of fallen people. It is a victory over enmity, hostility and loneliness. It is a love for enemies. This does not mean you feel the warmth that you have for your nearest and dearest, it is an unconquerable benevolence of mind, that wishes the unlovely and perverse well. It is opposite of the thought of Aristotle that love is for the lovely. Agape love is a gracious will as well as a loving heart, it is a benevolent mind, and not just an emotional reaction. Paul manifested this love, some suggest that Phil 1v8, can be translated, "I love you with the very love of Christ."

### **The totally different attitude of Greek and Christian thought in respect to caring love**

The Greek philosophers aimed at total self-sufficiency, and total independence of anything outside of themselves, and tried to find happiness and peace totally within themselves, "autarkeia." They tried to let nothing touch or effect them which happened to themselves or others, "apatheia." This is how they aimed to get serenity, peace of mind, and tranquillity, "ataraxia." All this is in striking contrast to the caring love of Christianity, Christian love cares.

### **Love alone is the source of Christian unity, fellowship, and stability in the Church and the home**

In Col 2v2, Paul speaks of us being, "Knit together in love." In Eph 5v2, Paul tells us to "Walk in love." Acts 1v14. In Col 3v14, Paul writes, "And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." Acts 2v42-46. We are known to be His disciples by love. John 13v35. This applies to our home relationships, as well as in our Church relationships.

### **Love is a vital co-partner of faith in service to God and each other.**

In Gal 5v6, Faith which works by love, "works" is "energeo." (Strong's NT:1754) Love energises faith, faith manifests itself through love. Let love make you slaves to each other. Gal 5v13. See John 13v15, 1Cor 9v12-22, 16v14. Love is the garment of service. Eph 1v15, 6v23, Col 1v4, 1Thess 1v3, 3v16, 2Thess 1v3.

### **Agape love and Truth**

We must love the truth with an "agape" love. 2Thess 2v10. Love produces obedience to the truth, Jesus said in John 14v21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." We can experience a manifestation of Jesus and the Father in our homes, if we love and obey the truth, a truly wonderful promise. See John 14v15-17,21. In 2Thess 2v10-12, we read that those who perish do so because they do not love the truth, Antichrist and his followers are here named. The truth must be spoken in love. Eph 4v15. Some preachers like to hurt people with the truth, they enjoy whipping God's people, but that is the Devil's work. Jesus wept as He warned of the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke 19v41-44, Matt 23v37-39. In Matt 23v13-29 "woe," "ouai" (Strong's NT3759) means both "woe" and "alas," it is a lament, not the words of passionate anger, but the pain of heart-broken love, as we can see from Matt 23v37-39, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I desired to gather your children in the way a bird gathers her chicks, under her wings, and you would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate." This was pain, real deep pain. See Luke 19v41-44.

### **The AMAZING LOVE of God, for God IS LOVE, 2Cor 13v11**

God's love is totally undeserved. Rom 5v8. It is a great redeeming love and is full of mercy. Eph 2v4-7. It is a love for the whole world. John 3v16. It is a totally sacrificial amazing love. John 3v16, 1John 4v9,10, Gal 2v20. "The Son of God who loved ME, and gave Himself for me." Eph 5v2, Rev 1v5. There is nothing He will not do for us. It is a transforming, disciplining, and sanctifying love. Heb 12v6, 2Thess 2v13, Rom 5v1-6. God's love is an inseparable eternal love, and

through it we are more than conquerors. Rom 8v35-39. "Who shall separate us?" It is a surpassing love, which can only be fully understood by revelation. Eph 3v15-19. God's love causes Him great pain. Hosea 11v8,9. "How can I give you up? - My heart --- within me My compassion grows warm and tender." Luke 19v41-44. This love can be in our homes and lives, and can make them a heaven upon earth. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to develop this greatest fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

### **God has included us within the sphere and quality of the love of the Trinity**

Jesus said that He had declared the Father's name to His disciples, "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." John 17v26. We are loved like God's dear Son. Col 1v13 with John 3v35, 10v17, 15v9, 17v23,24. "Agape" love can only be developed by abiding in the love of the Trinity. We must sit at the feet of Jesus, like Mary of Bethany. John 12v1-8.

For people who are dealing with difficult, and possibly unconverted partners, remember "agape" love is not liking. You can love people without liking the way that they live. Luke 6v27,28. Jesus said that we should do good to our enemies, and love them, and pray for them. We are loved by God, and are indebted to His great love, let us manifest His love in our lives and homes. It is in the manifestation of our love to others, that our love for God is proved. In the fellowship of love, love is inspired. Through the contemplation of our Lord's life and love, we are changed. 2Cor 3v18. Faith and hope are great, but **THE GREATEST IS LOVE!** 1Cor 13v8, 14v1. It is our Lord's new commandment, let us obey it. John 13v34,35.

### **The Attributes Of Love 1Cor 13v4-7**

Here we see the qualities of character that will be manifested from a heart of (agape) love. These qualities are essential constituents of a real revival, they are the only means of keeping a revival going on smoothly forward in the will of God, they alone will give value to our work for God. Paul tells us the attributes of character that we must manifest if we are to receive the full profit from the manifestations of the Holy Spirit's gifts. Let us consider the 15 qualities of character that Paul states makes up the character of the loving Christian.

### **Love suffers long, love is patient "Makrothumeo" (Strong's NT:3114)**

Makrothumeo, "longsuffering," occurs in Matt 18v26,29, Luke 18v7, 1Thess 5v14, Heb 6v15, James 5v7,8, 2Peter 3v9. It is a word that is used in the New Testament to describe relations between people as well as a persons attitude to their circumstances, e.g. 1Thess 5v14, Heb 6v12,13. It signifies the very opposite of retaliation, irritability, spite and vengeance. There may be some real cause for a Christian to lose patience with a brother or sister in Christ, but the loving Christian suffers long and is patient with those who like themselves, are so much in need of the patience, mercy and grace of God. In regard to the use of spiritual gifts, and this is the particular sphere of 1Cor 13, we may have reason to exercise considerable patience. "The powers of the age to come," Heb 6v5, can be overwhelming even to the most reserved Christian, as well as to those Christians who have ebullient and expressive personalities. Besides these there are Christians who are positively egotistical and they can make themselves a real nuisance if we do not patiently correct them and regulate the meetings properly. This patience with people is an essential part of Christian love, and Paul showed this patience in speaking as he did to the unruly Corinthian church. One may also need to have great patience with those who oppose and object to the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as with those Christians who are too timid to manifest the gifts, or to slothful to seek them. In the Corinthian church this longsuffering was definitely lacking, there were cliques and divisions in the church, but Paul counted them as God's children and was longsuffering with them.

This patience is very opposite to the spirit of the world. Longsuffering was the very opposite to what the Greeks thought was a virtue, patience was to them a weakness of character; they looked upon short patience as a virtue. They said that the refusal to tolerate or accept any injury or insult, and the desire for vengeance, was the thing that made a person great. This attitude is very prevalent in the world today; however, in the Christian Church a person cannot be great unless they are longsuffering. If we desire to be like our heavenly Father we must be longsuffering, and Christian leaders are in particular need of this virtue. Matt 5v44,45, Rom 2v4, 9v22, 2Cor 6v6, Gal 5v22, Eph 4v2,3, Col 3v12, 1Tim 1v16, 2Tim 3v10, Titus 2v2, Heb 6v15, James 5v7-10, 1Peter 3v20, 2Peter 3v9. We do not receive revelations about another person's character, or their intents, so that we can attack them, it is to warn us of possible danger, so that we may pray for both them and ourselves. **This lovely virtue of long suffering, like all the other virtues, is not one that we can produce by the energy of the flesh, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and it is produced by the grace of God by the obedience to the Word of God.**

There does come a time when even the divine patience comes to an end. This is illustrated by the flood in the time of Noah, the destruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, and the judgements at the second coming of Christ. Gen 6v1-7, 15v13,16,18, 2Peter 3v1-18. In each case amazing longsuffering is followed by judgement. During His time on earth, the Lord Jesus gave the most tremendous rebukes to religious hypocrites. Matt 23v1-39. **In the Church we are not to be longsuffering with wilful and deliberate sin, the Lord disciplines the wilful Christian, and the churches have to**

**discipline Christians whose lives are a danger and disgrace to the Church.** Matt 18v15-19, 1Cor 11v27-34, 5v1-13. However, the aim of this discipline is not only the preservation of the purity of the churches, but also the restoration of the sinning person as well. 2Cor 2v4-8. On occasions the Lord may have to take severe steps to preserve the witness and purity of His Church. 1Cor 11v30, Acts 5v1-11. These are the last steps and last resort of a very patient and loving Saviour, He does not take these kinds of steps in anger, but of necessity, we are His dear little flock. One can only marvel at the divine patience as we see the Lord Jesus passionately sobbing over those who had determinedly opposed His efforts to bring them salvation, safety and blessing. Luke 12v32, 13v34,35, 19v41-48, Hosea 11v1-12. NB v8. Let us rejoice in the great grace and patience of God, but let us take care never to trade on that great grace and patience. Let us also be sure to treat one another with the same grace and patience that our heavenly Father treats us, remembering the tremendous warning that He gives in Matt 18v21-35 to those who are impatient and unforgiving.

#### **Love is kind, gracious, and gentle “Chresteuetai” (Strong’s NT:5541), “sweet to all”**

“Chresteuetai,” means gracious, kind and gentle in behaviour. Origen said that “chresteuetai”, means “sweet to all.” The patience that we have talked about is not a grim endurance but a sweet endurance of awkward, ill-disciplined, inexperienced and immature Christians. Even when it is necessary to correct someone, such correction will be in a spirit of meekness and spiritual sweetness. Gal 6v1. Love does not correct people with cruelty, nor does it look upon God’s children with a spirit of criticism and anger. The essence of love is kindness and has been shown to them by God, and they can strive to show it to others. Love not only suffers those people who are a trial to its patience, it is kind to them and does good to them in a positive manner, James 3v17. When people use their gift in the wrong way, they are shown the right way in a kind and inoffensive manner. Those who are critical of the gifts of God the Holy Spirit and the recipients of those gifts, and treat them with suspicion and ostracism, need to remember that they have failed to mount the first two steps on the ladder of love.

As we have said before, there is a time for anger, even as the Lord Jesus was angry with the Pharisees and the other determined enemies of God who plundered poor widows and persecuted God’s prophets. Paul was angry with Elymas the sorcerer and brought the judgement of God upon him when he was obstructing people from finding God. Acts 13v6-13. So we can see that on occasions it is necessary to be angry, but it is certainly not right to be angry with the redeemed people of God who are using the gifts of God and doing their best to serve God. **The Lord Jesus was never angry with the apostles, even though he was on occasions very disappointed with them and had to rebuke and correct them.** The rest of the apostles were angry at James and John when they sought the best positions in the kingdom, but there was no anger from Christ, He showed them that His kingdom was not like the kingdoms of the world, the rule of His kingdom is based on loving service, Church history has revealed to us a continual striving for pre-eminence and a tragic lack of kindness, there has been, and still is, the most vicious persecution carried on under the guise of a zeal for God. However, Christian love is not like that, it not only suffers long, it suffers long kindly; it is not only passive, it is active and constructive as well. Love delights to give and bless, it is kind even when people have failed; it seeks not only to forgive but to please as well.

#### **Love is not envious, or jealous “Zeloo” (Strong’s NT:2206)**

“Envieth not,” is “ou zeloi,” the present active indicative of “zeloo” to boil. It can be used in a bad sense, as here, but it can also be used in a good sense as in 1Cor 12v31. Envy is worse than jealousy, for it desires to take away what a person has. Love is neither jealous nor envious. Love knows no jealousy; it does not begrudge another a greater manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If we are not careful we can begrudge people having what we ourselves have not got. When another Christian is well blessed with natural talents, earthly blessings, or spiritual gifts, we should never say, “If I have not got those blessings, why should they have them?” We should rejoice in their gifts and their blessedness.

**Jealousy and envy really spring out of a spirit of covetousness, and this cost Satan his place in heaven, and brought the most soul-destroying sin into his life.** We do not gain by being jealous, covetous and envious, we lose every time. Paul exhorts us to desire and even covet spiritual gifts, but he does not mean that we should manifest the envious begrudging spirit that is part and parcel of worldly covetousness. Paul is really saying, “Your desire and effort for spiritual things should be as strong as the worldlings desire and effort for worldly things, but they must be controlled by, and remain within, the confines of pure Christian love.” Luke 16v1-15, NB v8, 1Cor 12v31, 14v1.

Envy springs from ill will, but the Christian will rejoice with others who are blessed and will try to lead them into greater blessedness. Love recognises that there are “diversities of gifts and differences of operation” in the manifestation of the gifts, and that “we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office.” 1Cor 12v4-6, Rom 12v4. The gifts of the Spirit and the ministry gifts of Christ are not in opposition to one another, they are complimentary and independent. Don’t be jealous of what God the Holy Spirit gives to another, we all have our part to play, let us rejoice in what God gives to others, as well as over what He gives to ourselves. Envy is one of the evil “works of the flesh,” and it should not be found in the Christian Church among the lovely fruits of the Holy Spirit. Gal 5v19-21.

Envy is even more destructive than jealousy. Jealousy, "zelos," casts hostile grudging looks; "phthonos," "envy," is more malignant than jealousy, it has arrived at the stage of hostile acts. It is grief at another person's good fortune; it is not just the pain that they do not possess the other person's good fortune or blessings; but the bitterness that the other person does. It is not so much the desire for what another person has; it is the desire to take away from another what they have, or prevent them from possessing it. "Zelos," "jealousy," can sometimes speak of noble ambition, and desire for something good, as well as a covetous evil desire; whereas. "phthonos," "envy," can only speak of an evil and bitter ill will. It is not just the pain over an enemy's good fortune; it can be the grief over a friend's good fortune. The jealousy, "zelos," of the Jews led to the active opposition of the more malignant "phthonos," "envy;" and caused them to murder Jesus. Though Satan possessed Judas, it is not recorded that any of the leaders of Israel became possessed; the evil jealousy and envy in their hearts drove them to oppose and murder Jesus. Mark 2v5-7,16,23,24, 3v1,2, 15v10, Matt 27v18.

"Phthonoi," occurs in the Majority Text, in the works of the flesh in Gal 5v19-22; Paul uses it in Rom 1v29, to speak of one of the sins which people are filled with when they choose not to retain God in their knowledge; and in Phil 1v15,16, of some who preached Christ to spite Paul, and tried to hinder his ministry. We are warned against this dangerous sin. 1Tim 6v4, Titus 3v3, 1Peter 2v1, (Gal 5v26 "phoneo"). The envy that drives one to keep up with the Jones's can lead to tragic circumstances.

### **Love does not vaunt itself, it does not brag, boast, or display itself "ou perperuetai"**

"Vaunteth not itself." is "ou (Strong's NT:3756), perperuetai (Strong's NT:40680)", and is derived from "perperos," braggart. It only occurs here in the New Testament. It means to play the braggart. Love does not brag, love is not boastful, love is humble and of a contrite spirit. If a person manifests all nine gifts of the Holy Spirit they are humble and not arrogant if they are controlled by love. If there has been a real manifestation of spiritual power, or some really gracious and kind act, there should be a genuine humility. To make an arrogant claim for love, means that we have little love, and no humility. The loving Christian will not parade his achievements, spiritual blessings or conquests in an egotistical way. Spiritual arrogance and pride, and their companion, self-importance, are very undesirable qualities of character that should have no part in the Christian's life. They are seen in their true light by the following considerations.

### **Spiritual gifts are indeed GIFTS, they are unearned and unmerited**

They are not because of our righteousness; they are "charismata" (Strong's NT:5486) i.e. "gifts of grace." Rom 11v6,20, Deut 9v4, 1Cor 12v4,9,31. **These gifts are not our manifestations; they are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit graciously channelled through us.** In 1Cor 4v4,7 we read, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" All our natural abilities are given to us; they are only left for us to develop. However, with spiritual gifts we cannot even claim credit for development, these heavenly gifts come to us through the grace of God, and very often without us expecting them. The thing that will ensure a profitable working of these heavenly gifts is love and humility, not pride and arrogance.

### **We should realise that it was our sins that crucified our Saviour**

These gifts are only available to us because the Lord Jesus died for us; they are the outflow of Calvary. So when we think of our spiritual blessings and gifts we should have tears of gratitude over the wonderful grace and love of God, not spiritual arrogance. The gifts of the Spirit are precious gifts from a crucified and risen Saviour. Let us remember our great spiritual need, past, present, and future, and how it took the death of our Saviour to meet it, and we shall never be boastful. We can never repay our dear Lord Jesus for the gifts of His grace, past, present and future, and this tremendous fact of our continual and eternal indebtedness to Christ and our heavenly Father, should keep us humble and contrite.

**The great need around us should cause us to take our eyes off ourselves, and drive us to seek for those needs**  
We need so much more than we have, if we are to meet the great needs of the world, and there can be no sense of arrival, self-satisfaction, self-importance, or pride, in the light of the world's needs. **The aim of love is the blessing of others, not its own importance or advantage.**

### **Pride is the arch foe of the Christian**

Pride dies the hardest of all the works of the flesh, but it is by far the most dangerous. It is something that can attack all of us, and we need to take care and remember that it was this sin that destroyed Lucifer, and it will destroy us if we allow it to reign in our lives. To be proud over our gifts is quite wrong and it is really very foolish, for it is the Holy Spirit and His gifts that meet the need of the hour, not the human personality it is our privilege to be a channel of blessing.

The fact that spiritual arrogance, pride and boastfulness are mentioned, shows that it is possible for these to be in us. Indeed, this is the continual butt of the Devil. Pride is the last thing to go in the Christian, and so we need to take care. A Christian may have great struggles with their heart, but to allow pride and egoism is very dangerous, we must humble ourselves before God. Satan came to the Lord Jesus and said, "Cast yourself down from the Temple before the people and

the religious leaders." Satan was saying, among other things, "You show them that you are the Messiah and have a great and powerful miraculous ministry, if you claim to be God's Son." **If the Devil had the impertinence to tempt his Creator to spiritual pride, we can expect similar appeals to our pride.** Great power and great spiritual revelation can result in a constant appeal to our pride, and pride can hammer incessantly at one's heart, if one is greatly used of God. **This is particularly true when people, in their ignorance, start to give someone the praise that is only due to God; we have to really warn them against this and to direct them to give all the glory to the Lord.** Paul said that he was getting over-exalted with the great amount of spiritual revelation that he enjoyed, "a thorn in the flesh" was the cure for this condition. 2Cor 12v7,8. This was certainly something very nasty; I feel that it was the tremendous persecution that Paul received, for in the Old Testament "thorns in the flesh" were people who troubled Israel. Num 33v55, Judges 2v3, 2Cor 12v10, 11v23-28, Exodus 28v24. The Lord can deflate us if we are proud or boastful. The thing to do is what Paul learned to do; we should "serve the Lord with all humility of mind and many tears." Acts 20v19.

This vaunting spirit is the spirit of the powers of darkness, "Simon made out that he was a great one," Acts 8v9, and he wanted to obtain God's power so that he could vaunt himself even more, and so Peter gave him a great warning and rebuke for it. Our message is not that we are great, but that we have a great and wonderful Saviour and a great, gracious and lovely heavenly Father. **God exalts the humble and puts down the proud, so we should be VERY careful, or we can lose all that we have, or have some severe discipline from the Lord that will bring us to our senses.** We boast when we feel superior to other people, but we do not possess any superiority over other Christians, any blessing that we may have is entirely the result of the grace of God. Let us rejoice in the peacock's feathers that God gives to us, but let us humbly thank God for them. Love does not try to parade its beauty, or what it has done, or show people what it can do, love is meek and lowly in heart, let us keep little in our own eyes, and when God gives us some peacocks feathers, let us be humble peacocks and give God all the glory.

#### **Love is not puffed up and conceited "ou phusioutai," to puff oneself out like a pair of bellows**

"Is not puffed up," is "ou phusioutai," the present indicative of "phusio" (Strong's NT:5448), to inflate oneself, to puff up with false and empty pride. Love is not inflated or blown up with a sense of its own importance, it is not conceited. This is the inner cause of the previous outward manifestation, and Paul preaches against this undesirable trait of character in several places in the first epistle to the Corinthians, many of them must have been suffering from this spiritual disease for Paul to have mentioned it so often. 1Cor 4v16,18,19, 5v2, 8v1, 13v4. Paul tells them that "knowledge puffeth up," but "love buildeth up," so we can see that if we are puffed up in ourselves, we will find that we are not able to build up either ourselves, or others, in the faith. The result of an imagined importance and puffing up of ourselves will be a spiritual shrinkage, and the bigger the "puff," the greater will be the shrinkage. If we do not humble ourselves, the Lord Jesus will burst our inflation for us in no uncertain way and will humble us in a way that we will not forget. **The Lord knows how to bring down the proud.**

We need a contrite and loving heart to walk with the Lord, He knoweth the proud afar off. Isaiah 66v2, 1Cor 4v7, Psalm 138v6. Loving Christians are not puffed up with pride by their achievements, they humbly confess that it is grace alone that saved and blessed them. When we get puffed up, we take the glory from the Lord Jesus and give it to ourselves. **However, see the lovely humility of Paul and Barnabus, "they preceded to report in detail ALL THAT GOD, working with them, had done, and how HE had opened for the Gentiles the door of faith."** Acts 14v27. It is sometimes necessary to report what God has done, for it can enlighten and encourage Christians, and can produce faith in the sick or unconverted, and so be a real means of blessing. However it is never right to parade God's workings through us, with a puffed up and arrogant air, this attitude will certainly result in discipline from the Lord. **Pride goes before a fall, and those who steal the glory from the Lord are certainly heading for one.** If anyone could have been puffed up, conceited, or boastful at the end of his life it was Paul, but he realised that all he had accomplished was because of the great grace of God. See his lovely spirit of humility in 1Tim 1v11-16. **A humble person is one who realises the truth about themselves. They realise that all blessings and talents, natural and spiritual, spring out of the grace, mercy and provision of God.**

#### **Love does not behave itself unseemly, becomingly, or disgracefully**

"Does not behave itself unseemly," "ouk aschemonei" (Strong's NT807). To be or act unbecomingly, to behave unseemly. It only occurs here and in 1Cor 7v36 in the New Testament. The Christian who is controlled by love considers the reactions of others and does allow a genuine inspiration to result in excessive behaviour that is jarring to others, and likely to bring reproach upon the work of God. Let us first consider: -

#### **Order and disorder**

The apostle Paul is obviously against a disorderly and unbecoming manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, we need to remember that the order of a Pentecostal meeting does not mean a dead order. Christians can pray "with strong cryings and tears" like the Lord Jesus did in Gethsemane. Heb 5v7, or praise the Lord in quite a loud way. Psalm 98v4, 47v1, Luke 19v37-40, Rev 19v6, or even on some rare occasions dance in praise to God. Psalm 149v3, 150v4, and



sometimes, like the apostle John and Daniel, spiritual revelation can cause one to lose their strength and fall to the floor, or to lie on their face in worship. Rev 1v7, 4v10, Dan 10v8,11,15,17, Acts 2v13. On the day of Pentecost the 120 in the upper room were so blessed by the Lord and so effusive in their worship that some of those who saw them thought that they were intoxicated.

**Here is a passage from a tract by W F P Burton:** He is telling his reaction to these types of manifestations in Pentecostal meetings when he was first examining the Pentecostal experience and doctrine. Acts 2v13-16, Eph 5v18.

### **The Question of Manifestations**

Before I gave myself to waiting on God for the blessing with unrestricted faith, however, one or two matters had to be made clearer to me. These were chiefly concerned with peculiarities which I had seen in the meetings, such as falling to the ground, laughing, groaning, trembling, seeing visions. At times the weight of glory, the transports of praise seemed to make the participants appear drunk. A little study of the Scriptures removed my misgivings about such manifestations. I found that on the day of Pentecost, tongues were not used for preaching. They started before the crowd gathered, and it was the noise of the tongues, which gathered the Jewish listeners, who recognised the languages used. When the preaching started it was by Peter, and not in tongues, but in the one language that every Jew present understood. Acts 2v4-6. I saw, moreover, that even on that occasion, the manifestations were mistaken for drunkenness. Acts 2v13-16, Eph 5v18. Such passages as Dan 8v18-26, Neh 12v43, 8v6,12, Job 8v21, Psalm 126v2, reassured me, showing that these things were perfectly natural during times of special religious enthusiasm. One of the elder brethren put the matter nicely when he said: "We do not encourage such manifestations, but we are not at all surprised when they do occasionally occur. We have learned the lesson, which Michal learned so dearly, that it does not do to belittle those who are carried away with the joy of the Lord. 2Sam 6v18-23." End of quote.

John Wesley was concerned about people in his meetings who were under a deep conviction of sin; they fell as if they had been pole-axed to the floor. The advice that he received and took from a spiritual and godly lady, was that he should leave God to do His work in His own way. Whenever a manifestation that is very definitely of the Holy Spirit takes place, we should be careful not to criticise. However, it is quite plain from 1Cor 12 to 14 that it is possible to use the gifts of the Spirit, or respond to the blessing of the Lord in an unseemly and unbecoming way. Disorderly conduct occurs when we act in a selfish way and show no consideration for others. It will also cause friction and distress if we try to carry on in the flesh a work that was begun in the Spirit, or if we try to make the exceptional the normal.

### **Public and private use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit**

We are plainly instructed in the New Testament to consider the presence of unconverted and unlearned people in a meeting when we are manifesting spiritual gifts and act accordingly. Paul makes it quite clear that it can be unseemly to use our gifts in public in the same way that we would use them in private. What is quite right in private can be quite wrong in public. Paul says that the continual loud noisy use of the gift of tongues in a church meeting is wrong; our emphasis should be public, not private edification, when in a church meeting. Noisy meetings in the early Church could have meant the death of the believers.

Paul states that in public meetings we must exercise restraint in the use of the gift of tongues, or we shall bring reproach on the work of God. If there are people in a meeting who are unconverted or unlearned and ignorant about spiritual gifts, the person who is in charge of the meeting must not allow anything to proceed that is unseemly and would harm or disgrace the Christian cause. There are times when in meetings consisting of Pentecostal believers and instructed Christian friends, the whole gathering may praise and worship the Lord in tongues, but this should not happen when the unconverted are in the meeting, nor should it continue for a long period or in a loud and noisy way in any meeting. The same thing applies to what is known as "dancing in the spirit," this should also be limited in the presence of unbelievers, and it should not be overdone in our Christian gatherings. Without doubt Christians can be moved to "dance before the Lord," and it can bring great blessing, but it should never exclude, or take pre-eminence, over the Scriptures. **We can see that what can be quite alright in a private meeting in a church, has to be carefully controlled when there are unbelievers or outsiders in a meeting, for what is not "unseemly conduct" in the secret place, or in a meeting where only Pentecostal Christians are present, becomes "unseemly conduct" when the unconverted or unlearned are present.**

### **Young people and young converts**

Young people will nearly always react in a more lively way to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit than their stayed elders, we should not desire them to act like people twenty to fifty years older than themselves. The young contribute their energy, the older, their experience and wisdom. In a maternity hospital there is a lot of noise, but there is life. In a Pentecostal meeting with young converts you can't always expect an apple-pie order, or a mature Christian reaction from young converts. Young converts will grow in grace and learn as they walk with the Lord. If you are too severe and stop all the reactions and chaff experiences of young people or young converts, you will stop the wheat growing.

Every church ought to have Christian babies growing in them, and where this is happening there cannot help but be some imperfection and immaturity, but we should not get over concerned if everything is not perfect pattern, the young converts will grow in grace and experience as they follow the Lord. One has to make some allowances for immaturity, we know the young converts will learn about such things as modesty and dress watching pornographic T.V., bad company and worldly attitudes etc., and they will also learn how to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit alright, if they are taught properly and set a good example. Though any serious disorder should be dealt with, and any meeting which has outsiders in should be carefully controlled, in gatherings of believers only, we can on occasions overlook and allow certain chaff reactions of inexperienced Christians that are not quite according to the perfect pattern of the Scriptures.

We do not expect a person to master arithmetic in one lesson, or learn to drive a car or pilot an aeroplane as soon as they are placed at the controls, and in spiritual things let us not expect perfection all at once. We must not be too legal about things, or we can turn the blessed order of the Holy Spirit into legal bondage. We are not under a severe Law; we are under the grace of God. It is far better to have a little disorder than death of spiritual bondage, "Death is the dirtiest dirt." However, a Christian of longstanding should manifest the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a graceful and gracious way, and there should be no hint of disorderly or unseemly conduct. We should never make an upsetting, unruly, and rowdy exhibition of ourselves.

### **Fanaticism and experience**

There is a great difference between jarring incidents that occur because Christians are inexperienced in the use of the gifts, and jarring incidents that are the result of "unruly" young converts and Christians manifesting the gifts in a wilful, undisciplined and disorderly manner. There are Christians who are spoken of as "unruly," and we are told to warn Christians who are unruly. 1Thess 5v14. Christian leaders have to "reprove and rebuke and exert with all longsuffering and doctrine." i.e. they have to give sound teaching, good example, and sometimes stern warnings, 2Tim 4v2, Titus 2v15, but there must be longsuffering. There is a definite need sometimes for correction in Christian meetings when there is unseemly conduct, fanaticism or excess. However, the leader must exercise great grace and tact, and if possible speak quietly and privately to the persons concerned, for any harsh or graceless "unseemly discipline" may permanently injure a dear Christian, and can bring something infinitely worse than excess in the use of the gifts, it can bring spiritual bondage and death. **It needs real wisdom, to control unruly Christians who need a loving but firm discipline, and guide ignorant and inexperienced Christians, who need loving advice. A wise, loving and spiritual leadership will discern between unseemly, spurious and profitable manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and will keep a revival going forward in the will of God.**

It is not necessary to roll on the floor, even if Billy Bray did it, indeed, if the Holy Spirit comes in real power, we will not be able to move a muscle, we shall be physically overcome. When we manifest a gift of the Holy Spirit, we do not lose our self-control, the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet. The Holy Spirit is a perfect gentleman, He will not cause us to get into a frenzy, or act in a way that will produce concern, fear, friction, stress and distraction in the saints, and disgust in the outsider. The inspiration may be perfectly genuine, but our reaction to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit may be improper or unseemly. It is our response to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that decides the benefit to the Church. In the Corinthian church there was an imperfect use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. there was an over emphasis on the gift of tongues and a monopolisation of Christian meetings with tongues, they were only thinking of personal, not public edification, but the inspiration of those gifts is not in question with Paul. Paul makes it quite clear that it was the way that the Corinthians were using their gifts and their response to inspiration that was wrong, not the lovely gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**The gifts of the Holy Spirit are wonderful, it is the manifestation of them through imperfect channels that produces difficulty at times.** The manifestation of the gifts at Corinth were not counterfeit, they were genuine manifestations of the Spirit used wrongly. It is a sad thing that every revival always brings its quota of excess or fanaticism, but let us not fear seeking a full Pentecostal revival because of the dangers of excess and fanaticism, the dangers of spiritual death and powerless, subnormal, formal Christianity are far, far worse.

### **The cure for abuse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Consideration of others.

Correct teaching and spiritual example from the more mature Christians.

The crucifixion of the self-assertive spirit. God's gifts should exalt Christ not draw attention to the person manifesting them.

We should remember that excesses in the use of the gifts, and doubtful physical manifestations, arise from a resistance to the Holy Spirit, we will find a cure for these ills, when we submit and yield to the leadings and authority of the Holy Spirit.

We need a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit as well as the gifts of the Spirit. A growth in grace will cure all disgraceful behaviour. This will only be accomplished by a diligent seeking of God and spiritual determination. 2Peter 1v5-12. Self-control is one of the fruit of the Spirit that will cure any unseemly, disgraceful, or unbecoming conduct. This self-control, self-discipline and consideration of others will bring a fullness of the Spirit; excess and unseemly conduct will never bring the blessing that we desire, nor will it exalt the Lord Jesus. We should avoid doing anything that is offensive and unbecoming, or that violates decency or good manners. God is a perfect Gentleman.

### **A Final Word**

It is behaving most unseemly to suppress or oppose the Holy Spirit's gifts, gifts that Christ has given to His Church. Indeed, this goes beyond excess and fanaticism to real rebellion and wickedness, for by despising the gifts of God, we despise God. The abuses of the gifts are far less than anti-Pentecostal people would think. Wise leadership and mature example, can lead a Pentecostal revival away from any unseemly behaviour, fanaticism, or spiritual danger, into the lovely green pastures of a fruitful manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### **Love seeketh not her own. It is NEVER selfish**

"Seeketh not its own," is "ou zetei ta heautēs." Love does not seek its own interests; it is never selfish, it does not insist upon its rights. 1Cor 10v24,33. This follows on from the last quality of love; it is the cure for disorderly conduct and other misuses of the gifts. Love does not think of its own profit, it considers how others may best profit from the exercise of spiritual gifts. Love does not monopolise a meeting, it is not egotistical and self-centred, it seeks the welfare and blessing of others first, it does not pursue selfish aims. The loving Christian does not say, "How much can I get from my gift, or from the meeting?" The loving Christian says, "How much can I give?" The aim of love is not self-glory or ostentation. Love does not seek position, privilege, self-advancement, or benefit; it considers how it can minister, and what its responsibilities are. Love's eyes look upon the needs of others as well as their own needs. The surest antidote to spiritual pride and selfishness is to get taken up with the needs of others. The apostles were seeking their own when they were arguing as to who was going to be the greatest among them, they were loving the pre-eminence; but the Lord taught them in a most striking way, He washed their feet, in the kingdom of God the rule is service, not self-seeking. John 13 all, Matt 20v20-28.

The Scripture states that God is love, and here we read that love does not seek its own, it proclaims the glorious fact that all of God's actions are totally selfless. There is a no more striking or important truth in the New Testament than this. We should imitate our Heavenly Father and be unselfish. In a world that is always thinking of its own rights and seeking its own welfare, and is generally quite unconcerned over its responsibilities, we should set a shining example inside and outside the church fellowship. We should take care that we are not swept away by the errors of the wicked. Christian love sees its duties and does not insist upon its rights. We should always do the things that will build up the people of God, we should not love the pre-eminence, and we should think of others and humble ourselves before God. We have a responsibility to seek God for manifestations of spiritual gifts that will be a blessing to others as well as ourselves. In these materialistic days we need to remember that excessive seeking of materialistic things can cause us to be so spiritually run-down, that we shall be a burden to Christ's Church instead of a blessing.

### **Love is not easily provoked, or irritated. It does not fly into a temper**

"Is not provoked," is "ou paroxunetai" (Strong's NT:3947). The Greek word translated "provoked," only occurs here in 1Cor 13v5, and in Acts 17v16, in the New Testament, where it says that Paul's spirit was stirred within him when he saw that the city of Athens was wholly given to idolatry. Paul was provoked and moved to action in a good way by the idolatry of Athens, but here in 1Cor 13, Paul states that the loving Christian does not allow himself to be stirred to anger through a misuse of the gifts, he is rather moved to sympathy and compassion. Matt 9v35,36. The response of love to a misuse of the gifts is not irritability, temper and bitterness of spirit; but rather compassion, sympathy, tenderness and forgiveness. Love sorrows over immaturity and excess, but its attitude is curative and edifying not censorious, critical and bad-tempered. **When the Corinthian Christians were misusing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul gave them sound teaching and advice, not an exhibition of bad temper.**

Is it always wrong for a Christian to be angry? No! Though there are times when it is a sin not to be angry. Even the divine love of Christ was angered by a deliberate and unwarranted suppression of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by most of the religious leaders of His day. These hypocrites devoured widow's houses and prayed in a most pious way, and they were full of all kinds of iniquity. Matt 23v1-39, Luke 16v14,15. However, we should be very careful lest we call our bad temper by the false name of righteous indignation. **A person that cannot control their temper is of no use in the service of God, and can be a downright nuisance and menace, and can injure many people.** 1Tim 3v3. The only thing that the Christian has the right to be angry over is downright wickedness, and even then we have to control our spirit. Paul suffered a great deal of opposition and persecution like his Lord, and he tells us what our reaction to it must be, "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing

those that oppose themselves; if God pre-adventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth. 2Tim 2v24,25.

So we can see that anger is a thing that should be seldom seen in a Christian. **The Christian may speak the truth firmly and sincerely, but it should be spoken in love, not in a bad spirit.** Eph 4v15, Gal 5v13-26. In the proud, correction will cause anger, and we need to have the grace to humbly receive any advice, correction, or abuse that we may receive, whether it be right or wrong. See how our dear Lord Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners, and like a lamb went to the slaughter, let us follow His example. Love does not get angry and forbids spiritual gifts, nor does it call this bad temper and unbelief by the name of righteous indignation.

We are saddened to read in Acts 15v39 that Paul and Barnabas had a paroxysm ("paroxusmos" Strong's NT:3948) of anger over John Mark in Antioch. In Heb 10v24 "paroxusmon" is used in a good sense to incite and provoke Christians to love and good works. In Heb 10v24 we read, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." "Consider," is "katanomen," the present active subjunctive of "katanoeo" (Strong's NT:2657), the very same verb that is used in Heb 3v1 to tell us to put our minds down on Jesus and consider Him. **Let us really think how we can incite our Fellow Christians to love and good works, let us never fly into a temper, or provoke others to anger.**

#### **Love thinketh no evil. It is not mindful of wrongs**

"Taketht not account of evil" "ou logizetai (Strong's NT:3049), to kakon" (Strong's NT:2556). It is derived from "logos" (Strong's NT:3056), and means, to count up, to take account of as in a ledger or notebook. "The evil," "to (Strong's NT:3588), kakon" (Strong's NT:2556), done to love, but love cancels the debt and settles the account. Love does not store up in the memory a catalogue of wrongs received, injuries done, or manifestations of the Spirit that were misused. Love does not meditate upon evil inflicted by others, or compile records or statistics of failures and sins in fellow Christians. Love does not harbour grievances, or brood over injuries. Love is not critical over genuine manifestations of the Holy Spirit, it holds fast to that which is good. 1Thess 5v19-21. The Greek word that is used is an accountant's word; it is the word that is used to describe the keeping of an account in a ledger of every item that the person wants to remember. **In God's business there is no place for keeping an account of injuries received, or imagined, or of the errors, mistakes and excesses of others. Love finds no sense of superiority or satisfaction in the faults of others, and does not keep a record of a person's failings with this end in view.**

Christian love learns to forgive, forget and pass over the faults of others. In Polynesia the natives keep articles suspended from the roofs of their dwellings to remind themselves of the wrongs done to them by their enemies, and so they keep the hatred of their enemies alive. Love does not do this kind of thing, love prays for its enemies, and for those who make mistakes and fall into sin and error, the Lord Jesus told us to pray for those that despitefully use us. This aspect of love follows on from the last quality of love that Paul mentioned, i.e. anger. Love does not have outbursts of anger, or keep that anger burning by cherishing the real or imaginary wrongs committed. The only purpose of this kind of malice of heart is to deprecate another's character, and it shows as an unforgiving spirit. **The Lord Jesus warned us in Matt 18v21-35 that people who harbour an unforgiving spirit can expect the most severe discipline from God.** Matt 6v15. In saying these things, I do not mean to say that we should ignore wrongs that are done in the church, or neglect church discipline. If you have offended someone, it is your duty to ask for their forgiveness. Matt 5v23,24. **If we have been offended it is our duty to approach the person concerned personally, then with witnesses if there is no repentance, and finally the matter must come before the church, which has the responsibility to discipline rebellious members.**

**Wilful sin must not be allowed in the church, the church must use the authority that Christ has given to its discipline members.** Matt 18v15-22, Matt 16v18,19, John 20v21-23, 1Cor 5v1-5,11-15, Eph 5v11. However, where there is repentance there must always be forgiveness. Luke 17v3,4, 2Cor 2v4-11. **If the church fails to carry out the procedure of discipline that Christ laid down in Matt 18v15-22, Christ can, and may, discipline the offender Himself, this can even result in the death of a Christian.** 1Cor 5v5, 11v27-32. If we do not put matters right here on earth, we shall have to answer for it at the judgement seat of Christ. Rom 14v10-13. The injured party should be humble and perform positive acts of kindness to the person who has injured them, so that repentance is made much easier. Gal 6v1, Rom 12v14-21, 1Cor 1v10. Christians should not settle disputes between one another by means of unbelievers in courts of law. 1Cor 6v1-8. So we can see that sin and discord must be dealt with, but once there has been reconciliation and forgiveness, all should be forgiven and forgotten and the church should be knit together in perfect love.

We dare not keep a record of what God has forgiven and forgotten for future reference and criticism. Compiling statistics for the purpose of criticism and self-aggrandisement, can only arise when we fail to consider ourselves and our needs. Matt 5v22-26, 7v1-5. We should consider others better than ourselves, not worse, and if there is an obvious need for correction, it should be done in a proper spirit. Phil 2v3, Gal 6v1. When Paul corrected people it was from the attitude that he was "less than the least of the saints." Eph 3v8, 1Tim 1v15. Love does not meditate upon people's faults, or their injuries with a critical attitude. In the diatribes against the Pentecostal experience, people have done the very thing that 1Cor 13v5 condemns. **To justify their unbelief in the Pentecostal experience, even Christian men have gone to**

**amazing lengths to compile cases of fanaticism and failure, and they have criticised genuine moves of the Holy Spirit by maligned and perverted reporting.**

To strengthen their weak arguments some have felt it necessary to magnify out of all proportion the excesses of a small minority of "Pentecostal failures" or "fringe fanatics" of the Pentecostal movement. But what Christian group has no spiritual failures? Even the apostolic band could be looked upon as "not of God" by this method of examination. Christ was betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter and forsaken by all, and the Bible tells us of many good men who have failed God. **The Bible tells us to sorrow over the fall of a brother and help to restore him, not to compile a record of his failures for the purpose of exciting public contempt.** Gal 6v1, Matt 5v44-48, 7v1-5. What a fearful judgement awaits those who attack the gifts that Christ has given to His Church, by unchristian means! The Lord Jesus warned that it was the very worst form of blasphemy to ascribe the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan. Mark 3v22-30. One is very thankful that many Christians in all denominations are seeking and receiving the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that in many circles the old prejudices are becoming a thing of the past. Love does not impute evil motives to another Christian's actions, nor is it suspicious of their character or actions. Love puts the best construction and interpretation on actions that look doubtful in a Christian brother or sister.

**Love rejoices not in iniquity. It is not glad when others go wrong**

"Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness," "ou chairei" (Strong's NT:5463). Joy in the triumph of evil is the depth of degradation and wickedness. Rom 1v32. Some people find real pleasure in finding out the faults of others and making them known. Some would rejoice if they could find something that would discredit a good Christian person. If there was some excess in a Pentecostal meeting, some critics would exclaim a triumphant, "I told you so!" There is no triumph in knowing that we were right about another's failings; a heart of love has no pleasure or satisfaction over the fall or faults of another. It is a great sin to gloat over the fall of another and those who gloat over another's fall are themselves in need of forgiveness and mercy, and are liable to experience real temptation themselves. A spirit of meekness and godly fear is the only safe attitude for the Christian, we should consider how much we have needed, and still will need, the grace and mercy of God. Gal 6v1. Love is not full of envy or resentment at the blessing of others, nor does it rejoice when they fail or fall. Indeed, we should hold one another up in prayer, particularly those whose ministry makes them a target for the Devil. Love does not gloss over evil, or say that evil is good, it does not close its eyes to evil, it disciplines it whenever it is necessary, however, love is terribly grieved when people go wrong, or do wrong, love wishes no one to fail. It is even possible to use a revelation of the Holy Spirit in a wrong way, we can use a revelation to expose and condemn, when the Holy Spirit wants us to use it to convert, help and strengthen a person, and as a directive to pray earnestly for them.

This verse can also teach us that a Christian does not and cannot enjoy the evil things of the world when they are walking with Christ the king of love. The apostle John tells us to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1John 2v15-17.

The systems of the world are under the sway of the Evil One, and we (as Christians) should not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and then we shall prove the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. Rom 12v1-3.

**Love rejoiceth in the truth, and joyfully sides with the truth**

"But rejoiceth with the truth," "sungchairei (Strong's NT:4796), de (Strong's NT:1161), te (Strong's NT:3588), aletheia" (Strong's NT:225). Truth as opposed to unrighteousness. Rom 2v8, 2Thess 2v12. **After a series of remarkable negatives, Paul returns here to the positive side of the truth.** Love is pleased when it sees others blessed and going on in the Christian way, it is delighted when others do well, and rejoices over the victory of truth in them. We should rejoice when others are more blessed than ourselves, and are using greater gifts than ourselves, or having a more prominent part in Christian work than we are. Human nature tends to resent the blessing of others, but as Christians we have to crucify any envy or jealousy and rejoice with a loving heart over the blessing of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We should never say, "Why have they got this or that gift when I have not got it?" or, "Why should they have such a prominent place in the church?" **We should seek God for ourselves, for He has promised to always meet with the sincere seeker and bless them and make them a blessing.** We should never let envy stop us from rejoicing with others over their victories, gifts and blessings. Instead of finding pleasure in compiling and gloating over a person's faults, the loving Christian rejoices in their spiritual victories and attainments, and will do all they can to promote further spiritual well being.

Sometimes it may be difficult to rejoice in the truth, particularly if it shows you your deficiencies. Many people do not accept many clearly revealed Biblical truths. Some Christians cannot rejoice in the truth of spiritual gifts, having a fear, dislike, distrust, or even a hatred of this truth. However, it is the truth that makes us free and builds us up in faith. John 8v32. Spiritual gifts were given to the Church to build it up, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit

withal," so if we neglect this truth we will be much poorer. 1Cor 12v7. Obedience to Christ's commands, springing out of love for Christ, decides how much we experience of God's truth, provision, power and revelation, he who does the will of God shall know the truth that is from God. John 7v17. The Christian who deeply loves Christ, will obey Him and love others, and perform His will in all things, and will as a result experience a great revelation of God's love, power and truth. John 14v21.

When the Lord Jesus told the religious leaders of His day the truth, the vast majority of them wanted to kill Him, they did not want the truth, because it conflicted with their cherished but incorrect traditions. John 8v44,45. Man-made tradition dies hard even when it openly denies the Word of God. It took a vision of Christ to deliver Paul from the bondage of tradition to the truth of the Gospel. Spiritual gifts are a part of Gospel truth, and the Christian "should earnestly contend for the faith which was delivered once for all to the saints." Jude v3, Gal 1v6-10. Some people will always resist the truth, but the Christian should love truth, whoever it manifests itself through. 2Tim 3v8, Phil 1v14-20, John 18v37, 2Cor 3v8. The loving Christian does not condemn or forbid spiritual gifts, he rejoices in the manifestation of them, and sides with the truth concerning them. Do you? 1Thess 5v19-21, 1Cor 14v1,39.

### **Love beareth all things. It supports, protects and conceals**

"Beareth all things," "panta (Strong's NT:3956), stegei," (Strong's NT:4722). "Stego" means, to roof over, to cover, to conceal, (it is derived from "stege" (Strong's NT:4721), roof), it is used in 1Cor 9v12, 1Thess 3v1,5. Love forbears and protects, in 1Peter 4v8 Peter states, "love covers and throws a veil over ("kaluptei" Strong's NT:2572) a multitude of sins." Love knows no limit to what it can endure, there is nothing that it cannot face, it bears up under anything, it is always slow to expose faults and does its very best to uplift and sustain. Vine says that the Greek word "stege," means primarily to protect, or preserve by covering, hence it means to keep off something which threatens, to bear up against, to hold out against, and so endure, bear, forbear." So we can see that the Greek word carries with it the thought of enduring, sustaining, uplifting and protecting. Love can bear and endure the faults and hatred of others, it delights to sustain and uplift others, and where it is consistent with Church purity and discipline it covers the faults of Christians. Love does not bring the faults of others into public light so that it can point the finger of scorn.

The loving Christian will also bear with those who persecute and revile the followers of Christ, in order to win them to the Lord Jesus. See how the Lord Jesus tried to win lost men and women, He bore all things to fulfil the Father's will and to seek and save that which was lost. The apostle Paul was constrained by the love of Christ to seek the lost and point them to the Saviour, and was willing to suffer the most dreadful persecution because of his love for his Saviour and needy mankind. 2Cor 11v23-12v15. We need to remember that 1Cor 13 was spoken to Christians who were under persecution, some were even dying for their faith. Paul tells them that the Christian who truly loves the Lord Jesus will bear all that the world and the Devil brings against them to destroy their love for Jesus, their faith in Jesus, and the spiritual experiences given by the Lord Jesus. Sometimes, like Peter, a Christian may find that their love for Christ is not as great as they thought, circumstances may try their faith and find them wanting. However, like Peter, they can be restored by the wonderful grace and love of God, and as a result be a humbler, wiser person, conscious of their limitations and dependent on their Lord instead of themselves. Luke 22v31-34,61,62, John 21v15-19, Acts 2 (all), 5v12-16

Love will bear with Christians who are immature or inexperienced in the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament Church there is not such an emphasis on order that there is a suppression of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by a lack of forbearance. We may try to cover up our lack of love by appealing to the Scripture, "Let all things be done decently and in order," 1Cor 14v40, when we have permanently injured someone's spiritual life and use of spiritual gifts by a cruel rebuke and lack of forbearance. We can only reduce the effectiveness of the gifts by excess and disorder; we can also stop the movings of the Holy Spirit by excessive and unreasonable demands for order. Instruction and spiritual example will guide seeking and willing souls into the green pastures of a God-appointed order. It is much easier to destroy the gifts by a lack of forbearance, than it is to kindle a deep desire for them. However, love bears with the Christian who is to timid, quiet, or contemplative to manifest the gifts, as they do with those Christians who are too noisy or free in their worship and use of spiritual gifts.

The loving Christian will not only bear with immaturity in young believers, they will also bear with, and try to help, Christians who refuse to seek or manifest the "good gifts" that God gives to His children. Love will bear up under rebukes and persecution from those Christians who will not accept their genuine manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and will continue to manifest God's wonderful gifts. Those Christians who oppose the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are suffering from disorder and excess of the very worst kind, i.e. coldness, formal worship and rebellion against God's Word. These are by far the most difficult and dangerous disorders to deal with, however, the loving Pentecostal Christian will make a real effort to help and uplift Christians who are in all these circumstances, if it is within their power to do so. Forbearance is a difficult attribute of character to manifest, but the loving Christian prays for those that despitely use them and will bless and curse not. Matt 5v44, Rom 12v4, James 3v9-18.

What a lovely quality of character this is! No disappointment, abuse, injury or ridicule can stop the ministrations of the loving heart. Love secretly mends and prays over the faults of others, this is a burden bearer, even though it may at

times stagger under the burden and need that is laid upon it. 1Peter 4v8. Christians should protect their brother or sister in Christ, they should act as a family of God. What good mother fails to protect her child from a bad name, or the consequences of their wrongdoing? **The loving Christian will always try to bear up, sustain, and protect his brothers and sisters in Christ, indeed, love try's to sustain and uplift all.**

### **Love believeth all things. It has no limits to its faith and trust**

"Believeth all things," "panta (Strong's NT:3956), "pisteuei" (Strong's NT:4100). Christians are certainly not to be gullible; they are to be wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves. Matt 10v16. Love has an unquenchable faith in God, and completely trusts Him; it exercises faith in every situation. It is eager to believe the best about people. Love views difficult people and difficult circumstances with the expectation and faith that things will improve. Even continual disappointment will fail to crush the love-controlled Christian; they will look upon every circumstance with a conquering and triumphant faith. The basis of this faith is the faithfulness of God and the presence of God, "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." The Lord is our keeper, the Lord is our shade, He will preserve, heal and deliver. Psalm 46 and 121. Love has the faith that, "He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil 1v6, or, as the Amplified Version translates this verse, "I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ, developing that good work and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you." The loving Christian faces obstacles in the Church and hindrances in ourselves with the confidence that God can and will undertake for us as we yield to Him. This complete trust takes the strain and stress out of difficult circumstances.

This faith and trust is an attitude of heart that looks at imperfect brothers and sisters and says, "I know that you are capable of and made for better things." **Love sees the best in people and sees them as they will be, not as they are, it sees Christians as they will be, perfect and complete before the throne of God in heaven.** Rev 7v9-17. Love does not give people up as hopeless when the evidence is heavily against them. It has faith that they will be moulded and disciplined by the Lord, and that the peaceable fruits of righteousness will prevail. If we have a suspicious and wary attitude to people, we can expect them to improve but slowly, however, if you show people trust, it gives them a tremendous spur on the Christian way. We are told in Heb 3v13 to encourage one another daily, it is a great encouragement to know that we are loved, trusted and honoured by our brothers and sisters in Christ. However, this does not mean that we do not exercise a spiritual discernment or judgement, either in relation to spiritual gifts or a person's character, but it does mean that any judgement must be loving and just and not critical, censorious and unkind. We have to "Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good." 1Thess 5v21. We are told to be on the watch for ravenous wolves who disguise themselves as sheep, and we have to protect the flock of God from them. Matt 7v1-5,15-17, Acts 20v28-31.

The Christian should be wise as well as loving. Matt 10v16. However, there is a great difference between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom, the worldly philosopher, sage, logician and clever debater, will know little or nothing of the wisdom and truth of God. Christianity is an expression of God's living truth, not an argument or theory, God's babes and sucklings can enjoy an experience of God's truth and wisdom, which the wisest worldling knows nothing about. 1Cor 1v19-21, Matt 11v25v30.

The Christian does not believe everything, we must exercise judgement. Prov 14v15. Love will not believe the obviously proved lie, but it will trust that even when a person shows positive evidence of backsliding and sin, that they will improve and get right with God. **Suspicion can destroy a move of the Holy Spirit and hinder a manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.** It is a great tragedy when Christian people are suspicious and wary about the promise concerning the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The loving Christian will be full of faith and trust in the promises that their heavenly Father has given to them, they will have complete faith in the reality and benefit of the gifts of the Spirit, and will obey the command to "desire spiritual gifts." 1Cor 14v1

### **Love hopeth all things. It is full of hope and never ceases to hope**

"Hopeth all things," "panta (Strong's NT:3956), elpizei" (Strong's NT:1679). Love hopes under all circumstances. The victory of hope can be as great as the victory of faith. Rom 4v18. Christian hope is a very close relation to faith, indeed, it springs out of faith. Christian hope springs out of confidence and faith in the character and truth of God. There is a dead hope as there is a dead faith, and there is a living hope as well as a living faith. James 2v14-26 with 1Peter 1v3, Prov 10v28, 11v7,23, Rom 5v4,5, 8v24,25, 15v4,13, Phil 1v19,20, Col 1v5,23,27, Titus 1v2, 2v13, Heb 3v6, 6v11,18,19, 1Pet 1v21, 3v15,16, 1John 3v2,3, 1Thess 5v8. No opposition, temptation, or distress can destroy the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus.

"Hopeth all things," is a progression from the previous "believeth all things." When love can have very little grounds for faith in a person, they never cease to hope that things will turn out all right. When there are real dark appearances of sin in a person's life, there is hope that the person will get back on the right way, and that truth and goodness will triumph. Love longs and hopes that any bitter and unloving spirit will be purified, and that love may prevail. Love never ceases to

hope that the gifts of the Holy Spirit will be manifest through all Christians, and in all Christian churches and denominations. **The baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit are the blood-bought heritage of every Christian.**

### **Love endureth all things. It bears everything with triumphant fortitude**

"Endureth all things," "panta (Strong's NT:3956), hupomenei" (Strong's NT:5278). Perseveres. Carries on like a courageous and valiant hearted soldier. Love is full of endurance, it endures without limit for the sake of others, **love gives us the power to endure everything.** The word that is used here is the same word that is used in Heb 12v2 to describe how the Lord Jesus bravely endured the cross. It is a triumphant endurance. The loving Christian does not allow things that are wrong to break or mar their spirit. Love goes through trial with a perfect confidence in God. This is one of the things that shows Christian maturity, for it is only mature Christians that can face the overwhelming difficulties and persecutions that our Saviour faced in His ministry and death, with a triumphant fortitude. The loving Christian will endure all things so that the God of love may manifest His power and love through the lovely gifts that He has given. Christ's risen life, power, and ministry are communicated to the Church and world by the spiritual gifts that He has given to His Church. **Those who manifest gifts of the Spirit will surely find that, like their Lord, they will have some opposition of one sort or another to endure.** Indeed, one may have to suffer the most determined vicious persecution from unbelieving worldly and religious people for the sake of Christ's spiritual gifts. Acts 14v19-22, 13v50-62, 1Cor 4v11-13, 2Tim 2v10-13, James 1v12.

Some Christians mature more slowly than others and so do not manifest spiritual gifts or manifest them aright, but love will endure such difficulties with triumphant fortitude, not with just grim resignation, but with a conquering endurance. We should prefer to endure some misuse of the gifts rather than have them absent from the Church. Some Christians will only progress a short way in the things of God, and there is little hope of altering them, we have to leave such people in the hands of their heavenly Father and love them patiently and understandingly. **However, if a person is living in open and deliberate sin they must be disciplined and dealt with BY THE CHURCH!** Matt 18v15-20, 2Thess 3v11-15, 1Cor 5v1-5, 1Tim 1v18-20.

Young believers may sometimes misuse the gifts, but we should be willing to endure a measure of this rather than quench their experience by criticism, harshness, or unreasonable demands for order. Loving instruction and spiritual example will work wonders with young converts. The Corinthians had been saved for about five years when Paul wrote to them, they were still ignorant as to how to use their spiritual gifts properly, and this was sad; but how sad it would have been if they had had no gifts of the Spirit in operation. We must recognise that our Lord Jesus states that Christians take time to grow in grace and spiritual maturity, and some take longer than others. However, I have been impressed how some Christians who have enjoyed correct teaching and wise oversight, have leaned to master the use of the gifts of the Spirit quickly. However, if some don't progress as we feel they should, we should bear them up in prayer. As we have said before, in meetings where there are the unconverted or unlearned, there must be a much stricter supervision than in meetings where only Pentecostal Christians are present. The early Christian meetings were mostly in homes and so the problem of unbelievers being present did not arise so much, as only those invited would be present.

If we use the gifts of the Holy Spirit with these fifteen lovely Christian qualities in mind, we shall experience revival in our churches, and we shall see the Lord Jesus abundantly glorified. These qualities of character make the use of spiritual power safe and profitable, and will result in a dynamic manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. **The fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit must accompany one another if the Church of Christ is to fulfil its great commission and be a blessing to mankind.**

### **Joy "Chara" (Strong's NT:5479)**

**The Greek greeting, both written and spoken was "chairein," "joy be with you."**

"Chairein" is the present infinitive of "chairo," it means, "joy be with you." "Chairein" (Strong's NT:5463) was used by the Roman officer Claudius Lysias to Felix, when he wrote to him concerning Paul. Acts 23v26. Judas came to Jesus with the word "chaire," the present imperative of "chairo," which means, "rejoice." Judas kissed Jesus fervently, "katephilesen" (Strong's NT:2705) the compound word means "to kiss fervently." What dreadful, hypocritical play acting, Judas kissed Jesus with murder in his heart. There is a great difference between the world's insincere greetings, and the greetings between members of Christ's Church.

### **The greetings of the churches has a much deeper meaning, than the greeting of the worldling**

In James 1v1 "Greetings," is "chairein," "joy be with you." In 2Cor 13v11 "Farewell," is "rejoice," "chairete," the present active imperative of "chairo," "to rejoice;" it means, "keep on rejoicing." In Acts 15v23, "Greeting," is "chairein," "joy be with you." God's joy can be manifested in us and in our homes and it should surprise and astonish the worldling.

### **The New Testament is full of joy, and God wants to fill our homes and marriages with joy**



The feminine noun "chara" occurs sixty times; it is derived from the verb "chairō," "to rejoice," which occurs seventy two times. "Chara," "joy," is from the same Greek root as "charis" (Strong's NT:5485) grace; Christian joy springs from a life filled with the beauty of grace and love; **joy come through serving others in love, and joy in people and God.** 2John v12. Joy can never be obtained through selfishness, things or possessions. Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Luke 12v15. **The selfish person in the end destroys their own happiness; it is only by following the example of the totally unselfish dedicated love of God, that we can enjoy true and lasting heavenly joy.**

### **The Spirit of God imparts His full joy to us, not solemn misery**

The joy that the Holy Spirit gives is much more than ordinary happiness; the word happiness comes from "hap," which means "chance, luck, or fortune; Christian joy does not depend on chance, luck, good fortune, pleasant circumstances, or the superficial, empty and transient pleasures of the world. It is a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory," the full joy of Heaven. 1Peter 1v11. "The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom 14v17, 15v13. God comes to impart His joy to us, and fill our homes with His joy. 1Thess 1v6.

### **Jesus has promised to give us His full joy**

Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, **that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be FULL.**" John 15v11. See 17v13. In 1John 1v1-4, the apostle John states that we can have a full joy through fellowship with the Father and the Lord Jesus. **We are given the joy that angels enjoy, an everlasting joy, the joy of God.** Isaiah 35v10. Angels shout and sing for joy, and so can we. Job 38v4,7, Luke 15v7,10. Nothing and no one can take this joy from us. John 16v22. Our joy flows from God's love for us, and nothing can separate us from God's love. Rom 8v28-39. **Christ's joy, like His peace, can fill our hearts even in the greatest of trials and difficulties.** Paul and Silas were praying and continually singing after being severely beaten with rods, and being placed in stocks in the prison. Acts 16v22-25, 2Cor 7v4-6,13, 8v2. See John 16v20-24.

### **There is great joy in faith in God our Father and the Lord Jesus**

The joy of faith is a fact. Matt 13v20, 28v8, John 3v29, Luke 8v13, Phil 1v25, 1Peter 1v8,9, 1John 1v1-4. In Luke 2v10, "Chara," joy, is linked with "megas," "great;" in the angel's message of "good tidings of great joy." In Luke 24v52,53; the disciples great joy over Christ's resurrection. In Acts 8v8, the converts at Samaria had great joy. In Acts 15v3, there was great joy over the conversion of the Gentiles. In 1Peter 1v6-8, "Chara" is linked with "agalliao," "to exult, to rejoice greatly," to speak of our exultation and unspeakable joy in Jesus, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We will "rejoice exultantly at the revelation of His glory" at His second coming. 1Peter 4v13. Jesus will present us "in exceeding joy," "en agalliasai," to God our Father. Jude v24. Joy in Jesus is part of Christian daily living. The Church is God's joy and exceeding treasure. We are "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Eph 1v18. **God is the person who sells all to buy the field with the treasure in it.** Matt 13v44.

### **The foundation of our joy, is joy in Our Lord**

#### **Joy in the birth, life and ministry of our Saviour**

In Luke 1v28, Gabriel said to Mary " "Be rejoicing ("chaire"), for you have been encompassed with favour." The angel said to the shepherds, in Luke 2v10,14, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." The angel adds "and peace on earth and good will towards men;" which is the reading of the vast majority of texts; "goodwill towards men," is the nominative case "eudokia" (Strong's NT:2107) showing that God's great good will is extended to all fallen mankind, just as the good news was in verse 10. The minority reading has the genitive case, "eudokias," and so reads, "peace among men of good will," this limits the boundless good will of God towards all of mankind, to a select group, and so it cannot be correct. Psalm 78v41. David, in Psalm 145v8,9, confirms that God's good will extends to all; "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion: slow to anger, and of great mercy. THE LORD IS GOOD TO ALL: and His tender mercies are over ALL His works." **The desire of God to show mercy is revealed in the ministry of Jesus, in His teaching and the countless manifestations of the healing mercy gifts of God.** Multitudes found healing and forgiveness through Christ's ministry.

#### **Joy in our resurrected conquering Lord**

Christ is our joy. Peter says in 1Peter 1v8, "in whom --- ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." When Jesus met the women after His resurrection, His first words to them were, "Rejoice," "chairete," the present imperative of "chairō," to rejoice, it can be translated as "Be rejoicing." Matt 28v9. This salutation is only used in the Gospels, Gabriel used it to greet Mary in Luke 1v28; Christ's' enemies used it to mock Jesus in Matt 26v49, 27v29, Mark 15v18 and John

19v3. The Church is God's joy and exceeding treasure. We are "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Eph 1v18. God is the person who sells all to buy the field with the treasure in it. Matt 13v44.

### **The joy imparted by the Gospel. Luke 15v5,7,9,10,25,32**

The aim of the Gospel is to give men joy, there is joy in heaven over sinners repenting. Matt 18v13. There is joy in believing. Rom 15v13. The Samaritans had "great joy," when Philip preached the Gospel to them with signs and wonders. Acts 8v9. The Ethiopian Eunuch also went on his way rejoicing, after hearing the Gospel from Philip, and after witnessing Philip's supernatural transport. Acts 8v37-40.

### **The Joy Of Christian Fellowship**

#### **The early Church was filled with a joy that was both attractive and triumphant**

The joy of true Christian fellowship and home life, is something that the world cannot comprehend. Phil 2v1,2. It is a foretaste of the joy and fellowship of the kingdom. Joy comes from people not possessions or things. Christian joy, like Christian peace, is much more than worldly happiness. Christian joy is "not as the world gives." It is the joy of God in the soul, it is an abounding joy. This joy comes from the Holy Spirit's Presence and Fullness. It is a triumph of Divine grace and power.

#### **The joy of praise and worship together: "Rejoice ever more" 1Thess 5v16**

Even before Pentecost the disciples were continually praising God in the Temple, because their Lord and Saviour was alive and still with them. Luke 24v52,53. There was joy in the simple home fellowships of the early Church, around a simple meal. Acts 2v46. Joy in the singing of the Spirit-inspired psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Eph 5v18,19, Col 3v16. Through Jesus we should continually offer up a joyful sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of our lips. Heb 13v15.

### **The Joy Of Service**

#### **Joy in God's acts of power**

The healing of the man at the beautiful gate shows the real joy in healing. Acts 3v8. The seventy returned with joy at the miracles God had done through them in the name of Jesus. Luke 10v17. Jesus directed them to rejoice more in the fact of their salvation; however, He also exults that God had given these Christian babies such great power and blessing. Luke 10v17-24. They were more privileged than the prophets. Our Lord also rejoiced over the ministry of the 12 apostles. Matt 11v25-27.

#### **Joy in converts**

Jesus rejoiced with all of heaven over converts to the truth. Luke 15v1,5,7,9,10,32, Matt 18v13. Paul said his converts and flocks were his glory, crown and joy. Col 4v1, 1Thess 2v19,20, 3v9. Paul rejoiced and kept a prophetic eye upon his converts. Col 2v5. True joy springs out of relationships, out of people, not possessions. In 2John v4 & 3John v3,4, John rejoices that Christians and his "children," were walking in the truth. In Col 1v24, Paul rejoices in his suffering on the behalf of his converts and Christ, and rejoices that he completes what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Christian leaders will have to give an account of their charges at the judgement seat of Christ. Heb 13v17.

#### **Joy in fulfilled answers to prayer together**

It is wonderful when we pray through for one another, and see God's exceeding more abundant answers. We are to ask and receive that our joy may be full. John 16v24, Luke 11v9-13, Eph 3v20, James 5v13-18. We should rejoice over all the wonderful answers from our generous heavenly Father, His interventions through friends, healings, circumstances, finances, etc..

#### **Joy in fulfilling God's will and finishing the course planned for us**

In Acts 20v23,24, Paul said that he wanted to finish his course with joy. In Rom 15v32 Paul states his desire to come to the Romans "in joy," "en chara," "in the will of God." God wants us to fulfil our proper and godly ambitions.

### **The Joy Of The Lord Is Our Strength And Protecting Fortress**

#### **The joy of the Lord is an impregnable stronghold, let us defend our homes with it. Neh 8v10**

In Neh 8v10, the word for "strength" is "maoz," which means "fortress, stronghold, rock," as well as "strength." **It speaks of an impregnable defence.** This joy was received in joyful social fellowship, at a festival, in a love feast, as they ate a meal together. The same is true of the communion services of the early Church, **they were feasts of love and joy.** Paul and Jude condemn those who abused and spoilt the love and joy of these feasts. 1Cor 11v17-22,33,34, Jude v12. Paul makes it clear that it was a simple meal, and gluttony was frowned upon and forbidden. The feast was in the joy and love of prayerful social fellowship and the Presence of God, and in remembrance of our Lord's death and resurrection, not in the food.

### **The joy of the Lord triumphs even in persecution and trial**

Persecution could not break the spirit of the early Church, they rejoiced in the Lord. This joy was a fact in severe persecution, we read, "And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost." Acts 13v50-52. The Thessalonians had joy in severe persecution. 1Thess 1v6. Paul and Silas sang for joy of heart in the stocks in prison, even after a terrible beating. Acts 16v19-26. "A broken spirit drieth the bones," so rejoice in God. Prov 17v22. We have a joy and peace that overcomes trial. John 16v33. Our trials can be a great blessing, even when they cause us to be in heaviness through manifold temptations. 1Peter 1v4-7, James 1v12. Paul said in 1Thess 5v16-18, "Always be joyful;" he lived his advice, for in 2Cor 7v4, he writes, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations." Our joy in trial is derived from the presence and promises of our Lord; "I have spoken these things unto you that My joy may abide in you, and that your joy may be full." John 15v11.

### **The eternal joy and eternal joyful creativity of the kingdom of God**

The angels shared with God in the joy of creativity. Job 38v7. We will share in God's creative joys and pleasures for ever more. Psalm 16v11, Eph 2v7. "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "The unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph 3v8. "Unsearchable" is "anexichniaston," from the privative "a" and "exichniazo," "to trace or track out;" it is only in Rom 11v33, where it speaks of the amazing untraceable wisdom and ways of God. Christ's riches and God's ways are inexhaustible and untraceable even to angels as well as men. Job 5v9, 9v10. Satan and his angels, evil men and sin are banished forever. There will be joy without pain or tears. Rev 21v1-8,27. Oh the beauty and the glory of that kingdom! Eternal joyful activity, no boredom, eternal creativity, eternal joy with God.

### **Peace "Eirene" (Strong's NT:1515)**

Christian peace is not natural peace. It is Christ's peace, it is the peace that pervades all of heaven. John 14v27. It is a peace that passeth all understanding. Phil 4v7.

### **The Heathen Philosopher's False Ideas Of Peace**

God emphatically states that the wicked cannot know peace; Isaiah 48v22, 57v21; and that they do not know the ways of peace. Rom 3v17, Isaiah 59v7,8. The heathen Greek philosophers tried to find ways of peace without finding and following the true and living God. Their highest idea of peace falls far short of the Christian idea of peace. They sought for tranquillity, "ataraxia," and in their works several ideas occur which are quite contrary to the Christian idea of peace.

**The elimination of desire:** They said that human desires that brought one into conflict had to be taken away, and looked upon asceticism as the answer to obtaining tranquillity.

**The elimination of emotion:** They refused to have emotional ties with others, saying that if they did this peace was lost forever. Emotional sterility, apathy, and emotional unattachment, "apatheia," was their idea of tranquillity and peace; and brought emotional famine, in the disguise of peace.

**The elimination of concern for others:** These philosophers tried to isolate themselves from people's problems. The Stoics taught that the idea of caring for anyone or anything was to be strangled before it was born. How dreadful!

**The elimination of dependence upon others:** They said that attainment of total self-sufficiency and self-dependence, was the way to tranquillity. Total independence of others, or anything, "autarkeia," and insulation from life, brought peace. Epicurus said that peace was, "absence of pain in the body, or trouble in the mind;" and he and his fellow philosophers said that this was attained by having a self-contained life without any dependence upon others, or care for others. These self-centred, selfish ideas of peace are totally different from the Old Testament ideas of peace, and far below the theology or reality of Christian experience. Unfortunately these ideas are still followed by many people today, but this kind of peace, is a false peace, and a false foundation that will not stand the storms and floods of life. Luke 6v47-49

**In our day it has come to mean the elimination of war:** However, the peace that is the fruit of the Spirit, is much more than the absence of war, it is the peace that accompanies the all-pervading presence of God.

### **The Old Testament Ideas Of Peace**

#### **"Shalom" (Strong's OT:7965)**

"Shalom" is derived from a root meaning wholeness, soundness and completeness, the thought of 3John v2, and 1Thess 5v23. Barclay says that "shalom" means "all the things that produce man's highest good." "Shalom" carries with it the thought of total peace and well-being of body, Psalm 38v3; soul, spirit and prosperity of circumstances, Job 15v21.

#### **NB: God's peace is accompanied by divine protecting power**

The blessing of peace that was given in Num 6v22-27, caused divine power to operate on Israel's behalf, it was not a negative thing, it was a positive blessing and reality, which brought protection and health to the people of God. With prophets like Moses, Aaron and Miriam pronouncing the divinely ordained benediction of Num 6v22-27, blessing was sure to follow. God kept His Word, even when the people of Israel were rebellious in the wilderness, there was not one feeble person among all their tribes, Psalm 105v37, their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell over a period of forty years. Deut 8v3-5, NB v4, Neh 9v14-21.

#### **"Eirene"**

In the Septuagint "eirene" describes a life which is serene and secure because of the protecting and enriching Presence of God. David said he could sleep in peace because of God's safe-keeping. Psalm 4v8. The Millennial kingdom will be secure and at peace, because Christ and His brethren will reign in righteousness, "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." In Jer 29v11, "eirene is used in God's thoughts of good will and peace towards mankind. See also Isaiah 54v10, God's covenant of peace is guaranteed to last like the mountains and the hills.

### **The New Testament Usage Of Peace "Eirene"**

**Christian peace, "eirene" carries all the positive attributes that are seen in the divine "shalom;" they are yea and amen in Christ.** 2Cor 1v20.

#### **Peace, "Eirene," Is Used In Greetings With Grace, "Charis"**

The normal Jewish greeting was the Hebrew "shalom," but grace and peace is the greeting used in some New Testament epistles. Rom 1v7, 1Cor 1v3, 2Cor 1v2, Gal 1v3, Eph 1v2, Phil 1v2, Col 1v2. etc.. "Eirene" occurs 88 times in the New Testament, and occurs in every book. The first greeting of the risen Christ to His fearful apostles was "Peace be with you." John 20v19,21,26. Peace is Christ's gift. John 14v27. To the weeping women and the fearful men, the resurrected Lord Jesus gave His joy and peace. These greetings carried in them the power and grace of God, it was not the formal greeting of the unbeliever. **The deep spirituality and dedicated prayer lives of the early Church brought real power and protection to the people of God.** When "shalom" was used in invocation with the great name of God, it was just as effective under the new Christian covenant as it was under the covenant of the Law.

### **Peace Is The Result Of A Right Relationship With God**

The natural result of believing in Jesus is peace. Rom 5v1,10. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 15v13. The God of hope fills us with all joy and peace in believing. Col 1v20. The blood of Christ has secured peace for us. God is called the God of peace six times. Rom 15v33, 16v20, Phil 4v9, 2Cor 13v11, 1Thess 5v23, Heb 13v20,21.

### **Christian Peace Has To Be Jealously Guarded And Earnestly Kept**

#### **In the Church:**

We are to strive to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Eph 4v3.

We are to seek peace and earnestly pursue it. 1Peter 3v11.

We need zeal to be found by Him in peace at His coming. 2Peter 3v4.

Peace is the basis of fellowship, "koinonia," and unity, "henotes." Eph 4v3. Churches can be miserable places when peace has gone through bickering. All can, and should be one, in Christ, whether Jew, Greek, slave, male or female. Gal 3v28.

#### **NB: Be warned! Even the two greatest Missionaries of the Church had an angry dispute**

In Acts 15v36-40, we read that Paul and Barnabus had "a sharp contention" over John Mark; "sharp contention" is "paroxusmos," "a sharp fit of anger, sharp contention, angry dispute," our "paroxysm," only here and Heb 10v24: it is derived from "paroxuno," "to sharpen," metaphorically, "to incite, to stir up." See Acts 17v16. Paul had an angry dispute with Barnabus, the very thing he wrote against in 1Cor 13v5; "love is not provoked to anger." In Acts 15v37, we read that Barnabus had made up his mind to take Mark with him on their proposed missionary journey. In v38 we read, "But Paul kept on thinking it right and wise not to be taking along with them this one;" and refused to take Mark with them on their missionary journey. Paul said Mark was the one who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." For "withdrew" Paul uses "apostanta," the aorist participle of "aphistemi," which means "to depart, to desert, to apostatise from;" indeed, it is our very word for "apostasy. Both of their minds were made up so they parted and their ministry together was severed asunder, "apochoristhenai." "to sever, to separate." Barnabus went off with his cousin Mark, and Paul departed with Silas. This is the last we see of Barnabus in the New Testament, except for a reference by Paul in 1Cor 9v6. Barnabus earned his name, he was full of compassion and encouragement, a great and noble soul; he saved and developed Paul's ministry, and here he tries and succeeds to save the ministry of Mark. Mark made the grade, and both Peter and Paul recognised his valuable ministry. 1Peter 5v13, Col 4v10, 2Tim 4v11. **Mark's lasting work is his Gospel, which is the ministry of Jesus through the eyes of Peter.**

### **In the heart:**

We can destroy our peace if we are not careful. God's peace is the sentry of the heart. Col 3v15. Let the peace of God rule, "brabeuo," arbitrate, umpire, guard, or govern, your hearts. Anything that destroys peace must be told to move on.

Against worry and worldly anxiety, and the pressures of life. Matt 6v7,8,25-34. Let us watch our ambitions; and learn to be content. Phil 4v11, 1Tim 6v8, Heb 13v5.

Against physical or mental weariness. Exhaustion, moods, negative attitudes, and hormones have to be carefully watched.

Against Satan's attacks.

Against carnality. The life that is dominated by the flesh cannot know peace.

Against sin. Peace can only be sustained by godly living. Rom 2v10. Peter wept bitterly when he denied Jesus; he speaks out of his own experience of the grace of God, when he prays for grace and peace to be multiplied to his hearers. 1Peter 1v1,2.

Over doubtful things. Rom 14v1.

### **With all men:**

We are to strive for peace with all men. Heb 12v14.

The wall of hostility is broken down between Jew and Gentile through Christ's death. Eph 2v14-17.

### **In the home and marital affairs:**

In the home we must have Christ-like attitudes to each other; Eph 5v21-33, NB v25,33, 1Peter 3v7-9. God has called us to peace. 1Cor 7v15. Too much activity can destroy peace, as with the case of Mary and Martha. Luke 10v38-42.

### **Over God's will and guidance God's guidance has the following characteristics:**

It will agree with and not contradict God's Word. It will be confirmed by spiritual people in the body of Christ. It will be confirmed by the Holy Spirit. God will guide us by deep inward conviction, vision, voice and prophecy, and confirm that guidance with His peace. God's peace will always confirm God's guidance. It will agree with our circumstances. It will make the best use of our talents and abilities. It will be validated by good common sense. Psalm 32v8,9.

### **Conclusion**

#### **Christian Peace Can Only Be Maintained By Fellowship With God And Obedience To God**

We can have peace through prayer and communion with God. Rom 5v1,2, Isaiah 26v3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." It is a result of abiding in Christ and subordination to the Holy Spirit. NB Perfect peace. Christ's peace sprang from obedience to God and our peace will too. The flesh dominated life cannot know peace, it brings spiritual death. Rom 8v13.

#### **Christ's Peace Is Proof Against Any Circumstance**

Christ's peace is proof against any circumstance, as He proved by His victorious life at Nazareth, the pressure and opposition of His ministry, and the awful suffering of His death on the cross and in Hades.

We can have perfect peace within through Jesus. Jesus said to Peter, "I am going to be betrayed by one of you and suffer and die; and you will deny me Peter, but let not your heart be troubled, believe in me." John 13v21,36-38, 14v1.

We can convey peace through our lives and our prayers, even to changing the affairs of the nations. 1Tim 2v1-8. There is peace through the Gospel, let us have our feet shod with it. Eph 6v16.

### **Longsuffering "Makrothumia" (Strong's NT:3115)**

True patience is a rare thing; "Patience is a virtue, possess it if you can; seldom found in women, but never in a man;" except in the man Christ Jesus, and those who allow the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit in them. However, it is one of the characteristics of "agape" love, and Paul informs us, "Love is patient;" 1Cor 13v4; and instructs us to, "Put on garments of patience and forbearance." Col 3v12,13, Eph 4v2. The Greek word for patience is "makrothumia," and means literally, "long-tempered;" it is derived from "makro," "long;" and "thumos," "temper." "Makrothumia" mainly speaks of patience with people; whereas, "hupomeno" (Strong's NT:5278) means "steadfast endurance," and speaks of triumph over circumstances and suffering. Both words are used by Paul, in 2Tim 3v10,11, to describe his own ministry.

### **"Makrothumia" is used to describe the Great Patience of God with people**

#### **It is one of the great glories of God's wonderful character**

In Exodus 34v6, "Slow to anger," is "makrothumia" in the Septuagint. So also is Neh 9v17, 103v8. In Exodus 34v6, "merciful," is "rakhoom," (Strong's OT:7349), which means "full of compassionate, cuddling love and mercy." NB: Jonah 4v2, "Was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil."

#### **It is the reason for God's many efforts to save us**

Paul is an example of God's longsuffering, to give hope to all. 1Tim 1v12-16.

God is longsuffering and not willing that any should perish. 2Peter 3v9.

The riches of God's longsuffering. Rom.2v4. The riches of God's grace. Eph 1v7.

#### **It is the reason for the merciful delay of God's judgement**

The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah. 1Peter 3v20. **The tragedy is that people harden their hearts when God delays judgement and shows mercy.** Rom 2v1-4, 9v17,22. Pharaoh: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil." Eccles 8v11.

#### **It is one of the reasons for the delay in Christ's coming**

God delays judgement and gives space for repentance to show mercy. Rev 2v21-23. Peter tells us, "Count the longsuffering of the Lord as salvation." 2Peter 3v15. "The husbandman waiteth...and hath long patience for it." James 5v7-11. Peter warns the Christians of his day not to expect an imminent return of Jesus, as God's concept of time is different from ours, and to Him a thousand years are like one day to us; however, when Jesus returns, the work of a thousand years will be accomplished in one day. 2Peter 3v8,9, Psalm 90v4.

#### **At the Second Coming of Christ God's "orge" anger turns to "thumos" anger**

The carnage and suffering caused by Antichrist and his followers and others, results in a longsuffering God destroying with fury the wicked who have caused the world's pain. Isaiah 42v13-17, 63v1-6, 2Thess 1v5-11. It is the day of the wrath of the Lamb. Rev 6v17. **To a God of love such judgements are a strange act.** Isaiah 28v21. But justice demands such acts. Rev 6v10, 16v7, 19v2. "When Thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isaiah 26v8-10.

#### **"Makrothumia," should be a crowning glory of a Christian community**

#### **Long-patience is needed in the home**

**Relations between husbands and wives have to be carefully watched, and submission to each other in the fear of God is the divine desire and design in marriage.** Eph 5v21. Husbands and wives are "heirs together of the grace of life," a loving relationship and partnership cemented by mutual respect and love, and blessed by God. Patience is

needed in the pressures of life, and we have to be kind to one another, and be particularly careful when we are tired or sick, and tempers are frayed.

Paul tells Christian husbands to love their wives, and not to be bitter with them. Col 3v19. **Peter warns us that we have to be kind to our wives and consider them, and give honour to them, and recognise the pressures that come upon them through hormone problems, or our prayers will be cut off.** 1Peter 3v7-12. The husband may be the head of the house, but he must not dominate his wife, we have to love and care for our wives with the same thoughtful and gentle caring love that Christ shows to His Church. Christ loves His Church and died for it. We must positively put off the old worldly attitudes and standards that worldly men adopt towards their wives, and put on Christ, the new man. Gal 3v27, Eph 4v24, 5v25-33, Col 3v5-14.

Wives too must be submissive and not argumentative, this is particularly true when a husband is not a Christian. Col 3v18. Peter instructs Christian wives to win their husbands "without a word" by the efficient, kindly, thoughtful and loving way that they live. 1Peter 3v1-6.

Children should realise that obedience to parents is well pleasing to God. However, Paul warns Fathers to be careful how we discipline our children when they become rebellious and difficult, or we can provoke them to anger and they can soon become discouraged by unkindness and over discipline. Col 3v20,21, Eph 6v1-4. Growing up can be very difficult, and the "terrible teenage years" need real prayer, love and concern as well as necessary correction, firmness and advice. Good parents shed many thoughtful prayerful tears for their children, as Paul did for his converts. Acts 20v19,31, 2Cor 2v4.

### **Long-patience is needed in relations between Christians in Church relationships**

Paul instructs us, "With all lowliness, meekness, and patience, to forbear one another in love." Eph 4v2. Patience has to be "put on" as a garment, "Put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another." Col 3v12,13. **Lack of longsuffering is manifested in anger and a bitter tongue.** James 3v6.

### **Long-patience is needed in our reaction to and relations with unbelievers**

Paul tells us to, "Be patient toward all men." 1Thess 5v14. Give the reason for your hope in meekness and fear. 1Peter 3v15.

### **Long-patience is especially needed in Christian leaders, 2Tim 4v2**

Christian leaders should preach, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. Paul's qualities of character, including longsuffering, was well known to Timothy. 2Tim 3v10. Christians are to be patient with all men. 1Thess 5v14.

### **Long-patience is essential for receiving some promises, Heb 6v12**

Wait for doors to be opened by God, they will be great and effectual, but we need the right kind of friends and helpers to make use of them. 1Cor 16v9, 2Cor 2v12,13. It is very important to wait on God for His timing, as Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come." John 2v4, 7v30, 8v20. "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready." John 7v6. "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." John 12v23. "Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world." John 13v1, 17v1. God's "kairos" timings are critical events, and are well worth waiting for with patience. We must not be insolent like Israel and say, "Wake up Lord! Why are you asleep? Rouse yourself! Don't reject us for ever." Psalm 44v23.

## **The patience of Christ**

### **In the training of His disciples in truth**

Jesus explained His parables to the apostles, and was patient with their lack of understanding of the truths He taught them. Matt 13v10-18, Mark 4v9-13. **Jesus patiently withheld much truth from His apostles until they could bear it.** John 16v12.

### **In the training of His disciples in ministry**

Jesus loved His disciples to the uttermost after years of stupidity and failure, He loves us in the same way. John 13v1. Jesus patiently trained His disciples in their ministries, He said the saying was true that, "One soweth, and another reapeth." Some had patiently sowed without receiving fruit, and the apostles were gathering the fruit of their labours.

John 4v35-38. Jesus was removing His disciples hardness of heart, and causing them to grow in grace. Mark 6v52, 8v15-17.

### **God's wonderful longsuffering love and grace was even manifested to His enemies.**

Christ's heart-broken patience and love for Israel in spite of their rejection of God's time of visitation. Luke 19v41-44. How wonderful! Jesus patiently endured "hupomeno," the hatred of His enemies in His sufferings. Heb 12v2,3. Like the prophets Jesus is an example of longsuffering. James 5v10,11.

Divine patience gives way to Divine judgement. God bears long with the wicked but the time comes when He avenges the ill-treatment and murder of His own elect. Luke 18v7,8. "But these enemies of mine who would not have me as their king, bring here at once and execute them before me." Luke 19v27, 20v16. The great day of God's "thumos" anger is a future certain reality. Rev 6v17, 19v15, 2Thess 1v5-11.

### **Conclusion**

Those who control their spirit and tongue and are longsuffering are greater than he who takes a city. Prov 16v32. Jesus did this perfectly in His home life at Nazareth, James remembered it well. James 3v2. Considering Jesus is the key to manifesting victorious patience, "makrothumia," and triumphant fortitude, "hupomeno". Heb 3v1, 6v12-20, 12v2,3, 2Cor 3v18.

### **Gentleness, Gentle Kindness "Chrestotes" (Strong's NT:5544)**

#### **Chrestotes speaks of a happy mellow Christian Sweetness**

#### **"Chrestotes" is a quality of character that fallen mankind does not possess**

In Rom 3v12, Paul writes that all of mankind has become worthless, and there is none that does good, no not one. "Good" is "chrestotes." This fruit of the Spirit is now available to mankind in salvation, through the Holy Spirit's abiding presence.

#### **"Chrestotes" speaks of a kind, gentle, gracious and mellow disposition**

In the Authorised Version the noun "chrestotes" is translated as "gentleness" in Gal 5v22; as "goodness," in Rom 2v4, 11v22, three times; "good," in Rom 3v12; and "kindness," in 2Cor 6v6, Eph 2v7, Col 3v12 and Titus 3v4.

#### **"Chrestotes" speaks of a spiritual sweetness**

It is a kind, sweet, and gentle goodness, and a gentle forgiving kindness. The adjective "chrestos" is used for the sweetness and mellowness of old wine in Luke 5v39. It is the very opposite of a sour, harsh, and irritable disposition; it speaks of a calm, sweet, and sunny disposition. Knowing Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, produces in us kindness, and sweetens the temper. A religion that is sour, morose, sullen and miserable is a denial of Christianity. **Be sweet, gentle and kind at home.**

#### **"Chrestotes" is an essential quality for Christians and Christian leaders**

In 2Cor 6v6, Paul said the "chrestotes" was one of the qualities of character that brought the approval of God on his ministry. See 2Cor 6v4-6. "Chrestotes" is one of the virtues we must cloth ourselves with. In Col 3v12, Paul exhorts Christians to put off the old nature, and put on this forgiving gentle kindness. See Col 3v7-14, NB: v7,9,10,12,14.

#### **"Chrestotes" speaks of the kindness and gentleness of God**

#### **God's wonderful unmerited kindness**

"Chrestotes" speaks of kindness even to, and especially to, those who don't deserve it. Luke 6v35. God is kind, "chrestos," to the ungrateful, selfish, and wicked. Jesus tells us that our Heavenly Father is very kind, and gives without any thought of reward or recompense. Matt 5v43-48. In the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, "good" is translated by the adjective "chrestos," Palm 25v8, 34v8, 86v5. (forgiving goodness): 100v5, 106v1, 107v1, 136v1. etc: and "goodness," by the noun "chrestotes." Psalm 24v7, 68v10. God's goodness prepares for the poor: NB: Psalm 145v7-9. God's is abundant in goodness, "chrestotes," and is longsuffering, full of compassion, grace and great mercy; He is good, "chrestos," to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All His works praise Him. Both "chrestos" and "chrestotes" occur in praise of God's great mercy, forgiving kindness and gentle goodness. Even God's judgements are good and spring from His kindness. Psalm 119v39.

#### **God's continuous kindness in His efforts to lead to repentance and salvation**



In Rom 2v4, Paul informs us of the riches of God's kind and gentle goodness, "chrestotes," that has always tried to lead men to repentance and eternal life; men turn this down, not realising that it is the goodness, "chrestos," of God that leads them to repentance. In Rom 11v22, Paul tells us that the merciful goodness of God precedes His severity. In Titus 3v4, NB: v3-7, Paul writes of the wonderful kindness and gentle giving goodness of God in sending Jesus to die for us.

### **God the Father's and Christ's gentle yoke**

The adjective "chrestos" is used for the gentleness with which Christ deals with us; He gives us a gentle yoke. Christ's service is not tyrannical, Christ perfectly fits the task that He gives us to our abilities, temperament, and circumstances. Matt 11v28-30

### **God's kindness and thoughtfulness to women**

Under the Law God protected women, and He severely warns husbands not to deal treacherously with the wife of their youth. Mal 2v14-17. See the kind and gentle way Jesus raised the widow of Nain's son from the dead. Luke 7v11-15.

### **The gentle kindness and friendship of Jesus to sinners**

#### **Christ promises gentle kindness to all who are heavy laden and needy, Matt 11v28-30**

Our Lord's welcoming gentle kindness transformed needy and sinful people who met Him. People knew that Jesus really cared for them, the warmth of His love and His kindness was a tangible reality, it enveloped them when they came to Him. Jesus gave them a real welcome. If we have failed in our marriages, Jesus will still be kind and gentle with us. Come to Him with confidence.

#### **The friend of tax collectors and sinners, Matt 11v19**

Jesus got badly criticised for being friendly with tax collectors and sinners, He told three parables to show God's kindness to sinners. Luke 15v1-32. Jesus did not count the cost to bring Zacchaeus into the kingdom. Luke 19v1-10.

#### **The woman at the well, and the woman taken in adultery, John 4v1-29, 8v1-11**

The gentle kindness and forgiving love of Jesus is beautiful to see. There was no Hell fire preaching, there was not condemnation, only a beautiful welcome into God's gentle and kind-hearted forgiveness.

### **The whole attitude of Christ to His Church is one of tender-hearted forgiveness**

Paul tells us in Eph 4v32 "And be ye kind, "chrestos," one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." "Tender-hearted is "eusplagchnoi," literally, "having healthy bowels," or, "of good heartedness," from "eu," "well," and "splagchnon;" "the heart, the inward organs;" these were considered to be the seat of emotions and intentions, and means "compassionate tenderness." It only occurs in Eph 4v32 and 1Peter 3v8, where Peter appeals for the fruit of the Spirit to be manifested.

In James 5v11, James speaks from his experience of living with Jesus at Nazareth, he extols the gentle kindness of Jesus, he says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." "Very pitiful," is "polusplagchnos," (only here in N.T.), from "polus," "much," and "splanchnon," "the heart;" it means "very kind, very sympathetic, extremely compassionate;" Jesus is very kind, and really feels for us. "Tender mercy," is "oiktirmon," a strong adjective meaning "tender compassion and mercy." "Oiktirmon" only occurs in James 5v11 and twice in Luke 6v36, where Jesus appeals to us to show the same tender mercy to others that God shows to His creation. What a lovely picture of the wonderful gentle kindness of Jesus and our heavenly Father.

### **Our Lord's gentle kindness to His apostles**

Jesus was kind and gentle to His apostles when they were slow to answer His call to service. Luke 5v1-11. He was also kindness itself in the development of their ministries. When Jesus repeated Matt 11v28-30 to His apostles, it was for them, He was telling them that He would put a gentle and kind yoke upon them and not overburden them, and he would give them rest to their souls.

Jesus showed His gentle kindness to the apostles in their unbelief and failure, He prayed for His apostles **BEFORE** these failures occurred. e.g. Peter's denial of Christ. Luke 22v30-34. Jesus had called them His friends and His forgiving gentle love proved the truth of His friendship. John 15v13-15. This kindness to failures was again shown in His resurrection

ministry to His apostles, He showed kind and forgiving mercy, "eleos," to the disciples who forsook Him, and failed Him. Luke 10v25-37.

### Conclusion

The following hymn was written by Frederick William Faber, who lived from 1814 to 1863 AD and he expresses beautifully the sheer loveliness of the gentle kindness and love of our heavenly Father and Saviour, and the blindness and stupidity of the world and Church in failing to comprehend the inexhaustible fullness of their love.

1 Souls of men, why will ye scatter Like a crowd of frightened sheep? Foolish hearts, why will ye wander from a love so true and deep?	2 Was there ever kinder Shepherd Half so gentle, half so sweet, As the Saviour who would have us Come and gather round His feet?	3 There's a wideness in God's mercy Like the wideness of the sea: There's a kindness in His justice Which is more than liberty.
4 There is welcome for the sinner, And more graces for the good There is mercy with the Saviour; There is healing in His blood.	5 There is plentiful redemption In the blood that has been shed; There is joy for all the members In the sorrows of the Head.	6 For the love of God is broader Than the measure of man's mind, And the heart of the Eternal Is most wonderfully kind.
7 But we make His love too narrow By false standards of our own; And we magnify His strictness With a zeal He will not own.	8 If our love were but more simple. We should take Him at His word, And our lives would be all sunshine In the sweetness of our Lord.	

### Generous Goodness "Agathosune" (Strong's NT:19)

**The meaning of "agathosune" has been under a great deal of discussion.**

**The definition of the meaning of "agathosune"**

**"Agathosune" is not a common word.**

The other eight fruit of the Spirit are easily defined, however, "agathosune is not a common word, its limited use makes it more difficult to define. "Agathosune," is not used in early secular Greek writings and only occurs in late Greek, and only 13 to 16 times in the Septuagint, depending on the manuscripts. Judges 8v35, 9v16, Neh 9v25,35, etc. "Agathos," good, is used extensively, "agathosune" only occurs four times in the New Testament, in Rom 15v14, Gal 5v22, Eph 5v9 and 2Thess 1v11.

Rom 15v13,14: Paul gives the benediction in v13., "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Then he goes on to say in v14, that he was persuaded that the Romans were "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

Gal 5v22: "The fruit of the Spirit is goodness." Eph 5v9: "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

2Thess 1v11,12: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." The desires of God's goodness are always "infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes or dreams." Eph 3v20. God's tremendous desires to bless us spring out of His unlimited giving goodness and love.

**The wide usage of the adjective "agathos," "good," does not help to define "agathosune"**

The noun "agathosune," "goodness," is the moral quality described by the adjective "agathos," "good." "Agathos" is the most common Greek word for "good;" it occurs over 500 times in the Septuagint, and 102 times in the NT; it is used of physical things, like a good tree, Matt 7v17; good ground, Luke 8v8, or a good harvest. Luke 13v8. "Agathos" can also be used in a moral sense of good persons and good things; a good man, good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and a resulting good conscience. Matt 12v34-37, Luke 6v45, Acts 23v1, 1Tim 1v5,19. Every good and perfect gift finds its origin in God, James 1v17, Luke 11v13. God alone is perfectly good, and it is only in the light of His character, that the standard and true meaning of "agathosune" goodness is revealed. Matt 19v17. The character of God reveals the fullness and beauty of the moral qualities described by "agathos" and "agathosune."

**The heathen's views about "good" and "goodness" are no help in defining "agathosune"**

As with the other fruit of the Spirit, the heathen views about "good" and "goodness" are no guide to the use of "agathos" and "agathosune," for their ideas of "the good" are far from the Biblical ideas of goodness. The secular Greek philosophers looked upon anything which gave meaning to life as good; their concept of "the good" was speculative, humanistic and depraved. Their statements, that knowing what was good would ensure the doing of the good, are contradicted by their writings which reveal the domination of the worst sins of the flesh in their lives. The Biblical concept of victory over the flesh and a life of "good" and "goodness" flowing from communion with the true and living God was unknown to the heathen. The heathens idea of "good" was pleasing the flesh and the gods, and this involved the worst levels of debauchery.

### **Christian scholars themselves vary in the meaning of "agathosune"**

When Jerome and Trench compare "chrestotes," "kindness," with "agathosune," "goodness;" they say "chrestotes" speaks of gentle and gracious kindness and the kindlier aspects of goodness; as when Jesus dealt gently with the sinner of Luke 7v37-50; and say "agathosune" speaks of moral judgement, and zeal for goodness, and the sterner qualities of goodness, such as rebuking, correcting and chastening; as when Jesus cleansed the Temple, or condemned Israel's religious leaders and threatened them with Divine judgement. Matt 21v13, 23v1-39. It is true that "agathosune" must speak of moral judgement and zeal for goodness, but the sterner qualities of goodness, seem to speak more of justice, "dikaiosune," than "agathosune."

Lightfoot agrees that "chrestotes" speaks of a kindly quality of heart, emotion and disposition towards others, that does not necessarily take a practical form; and states that "agathosune," speaks of a quality of conduct and an active and energetic principle of life that results in kindly activity towards people. Lightfoot concludes that, "Chrestotes" is potential "agathosune," "agathosune" is energising "chrestotes." Barclay however, says, "On this basis we might say that "agathosune" is "chrestotes" in action. It is an attractive idea, but in point of fact there is no actual evidence that the words are so distinguished in use." Barclay, however, agrees with Lightfoot's comment that "agathosune" speaks of kindly activity towards people, for Barclay says, "Agathosune is the generosity which springs from a heart which is kind." Bloomfield agrees with this, he writes, "By "chrestotes" is denoted benignity, affability; by "agathosune," that kind-heartedness which delights in doing good."

The Expositors Greek Testament states on Gal 5v22, "Since the object of this verse is to exhibit the harmony between the fruit of the Spirit and the restraints of the Law, those qualities only are specified which affect man's duty to his neighbour. "Love" with its unfailing attendants, inward "joy" and "peace," supplies the motive power; "long-suffering" in the face of wrongs and ill-treatment, "kindness" in rendering service to others, and "goodness" in the free bestowal of bounty on those who need, cannot fail to gain good will."

**It seems, then, that "chrestotes" is an abundant forgiving kindness and gentleness, and "agathosune" speaks not only of moral rectitude, but also of an abundant generous giving goodness. Goodness is not being sanctimonious, or a negative "thou shalt not" attitude; it is an attractive generous attribute of character that gives until it hurts; just as God gave His only begotten Son to suffer and die for us, to save a sinful evil world. John 3v16. In giving Jesus to us, God's unspeakable gift, the fullness of God's giving goodness is revealed. 2Cor 8v9, 9v15.**

**"Agathosune" describes God's generous giving goodness**

**"Agathosune," is the giving goodness that gives to people what they do not deserve**

"Agathosune" goes further than justice, "dikaiosune," which gives men their due. When the Scriptures say that God is good, they do not just mean that He behaves properly, they mean that He gives generously and abundantly, infinitely beyond all that we can ask, think, desire, or dream. Eph 3v20. God's goodness is a goodness that is beautiful, warm, generous and kind. God is actively and eternally being and doing good. **"Agathosune" speaks of a beautiful and attractive benevolent goodness; like "toob," the Hebrew word for goodness, which in Neh 9v35 speaks of God's beautiful and great generous goodness.**

**"Agathos" is the opposite of "poneros"**

"Agathos" speaks of active goodness, the very opposite of "poneros," which is active corrupting evil. In reference to Satan, "ho Poneros," "the Wicked One," "poneros" speaks both of the active corrupting evil and the grudging meanness, that his character and actions display. See Sept. of Deut 15v9, Prov 23v6, 28v22. God is even good to evil people; in Matt 5v45, Jesus tells us that God makes His sun shine on the evil, "poneros," and the good, "agathos." In Matt 20v16, "agathos" is used to speak of God's generous giving of rewards to the labourers on judgement day; "Is your eye evil, ("poneros"), because I am good, ("agathos")."

**"Agathos" speaks both of an active transforming goodness as well as a generous giving goodness**

"God's goodness is not content until we are changed into His likeness; it is an uplifting goodness, that is actively transforming Christians and conforming them into the image of Christ. Rom 8v28-30. In reference to God, "agathos" speaks both of the active transforming goodness and the generous giving goodness, that is manifested in His character and His acts.

### **The cost of God's great giving goodness, God's giving goodness has meant:**

God having to work day and night for ever; an awesome eternal responsibility.

God experiencing awful and continuous suffering.

Jesus suffering and dying, and going to Hades for us.

### **"Agathosune" includes purity, the being and doing of God**

#### **Goodness manifests itself in purity and integrity**

Goodness involves being good, as well as doing good. Integrity is always a part of goodness, like Job, who was a perfect man, "tam" a man of integrity. Job 1v1,8, 2v3. Jacob too was a person of integrity, an upright man, for in Gen 25v27, "plain" is also "tam," "a person of integrity." Job's integrity consisted of fearing God and hating evil. Loving a good God, and keeping the heart pure are both essential parts of true goodness, for it is the pure in heart who will see God. Prov 4v23, Matt 5v8. Trees are known by their fruit, a good person brings forth good fruit, and a good person brings forth good treasure out of their heart, in both words and works. Matt 7v15-20, 12v33-37. Goodness acts as both salt and light to the world. Matt 5v13-16.

#### **Goodness manifests itself in generous giving goodness and encouragement**

Barnabus, the son of encouragement, was a good "agathos," man, as well as full of the Holy Ghost and faith. Acts 11v24. His real name was Joseph, but he was renamed "Barnabus," "the son of encouragement." Acts 4v36,37. Barnabus encouraged and brought on the ministry of Paul, his welcoming kindly goodness brought Paul in from out of the cold, and opened doors of ministry for him at Jerusalem and Antioch; and later into full apostolic ministry. Acts 9v26,27, 11v24-26, 13v1-4. Barnabus stood by Mark when Paul rejected him, and developed his ministry, later Paul accepted Mark. Acts 15v36-39, 2Tim 4v11.

Barnabus manifested warm compassionate sacrificial giving love; he sold lands to meet the needs of the poor at Jerusalem. Acts 4v37. Joseph of Arimathea was a good and just man, he gave Jesus his own new tomb. Luke 23v50-53, Matt 27v57-60. God's warm and compassionate giving of Himself leaves all of Heaven breathless with amazement. God acts are not only just, He is great in His giving goodness, He magnificently out-gives all of His creation. At tremendous cost to Himself He gave us life and being, forgiveness and salvation, and eternal life and heaven, and above all Himself, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

It was not just the righteousness of Jesus that made the demons call Him "The Holy One of God." Christ's goodness was manifested in His incredible sacrificial giving and devotion to His creation. Holiness is sacrificial goodness in action, love in uniform. The giving goodness of God is a blazing light that the demons and wicked men cannot stand. Mark 1v24 It was not only our Lord's purity that the demons could not stand, but the giving goodness of His life that condemned their greed and selfishness. Christ's zeal for God and righteousness caused the people at Nazareth, and His other enemies to resist and oppose Him. Psalm 69v7-12.

### **Conclusion**

Only God is truly "agathos," good, and exercises the ultimate in giving goodness, "agathosune." Luke 18v19. We can partake of His character and goodness by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Rom 8v1-4. We can be transfigured by beholding His glory. 2Cor 3v18. Those who do not have the Spirit of Christ are none of His. Rom 8v5-9. The life of goodness, results in obedience to the truth, and in doing the Father's generous and loving will as revealed in the life of Jesus.

### **Faith And Faithfulness "Pistis" (Strong's NT:4102)**

The verb "pisteuo," means to trust someone, or something. The noun "pistis," means persuasion, credence, faith. In the Authorised Version, "pistis" is translated as, "assurance," once, in Acts 17v31; "belief," once, in 2Thess 2v13; "fidelity," once, in Titus 2v10; and "faith," 239 times. It is obvious, therefore, that it is quite wrong to say that Paul is speaking only of faithfulness in Gal 5v22. **Faith is one of the qualities of character that will eternally abide with love. Trust in God and each other is an absolutely essential part of the happiness and security of heaven.** The fruit of faith is

the extension of "saving faith," to faith in God in all other areas of our life; through walking with God. Faith is the basis of our walk with God, both on earth, and in heaven.

Do our modern translators lack the faith to trust God in the problems of life, and for miracles and healing? Is this why they prefer to translate "pistis" as "faithfulness," rather than "faith" in Gal 5v22? The verbal adjective "pistos," is translated, in the passive, as faithful, trustworthy, reliable, "God is faithful," Col 1v9; in the active, as "believing, trusting." Surely in Gal 5v22, "pistis," can be interpreted, in both its active sense as "faith," and its passive sense as "faithfulness." In the Septuagint "pistis" is used both for faith and faithfulness; "Great is Thy faithfulness." Lam 3v23. "No faith," Deut 32v20.

### **Faith is the active principle in receiving salvation**

We are justified by faith, and have peace with God through faith. Rom 1v17, 3v21-31, 5v1,2, Gal 3v24. Saving faith is produced by a divine quickening of the human spirit, it is the gift of God. Eph 2v8,9. The end of faith is the salvation of our souls. 1Peter 1v5,9. Through our quickened spirits, the new birth, we have the ability to grow in faith.

### **Faith is the active principle in service**

#### **Faith to move mountains, Matt 17v20,21**

We read of the heroes of faith in Hebrews eleven, "by faith" occurs 13 times, this was their secret of victory and endurance. "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Acts 6v8, in the Majority Text. Barnabus was full of the Holy Ghost and faith. Acts 11v24. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. 1Thess 1v3.

#### **The unbelief that can stop us entering our spiritual Canaan**

This speaks of the believer who fails to claim their inheritance in Heb 3 and 4; and fails to trust God for the miraculous. Psalm 95 all. An evil heart of unbelief caused Israel to depart from the God. Heb 3v12.

#### **The wonderful faith of Jesus, the pioneer of faith and perfecter of our faith, Heb 12v2**

Jesus did His miracles by faith in the Father. John 5v19,30. He pioneered and showed us the way of faith.

#### **NB: The growth of faith and spiritual strength**

Even men of God had to develop faith, power and strength of spirit. Elijah and Elisha. John Baptist. Luke 1v80. Even our Lord grew strong in spirit. Luke 2v40 (KJV). All believers grow from faith to faith. Rom 1v17.

### **Faith is the active principle in discerning doctrinal truth**

Sound in faith. Titus 1v13. In Acts 6v7, A great number of priests were obedient to the faith. See 1Tim 1v15. This is a faithful saying, "pistos logos," and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Compare 2Thess 2v12, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

### **Faith is the active principle behind a trustworthy life**

#### **Faithfulness in daily living**

**In the home:** Correct relationships between wives, husbands, and children. Eph 5v22-25, Col 3v18-20, Mal 2v14-17.

**In our work situations:** Col 3v17,23,24, Whatever we do, we do it in the name of the Lord and heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men, for we serve the Lord Christ.

**In our friendships:** True friends are faithful to us in our difficulties. Prov 17v17. "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Prov 18v24. "There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother." Prov 19v4.

#### **Faithfulness in evangelism and ministry to the body of Christ**

Paul informs us that Jesus counted him as faithful and put him into the ministry; a former blasphemer and persecutor obtained mercy and ministry, to show a pattern of God's longsuffering mercy to encourage others. 1Tim 1v12-17. In 2Tim 2v2 Paul tells Timothy to teach the truths he taught him to faithful men who were able to teach others.

### **The faithfulness of God is our source of security, and reason for our faith**

### **God is faithful to us and will keep all His promises to us**

The Scriptures declare that God is faithful. He will not allow us to be tempted more than we can stand, but will make a way of escape for us. 1Cor 1v8,9, 10v13. God's promises are yea and amen in Christ. 2Cor 1v19,20. God can preserve our whole body, soul and spirit blameless, until the return of Jesus. He is faithful that promised. 1Thess 5v23,24, 2Thess 2v3.

### **Christ is the faithful and true witness**

Jesus is The Faithful Witness. Rev 1v5. Jesus was the faithful and true witness to the Church at Laodicea, He told the Christians there the truth about their spiritual condition. Rev 3v14. In Rev 19v11, Jesus is called "Faithful and True" when He comes to make war with Antichrist, and destroy him and his armies.

### **God will faithfully fulfil ALL His prophetic promises to us, so trust Him**

God the Father states that the prophecies and promises in the book of Revelation are faithful and true. Christ's angel states the revelations to John are faithful and true and came directly from God the Father. Rev 21v5, 22v6. **His promises to us are true, He will not fail us!**

### **Meekness "Prautes" (Strong's NT:4236)**

The noun "prautes" occurs eleven times; "praus," the adjective four times. "Prautes" speaks of the controlling power that makes strength gentle; our English words, meekness, gentleness, and humility, convey the incorrect thought of weakness. **Meekness possesses great strength as well as merciful strengthening gentleness.**

### **Meekness possesses controlled strength**

**Moses:** In Num 12v3, we are told that Moses was the meekest man on the face of the earth; humble before God, and restrained and controlled by gentleness and humility before men. "Prautes" is used by Greeks to speak of an animal which has been broken-in and trained to obey and answer to the reins. There was no person in the world who was as strong, or more humble than Moses.

**Jesus:** Jesus is both the Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah. Rev 5v5,6. He has both gentleness and strength. His meekness is greatly misunderstood; meek does not mean weak, it is strength under control. It is gentle meekness that brings victory not arrogance.

### **A gentle meekness was an essential part of Christ's life and ministry**

### **Meekness is one of the welcoming graces of Christ's character**

Zechariah prophesied, "Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass." Zech 9v9, Matt 21v5. Jesus said, "Come unto me for I am meek and lowly in heart." Christ is meek ("praos") and lowly ("tapeinos") in heart, and we find rest in His gentle and kind humility. Matt 11v29. Jesus does not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. Isaiah 42v1-3, Matt 12v15-21. In 1Cor 10v1, Paul appeals to the Corinthians by "the meekness ('prautes') and gentleness ('epieikeia') of Christ. "Epieikeia" means "fair, reasonable, equitable and lenient, when applied to those in authority; and a humble, patient steadfastness, and submissive trust in God in injustice, disgrace and ill-treatment, and freedom from malice, hatred and bitterness under this abuse and mistreatment. Both are perfectly fulfilled in Christ. In the only other place where "epieikeia" occurs in the New Testament, Tertullus uses it in flattery to Felix at the trial of Paul in Acts 24v4, in this case it could not have been more inappropriate.

### **Meekness was part of Christ's dealings with broken people**

The mark of Christ's ministry was an uplifting merciful gentleness. The bruised reed He did not break, the smoking flax He did not quench, He imparted strength and purpose to broken lives. Matt 12v18-21. **Jesus showed gentle tenderness to the fallen, not criticism.** Jesus manifested gentle strength with the sinner, and with the sick.

We see from 1Cor 4v21, that meekness is the opposite of strict and stern justice. Paul speaks of the alternative of him coming with a rod, or in meekness and love. A fallen Christian must be aided and restored in a spirit of meekness. Gal 6v1. Power controlled by delivering gentleness.

### **Meekness was part of Christ's healing ministry**

When Jesus healed people He did not show off, in fact He often strongly commanded people not to make it known. Our Lord's gentle touch released great healing power and resulted in astonishing miracles. The man with leprosy. Matt 8v1-4. Peter's mother in Law. Matt 8v14,15. Many sick. Luke 4v40,41. The daughter of Jairus. Matt 9v18,19. The widow of Nain's son. Luke 7v11-16. All these and many more could all sing:

"He touched me, oh, He touched me; And, oh, the joy that filled my soul; Something happened, and now I know; He touched me, and made me whole."

### **Meekness possesses humility of mind and teachableness of spirit**

Receive with meekness the Word of God. James 1v21.

Show meekness to all men. Titus 3v2.

### **Meekness manifests Christian gentleness to opponents**

In meekness instructing those who oppose. 2Tim 2v25.

In meekness giving a reason for the hope. 1Peter 3v15.

The wise man is always meek. James 3v13.

### **Meekness brings entrance into the kingdom**

Meekness is a manifestation of one of the characteristics of God's kingdom. "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." Matt 5v5, Psalm 37v10,11. A meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of God. 1Peter 3v4.

### **Conclusion**

Let us come to Jesus, He can impart His gentle meekness to us and transform our lives, homes and marriages. Matt 11v28-30.

### **Temperance, Self-Control "Egkrateia" (Strong's NT:1466)**

"Egkrateia," pronounced "enkrateia," is derived from "en" and "kratos," which means "strength to control," or "power to conquer or rule;" it speaks of mastery. It only occurs 3 times in the New Testament. In Gal 5v23, of the fruit of the Spirit. In Acts 24v25, when Felix trembled as Paul preached to him about righteousness, self-control and judgement. In 2Peter 1v6, "Add---to knowledge self-control; and to self-control patience." Other fruits had spoken of certain aspects of self-control, "makrothumia," "longsuffering;" "prautes," "meekness;" and indeed "agape," "love." Jesus is changing spiritual wrecks to disciplined and loving sons and daughters of God. The whole of Heaven marvels at the self-control of the Trinity; the Seraphim of Isaiah 6v1-3 (the living creatures of Rev 4v6-8), worship in eternal amazement at the longsuffering holiness and self-control of God towards a rebellious creation. The verb "egkrateuomai" occurs twice. In 1Cor 7v9, where Paul advises those who cannot control their sexual desires to marry; and 1Cor 9v25, where Paul speaks of his own determined self-control. The adjective "egrates" occurs once. In Titus 1v8, where it says that an overseer, or bishop must have self-control.

### **God offers Christians self-control over desire**

**In 1Peter 1v4:** Peter tells us of the corruption in the world through lust. "Epithumia," "strong desire, uncontrolled desire, lust, passion." We escape the corruption through the exceeding great and precious promises of God, and the new-born spirits that make us partakers of the divine nature. Peter also makes it clear that fleshly lusts make war against the soul. 1Peter 2v11.

**In 1John 2v15-17:** John tells us, v15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If anyone love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes (Matt 5v28), and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. In all places "lust" is "epithumia," "strong desire, lust, passion." "Pride," is "alazoeia," boasting arrogance, braggart talk, from "alazon," the empty boaster. Only in 1John 2v16 and James 4v16. See Rom 1v30, for the verb "alazoneuomai," to act the "alazon," the empty boaster.

**The Christian's body is a temple of God:** This is in sharp contrast to the teaching of the heathen philosophers, who called the body evil, and said it was a contaminating prison in which the soul is housed.

### **Self-control is essential, particularly in leaders**

Self control is essential in spiritual leaders. Titus 1v8. Elders must be masters of self. Paul says that athletes "exercise self control IN ALL THINGS," for a corruptible crown; whereas we exercise self-control for an incorruptible crown. 1Cor 9v25.

If we concentrate on just one aspect of self-control we can well miss other areas where self-control is essential. Christians may preach against drunkenness and immorality, and yet fail to curb equalling dangerous works of the flesh, like bad temper, covetousness, slander and lying. We have to make sure that the defences of our soul are strong at all points.

### **The different areas where self-control is necessary**

#### **Self-control is needed in many different areas of the personality**

##### **Self-control in the area of the desires of the flesh**

Paul likens the mastery of the body to the strenuous all-out efforts of the athletes in the Greek games. 1Cor 9v24-27. Paul uses the picture of a runner first and then follows it with the picture of a boxer, he tells the Corinthians of his determined subjugation of the flesh. Paul says he is not a shadow boxer with an imaginary opponent, who beats the air; but he beats and keeps under his body, "hupopiazō," the present indicative active, "to strike under the eyes, to beat black and blue;" from "hupopion," from "hupo" and "ops," the part of the face under the eyes. It is only used here and in Luke 18v5, of the persistent widow who wore out the unjust judge, with a verbal beating. Paul said he disciplined his body, and so must we, this is the meaning of the word disciple, one who follows the disciplines and pattern of life of Christ.

##### **The desire for food and drink**

It is important to realise that God has given us the taste buds to enjoy food, and have the pleasure of eating. But God condemns gluttony and drunkenness. Gal 5v21, 1Peter 4v3, Prov 23v29-32, Gal 5v21, Eph 5v18. The Lord Jesus warns that in the last days, many Christians will allow their hearts to be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and they will, as a result, be blind as to the prophetic time, and not be prepared for those evil days, or for our Lord's return. Luke 21v34, Matt 24v12,44-51.

##### **The desire for sex**

Sex is a gift of God and must be accepted with gratitude and not be despised, God saw that His human creation was "very good." Gen 1v27,28,31. Marriage is honourable and precious, and the bed undefiled. Heb 13v4. God looks upon unlawful divorce as adultery, and He hates it. Mal 2v14-17, Matt 5v31,32, 19v3-9, Mark 10v2-12, Luke 6v18. However, there is mercy and free forgiveness with God to the fallen, or no one would stand, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom 3v9-12,21-28. The mercy of God to people with sexual and marriage problems is revealed by His instructions to Moses in Deut 24v1-4, for wives divorced for immorality to remarry. The ministry of our Lord to the Samaritan woman, the woman taken in adultery, and the Tax collectors and sinners, show Jesus as the true and kind friend and Saviour of sinners. John 4v6-26, 8v1-11, Luke 7v34-50, NB: v34,37,50, 15v1-32, NB: v1,2,7,10,32, Matt 11v19, 1Cor 7v15,27,28.

The Scriptures condemn pre-marital sex, and extra-marital sex; for the reason that they destroy the basis of a happy society and home. Society today is infatuated with sexual promiscuity, and this has led to the spread of incurable diseases, like aids, etc.. These are a great warning against sexual promiscuity and proof of the wisdom of Biblical sexual holiness and purity.

There is the need for spiritual surgery in the realm of desire. Matt 5v27-30. It is wrong to trifle with sexual desire, it has to be dealt with very firmly; things that produce temptation and incite the flesh, like erotic books, dirty films, and worldly flirtatious necking and heavy petting, are characteristics of the old life and have to be put off and the new man put on. Col 3v5-14. It is also a sin to dress in a way that will cause others to fall into temptation, and it should be repented of before God.

Sexual lust and desire are quite distinct from true Christian love. True Christian sexual love is dominated by agape love and consideration of our partners; this produces growth of character and true worship of God. The only true control of sex is agape love; sublimation by satisfying occupations and ministry can help, but agape love that seeks not its own is the real secret of Christian self-control in sexual matters.

##### **Self-control in the area of desires of the mind**

Christian self-control is not just in the area of the flesh, it extends to the area of the mind and of the spirit, there are desires of the mind as well as desires of the flesh. Eph 2v3. The beautiful things of life, music and the arts, philosophy, and other intellectual pursuits, can be corrupting; for people can fill their lives with them to the exclusion of all else; and exclude spiritual realities and God. In Eph 2v1-3, Paul warns us that Satan uses the desires of the mind to enslave the souls of men. In Acts 24v25, Felix was a prime example of lust and lack of self-control. It is from the hearts of men that evil thoughts arise. Matt 7v21. The battle against evil thoughts is in the mind, evil thoughts have to be brought in captivity to Christ. 2Cor 10v4,5.



### **Self-control in the area of the tongue and anger**

#### **Let us control the anger that leads to abusive and dirty talk**

The tongue has to be controlled; for it can be full of deadly poison James 3v1-18. NB: v2-9. So let us be longsuffering and defer our anger. Prov 19v11. Those who control their spirit are greater than they who take a city. Prov 16v32. Let us dispense with dirty or filthy talking. Sin is not amusing. Eph 4v29.

#### **Let us dispense with the slander that leads to character assassination**

Let us dispense with slander and lying, and tell and live the truth. Eph 4v25. Remember all liars end in Hell. Rev 21v8, 22v15. Those who slander partake of the character of the Devil, the slanderer and accuser of the brethren, and for it he ends in Hell forever. Rev 12v10-12, 20 v1-3,10. Anger can also send us to Hell. Matt 5v21-22.

We have to speak the truth in love, and this will always be manifestly kind, humble and meek. Eph 4v15, Gal 5v25-6v1. Let us watch our lips, slander and evil talk wreck Christian homes and fellowships. Psalm 141v3, Gal 5v14,15.

### **Self-control in the area of ambition**

Jesus made Himself of no reputation, and was despised and rejected of men. Isaiah 53v1, Phil 2v6,7. Paul counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus. Phil 3v4-14. **Ambition has often destroyed those who have conquered all else.** Ambition in worldly things is very destructive, seeking power and influence in church structures can be even more dangerous. It was religious leaders, who loved power, who killed Jesus. Ambition ruined Satan. Isaiah 14v12-20, Ezek 28v12-20.

### **Self-control in doubtful matters**

There is abstinence in love over doubtful matters which cause another to stumble. Rom 14v21.

### **The self-control of Christ**

#### **In every area of His life the Lord Jesus was victorious in His self-control:**

When He was opposed at Nazareth: Psalm 69v7-12 with Luke 4v20-29. NB: v22, Mark 6v1-6.

When He was attacked by the flesh, He chastened His soul by prayer and fasting: Psalm 69v10. Jesus was tempted in all points like us, but He exercised perfect self control and overcame all sexual, emotional, worldly, and spiritual temptations. Heb 4v15.

In the enormous spiritual demands of His ministry, His self-control was complete.

When He endured the cross and the violent contradiction of sinners: Heb 12v2,3. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1Peter 2v23.

### **Conclusion**

#### **The Means To Self-Control In The Christian**

Through strength of purpose. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh. Gal 5v24, 1Cor 9v24-27. Paul's example.

Through the fullness and presence of the Holy Spirit, the law of the Spirit and life in Christ. Rom 8v1-3, Gal 2v20,21.

Through the means of grace, fasting, prayer, fellowship and God's Word.

Through legitimate fulfilment of proper desire. Let them marry. 1Cor 7v2,7-9.

Through active service that fulfils and satisfies.

Through considering the end of life and future reward. Lest by any means, after that I had preached to others, I myself should be rejected." "Adokimos," "disapproved," used of metals, not sterling silver. 1Cor 9v24-27.

### **The importance of possessing the fruit of the Spirit during the last seven years of this Age**

The Scriptures tell us that during the last seven years of this Age (of Grace), especially during the last three and a half years, which is the period known as the Great Tribulation, multitudes of people (including Christians who backslide and go into apostasy) "shall wax worse and worse," abandoning self-control and giving themselves over whole heartedly to the flesh and all kinds of evil. It is therefore **MOST** important that we follow Paul's injunction in Gal 5v24 to crucify the flesh with its desires and passions! This we do by getting close to the Lord Jesus in prayer and putting off the old man and renewing our mind by filling them with the Scriptures and walking in obedience to them and the Holy Spirit, which will enable us to partake of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Matt 24v12,15-21, 48-51, Luke 17v26,28, Rom 8v1-4, 12v1-2, 1Tim 4v1-5, 2Tim 3v1-13, James 4v6-8, 2Peter 2v1-3v4, Rev 7v9-17.

Peter writes in 2Peter 1v2-11 the following: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

He informs us that through the new birth and God's exceeding great and precious promises, we become partakers of the divine nature, he then goes on to say that we should add further attributes of character. It is faith (which is the gift of God, and the result of the new birth, so that by been given a new living spirit, we can believe the Word of God, John 3v1-8, 1Cor 2v14, Eph 2v8) that has enabled us to become partakers of the divine nature and to that we **MUST** add, virtue (Greek "arete" Strong's NT:703, which means excellence, praise, vigorous action (in exercise of our faith), to virtue, knowledge (Greek, "gnosis" Strong's NT:1108, which means knowledge, insight, understanding and refers to knowledge of God, Hosea 4v6), to knowledge, temperance (Greek "egkrateia" Strong's NT:1466, it means self-control, holding the passions and desires in hand. The word was used of the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites. The Greeks used it of the one who had his sex passions under control. The papyri (Moulton and Milligan) quote the phrase, "a trusty dispenser of continence," and is the same word used for "temperance," the fruit of the Spirit). To temperance, patience (Greek "hupomone" Strong's NT:5281, which is from "hupomeno" (Strong's NT:5278, which is literally "an abiding under"), it means endurance, constancy, enduring patience, patient continuance (waiting), patient courageous endurance, to bear up courageously with triumphant fortitude. In Classical Greek it is used of the ability of a plant to live under hard and unfavourable circumstances. It is the virtue which can transmute the hardest trial into glory because beyond the pain it sees the goal. To patience, godliness (Greek "eusebeia" Strong's NT:2150) which has the literal meaning "to worship well" so that the radical idea is "worship rightly directed." In Classical Greek the word is not confined to religion, but means also "piety" in the fulfillment of human relations, like the Latin "pietas." Even in Classical Greek, however, it is a standing word for "piety" in the religious sense, showing itself in right reverence; and is opposed to "dusebeia", "ungodliness," and "anosioetes", "profaneness." "The recognition of dependence upon the gods, the confession of human dependence, the tribute of homage which man renders in the certainty that he needs their favor--all this is "eusebeia," manifest in conduct and conversation, in sacrifice and prayer" (Nagelsbach, cited by Cremer). This definition may be almost literally transferred to the Christian word. It embraces the confession of the one living and true God, and life corresponding to this knowledge. To godliness brotherly kindness (Greek "philadelphia" Strong's NT:5360, made up of "phileo", "to have an affection for," and "adelphos", "a brother"), it literally means "love of the brethren," this affection or fondness for one's Christian brethren is to be saturated with charity. To brotherly kindness charity (Greek "agape" Strong's NT:26), "that divine love which God is as to His nature, which is produced in the heart of the yielded believer by the Holy Spirit, and which impels him to deny himself for the benefit of the one loved."

Peter goes on to say that if these attributes of character abound in the Christian they will have an abounding knowledge of the Lord Jesus and be fruitful in their work for Him. He also goes on to say that these attributes of character are essential to have (especially during the Great Tribulation) so that they can make their calling and election sure, thus making sure they will not fall.

The Lord Jesus says the following in Luke 6v47-49: "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

This parable is stating the same truth that Peter writes about in 2Peter 1v2-11, the Christian **MUST** dig a deep spiritual foundation and be most diligent to make sure his foundation is upon a rock and **NOT** upon the earth. The storms, indeed

the hurricanes, that will come upon the Christian during the last seven years of this age (of Grace), especially the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation and going to be such that there has been **NOTHING** like them in **ALL** of human history, and that includes the Pre-Adamic ages as well! The Christian who's foundation is built upon the earth, as soon as the Great Tribulation starts will be battered and blown away like the chaff of wheat in a hurricane. The fruit of the Spirit does **NOT** grow over night, but they grow over time as we respond to the grace of God upon our lives in obedience to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God in the natural process of our daily lives (Luke 2v40,52 (KJV), John 1v14). Once the Great Tribulation starts it is going to be **VERY** difficult for the Christian who has built their spiritual experience upon the "earth" to rectify their wrong thinking on the doctrine of the Second Coming, for they were expecting **NOT** to go through the Great Tribulation and so did **NOT** prepare themselves for it. Very many of these Christians will, like the Evil Servant in Matt 24v45-51, think that the Lord Jesus is simply delaying His Coming, but not that they have got their doctrine wrong (and so have **NOT** prepared themselves for it) and will do absolutely nothing about it and so will backslide and go into apostasy. Dan 12v1, Mark 13v19, Col 3 (all)

### Conclusion

The Lord Jesus has promised us, that if we abide in Him, we will bear much fruit being in receipt of His wonderful intercessions of every second of every day, enabling us to overcome in **ALL** circumstances of life that will come our way, **NOT** only **NOW**, but **ESPECIALLY** during the Great Tribulation! Let us therefore seek the Lord Jesus in a new, real and determined way, so as to sit in His Presence, so that we might be changed from glory to glory and thus be changed into His likeness and receive from Him the plans and purposes that He has for each individual Christian in ministry as the last seven years of this age (but especially the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation) rapidly approaches! Dan 12v1,3, Matt 24v21, John 15v1-17, 16v33, Rom 8v26-39, 1Cor 10v13, 14v1,4, 2Cor 3v16-18, 2Thess 2v1-12, Heb 7v25, James 4v6-8, 1John 2v13,14, 4v1-6, Jude v20-25, Rev 7v9-17, 14v1-5

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