

Facing Trials with Joy | Let the Peace of God Rule | What is the "Spirit" in the Fruit of the Spirit?

THE SOWER

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The Fruit of the Spirit



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Producing Spiritual Fruit

by Karen Theisen

Greetings in Jesus Christ's fruitful name. Our Lord reveals himself as our "true grapevine" (John 15:1-NLT¹). In this issue of *The Sower*, we are focusing on the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22 and 23 reads, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...."

As this letter goes to print, our family will have completed our annual trek to pick delicious Michigan strawberries. We look forward to these berries all year long, and make jam so we can enjoy them long after the harvest season has ended. When our children were younger, and hence, novice berry pickers, they would always pick the biggest berries on the bush. Through trial and error, they learned that these berries, though delicious looking to the eye, were often not flavorful. In berry picking, the lesson, "looks can be deceiving" is an easy one to teach. Typically, the most flavorful berries are only average in size, deep red, and not lying on the ground where moisture can produce mold and insect infestation. Our favorite farm to go berry picking is organic, even the soil smells amazing!

Just as the condition of the soil is foundational for harvesting great strawberries, so the condition of the heart is foundational for producing spiritual fruit. Jesus teaches us in the parable of the farmer that an individual's responsiveness to God's Word depends on the soil of the heart: "...Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand" (Matt. 13:1-9-NLT). Our Lord explained the meaning of the parable in Matthew 13:18-23. He warned that it is available to have the Word "snatched" from our hearts because of lack of understanding, persecution, improper priorities, worldliness and distractions.

Jesus encouraged us, "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5-NLT). Let's continue to study the written Word in order to more intimately know the Living Word, Jesus Christ. Let's keep maturing in him, and enjoying the wonderful by-product, *fruit*.

Blessings for a fruitful summer,

Karen

Note:

1. Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, *New Living Translation*, © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL, 60189.

The Fruit of the Spirit

by John W. Schoenheit

Love

“Love” is the very nature of God, for God is love (1 John 4:7-12 and 16). The Greek word is *agape*.¹ Love is revealed by the action produced from it (John 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:1-8). Christian love is not an impulse based upon our feelings, nor is it always in accordance with our natural inclinations, nor is it lavished only upon those things we naturally like or find lovely or beautiful.

The understanding of true biblical love has been distorted in our modern society in two major ways. First, it has come to mean, “like a lot.” People say, “I love ice cream,” or “I love going to the beach,” when what they really mean is that they very much enjoy those things. Biblical love can involve feeling and emotion, but it does not have to. *Agape* love is commanded, showing that it is related to obedience and action, not necessarily feeling. God can command us to “do” something, but not to “feel” a certain way, because our actions are under our control, while our feelings often are not.

“Love” is obeying God whether we feel like it or not. Jesus made that point very clearly: “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.... Whoever does not love me does not keep my words...”(John 14:21 and 24 ESV²). Jesus also modeled true biblical love for us when he suffered and died, something he clearly did not want to do. *Agape* love is an exercise of the will, a deliberate choice, which is why God can command us to love our enemies (Exod. 23:1-5; Matt. 5:44).

The second way “love” has been distorted in our modern society is that it has been confused with a lack of judgment (discernment) and justice in our society. A modern sentiment is, “I do not want to judge people, I just want to love everyone” (translate that as: “I do not want to have to recognize any evil, and I just want to feel good about everyone and treat them as if what they are doing is good”).

This sentiment is not at all biblical, and causes great harm to individuals. People act as if, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Matt. 7:1), was universally applicable, but that verse is in the context of hypocrites who are judging others because they have logs in their own eyes. The universally applicable teaching of Jesus on judging is in John: “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment” (John 7:24)³. True love is obeying God, which involves recognizing what He says about the evil in the world and dealing with it to protect the innocent. For example, punishing criminals to keep society safe is loving, but not easy (Exod. 21:12-17, etc.), and asking someone to leave your Christian fellowship because they persist in flagrant sin is also loving, but never easy (1 Cor. 5:1-5).

Love energizes faith (Gal. 5:6), and empowers us to give and keep on giving. Christians are to be known for their love toward one another (John 13:35). Love is the distinctive character of the Christian life in relation to the brethren and to all humanity. [For further study visit TruthOrTradition.com/love]

Joy

“Joy” is an inner light, an internal effervescence or bubbling. The Greek word is *chara*. True joy is a quality of life, not simply an emotion. It is grounded in God and comes from knowing and believing Him, what He has given us, and what He promises us in the future. It is excited by the expectation or the acquisition of good. The “goods” we possess now are the gift of holy spirit, the wonderful Word of God, and many other blessings from Him. The goods we will possess include forever being with Christ in Paradise. These things cannot be taken

from us by the trials of this life, and for that reason true joy is not extinguished by the cares of this world. We should make our joy visible so that others can be won by it.

Jesus is our chief example of joy (John 15:11). Joy gives us a sound basis for optimism; it helps us look at the future that is desirable and possible (Heb. 12:2); and it strengthens us for the work we are called to do (Neh. 8:10). God commands us to have joy (1 Thess. 5:16; Phil. 3:1,) so it must be a choice of our will, based upon how we think about our circumstances. Joy can result from the way we choose to interpret the things that happen to us, especially painful things (James 1:2). The Apostles rejoiced after being beaten, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus (Acts 5:41). Joy is related to an attitude of thanksgiving.

Peace

“Peace” is quietness, rest, tranquility. The Greek word is *eirene*. It is an inner quietness that comes from an inner strength, an exemption from the rage and havoc of conflict, internal or external. It is associated with the elimination of one’s enemies. As influenced by the Hebrew word *shalom*, which was the ancient Jewish salutation and formula of well-wishing, it includes the concept of total well-being, including security, safety, harmony, prosperity, and happiness. True peace includes the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, the certainty of which can temper any fears we have in this life.

Peace is not the state of being undisturbed simply because we do not care what happens. Rather, it is the state of quietness that comes from knowing there will be a righteous end to life and the world. God is a God of peace (2 Cor. 13:11). Christians have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). The peace of God will guard your heart (Phil. 4:7). Scripture says, “Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble” (Ps. 119:165).

Longsuffering (sometimes translated “patience”)

“Longsuffering” is being patient with people.⁴ It is the ability to deal with difficult people for a long time before becoming angry. It is to persevere patiently and bravely; to be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; slow to anger, slow to punish. It is translated from the Greek word, *makrothumia*, which itself is made up of two words, *makro* = long; *thumia* = passion or anger.

Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation that does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish. It is how a Christian should behave in difficult circumstances with people rather than getting angry quickly. It is associated with mercy, and is used of God. However, it is not being a “door mat” and allowing yourself to be used or abused. Similarly, true longsuffering is not being “too spiritual” or “too holy” to get angry at people⁵, nor is it tolerating sin indefinitely.

In contrast to longsuffering, “patience” (in Greek, *hupomone*), which is not mentioned in the list of the fruit of the spirit, is being patient with things, not people. Patience is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial, and it is associated with hope that things will get better (1 Thess. 1:3). The Greek scholar and grammarian Richard Trench writes: “We may now distinguish *makrothumia* [longsuffering] and *hupomone* [patience].... *Makrothumia* refers to patience with respect to persons, *hupomone* with respect to things. A man is *makrothumei* if he has to relate to injurious persons and does not allow himself to be provoked by them or burst into anger (2 Tim. 4:2). A man is *hupomone* if he is under a great siege of trials and he bears up and does not lose his heart of courage.”⁶ “Longsuffering” may not be used much today, but it is a wonderful and descriptive word.

Interestingly, *makrothumia* (longsuffering with people) is used in reference to God, while *hupomone* (patience with things), is not. Like the rest of us, God has to put up with people, who have free-will, so He must be longsuffering. However, God never has to be patient with *things*, which He can change immediately, and He never has to put up with the trials from things and life that people do. Longsuffering (*makrothumia*) and

patience (*hupomone*) occur together in Colossians 1:11; 2 Corinthians 6:4-6; 2 Timothy 3:10; and James 5:10 and 11. Longsuffering is especially important as an essential quality for Christian leaders (2 Tim. 4:2).

Kindness (sometimes translated “gentleness”)

“Kindness” is a generous, warm-hearted, friendly, nature. The Greek word is *chrestotes*. “Kindness” is sweet, mild, and full of graciousness. It is a virtue that pervades and penetrates a person’s whole nature and that mellows anything harsh or austere. “Kindness” is ready and willing to do good deeds, and it expresses itself in acts that create pleasure or relief in others. Kindness comes from an inner disposition to benefit others, and is aroused by their need.

Kindness is a fruit of the spirit that is now, and always has been, greatly lacking in society. People seem to take great pleasure in making cutting, critical, sarcastic and belittling statements to each other, and pointing out faults, mistakes, and shortcomings. Television sit-coms, and many jokes, plays, books, and stories are “funny” because they have sarcastic or cutting remarks. Kindness does none of this, but seeks the welfare, relief, and happiness of others. Kindness is a fruit of the spirit Christians can cultivate that will truly set them apart from the world.

It is important to separate true kindness from sentimentality. It is easy to feel sorry for someone who has gotten himself into a mess, and begin to “caretake” him, which actually weakens the person. In many situations, what one really needs in order to become strong is to repent and get busy restoring his own life with the help of the Lord. People who are kind to others must be aware of the difference between kindness and caretaking.

God is kind, even to the unthankful (Luke 6:35), and God’s kindness leads people to repentance (Rom. 2:4), but most of the time God lets us work ourselves out of our own messes. It would be easy for Him to take weight off of us when we overeat, create money in our account when we overspend, energize our bodies when we stay up too late watching television, etc. Instead, God lets us fight our desires and control our eating, our spending, our sleeping habits, etc. God is not a “caretaker,” and we should follow His lead. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of every believer to be kind to others (Eph. 4:31 and 32). Love is kind (1 Cor. 13:4).

Jesus Christ said his yoke is “kind” (*chrestotes*, not “easy,” as many translations have), because there is nothing harsh, sharp, or cutting about it (Matt. 11:30). You can put on Christ’s yoke without worrying about getting painful blisters or splinters from the Lord. Anyone who has worked hard in Christian service can attest to the fact that Christ’s yoke is not always “easy,” but it is always “kind.”

Goodness

“Goodness” is uprightness in heart and life, a moral excellence. The Greek word is *agathosune*. A person who exhibits the fruit known as “goodness” is upright and honorable. “Goodness” is usually associated with activity rather than inner nature, although the good actions spring from the good heart: “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart...”(Luke 6:45). Goodness is not self-absorbed or comfort-oriented. Many “good” tasks are uncomfortable to perform, as Jesus showed us when he died on the cross. “Goodness” is anchored in God and in His revelation to man.

In Scripture, “good” is often contrasted with “evil,” and it is the Word of God that defines what is good and what is evil. Moral relativism leaves both “good” and “evil” up to the feelings and inclinations of the individual. In a system without the standards given by God, all kinds of “good” things become viewed as “evil.” For example, holding people accountable becomes evil (you may hurt their “self-esteem”), punishment becomes evil (they were not really at fault, but were victims of society), and saying that someone is wrong becomes evil (why be so narrow minded?). Also, without godly standards, many “evil” things become “good,” such as getting too much change back on a purchase and then not telling the cashier; couples living together without being married; or not returning something you find even if you could locate the owner.

“Goodness” can be called the “fruit with teeth,” because goodness, while it has a lot in common with “kindness,” very clearly also contains the idea that it is a *good* thing to uphold standards, enforce the law, and punish wrongdoers. If there is no “goodness” in the Christian’s life or in our society, evil continues without fear of consequences. Romans 15:14 (NASB⁷) says, “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.”⁸ We Christians are supposed to admonish one another, which involves reproof and correction, because we are “full of goodness.”

This brings up a very important point concerning the fruit of the spirit. Each is applicable in the life of a Christian, but not all at the same time, as we see when we compare “kindness” and “goodness.” It is both good and kind to give food to a hungry person. However, it is good (and appropriate) to execute a serial killer, but it is not “kind” to him.⁹ Similarly, it is good of God to burn the wicked up in Gehenna (Rev. 20:15), but that is not “kind” to them. If earth is going to be a nice place to live, we must be “good” to one another in the full sense of the word, not just be “kind” and say we are being “good.”

Faithfulness (sometimes translated “faith”)

“Faithfulness” is translated from the Greek word *pistis*. In this context it can mean either “faith” or “faithfulness,” and here “faithfulness” is the better translation. While “faith” is trusting God and thus believing His promises, “faithfulness” is continued faith or perseverance. It is a steadfast adherence to God and His will. We trust God because God is *trustworthy*, but more than that, we are to continue in that faith day after day, thereby being “faithful” toward Him. In addition, we are to be faithful in earthly things also. The Christian is to be a faithful person: a faithful friend, a faithful neighbor, a faithful parent, a faithful child, and faithful in prayer, giving, and other Christian virtues. Many people have “faith” for a short time, and while any faith is better than none, the fruit of the new nature, faithfulness, is being full of faith day after day after day. Those given a trust must be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).

Meekness (sometimes translated “gentleness”)

“Meekness” (the Greek word is *praotes*) is the quality of humility that recognizes one’s own imperfection and neediness and causes a willingness to listen to reproof and correction, as well as to help others without unduly asserting one’s authority or overpowering them. The last part of the definition is why many translators use “gentleness” here, but the first part of the definition is just as important for Christian character. Thus the translation “meekness,” as long as it is properly understood, is much better than “gentleness,” which usually refers to being soft and free of harshness.

Meekness is a submissive attitude toward the will of God. Biblically, meekness is the ability to take coaching, teaching, and even reproof from others without resistance, anger, or temptation to seek revenge and retaliation, and it also includes being gentle when guiding others. The Christian’s meekness is first and foremost to be toward God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.

Godly meekness is a mental posture of power, not weakness. The common assumption is that meekness is synonymous with being “mousy” or “cowardly,” and comes from a feeling of weakness, but the opposite is the case. The Lord Jesus was “meek...in heart” (Matt. 11:29). He knew who he was, so he had no need for pride, arrogance, or controlling others. He was coachable, and took direction from God and others when appropriate. Someone who is meek can afford to be so because his strength and confidence allows him to listen to others. Moses was the meekest man on earth in his time, but his life was filled with powerful signs and wonders (Num. 12:3). Meekness is a way of being, and is the opposite of being pushy, demanding, overly self-assertive, and arrogant. It is to be the default manner for leaders in the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 10:1 and 2).

Self-control

“Self-control” is mastery over oneself. The Greek word is *egkrateia*, and the root word is *kratos*, which means power in action; strength exerted. As used by the Greeks, *egkrateia* is the virtue of one who has power over himself and thus masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites. God designed us so that we are not slaves to our flesh or mind, but instead can use our will to decide what we think and do.

The whole concept of self-control implies that there is a standard to conform to. If there were no standard, there would be no reason for control. The Word of God is the standard according to which God expects people to practice self-control, and the disregard for the Word of God in our society today is a major reason why people are so out of control in their thoughts, emotions, and actions. People have no standard, and thus no reason to control themselves. Furthermore, as our culture becomes less and less godly, we Christians must recognize that what is legal is not necessarily godly. Christians are not to live like unbelievers who indulge the flesh (Eph. 2:3). We are to avoid sin, including culturally accepted indulgences and legal sensuality. We are to control ourselves, even when it takes great effort to do so (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

Godly self-control is not trying to reform the flesh by ascetic practices, as if our sin nature could be reformed so that we never have sinful desires. Self-control is controlling, situation-by-situation, our fleshly desires. Similarly, self-control is not overcoming sinful tendencies by outward religious practices, although having godly practices in one’s life can contribute to one’s ability to control his mind and desires. True self-control comes from a combination of free-will decisions, a heart that is right before God, and our new, spiritual nature within us that is trying to reproduce itself in our outward man. We must bear in mind that “self-control” is a “fruit of the spirit,” not a “fruit of the will.”

A person with great self-control can accomplish much for himself. Thus, self-control, more than the other fruit of the spirit, can feed prideful ambition and self-glorification if it is not combined with love, all the other fruit of the spirit, and a desire to serve God and others. Therefore, it seems fitting indeed that self-control is the last fruit in the list, because it shows that we Christians need all of them to live a productive and godly Christian life.

Notes:

1. We give the Greek words in this article for clarity, because different versions of the Bible translate the Greek differently. Having the Greek words assures that there will be no confusion as to which of the fruit we are discussing. Although it is commonly stated that the Greek word “love” is *agape*, the more accurate understanding is that the noun is *agape*, and the verb is *agapaō*. This is different from English, in which the word “love” is a homonym, used as both a noun and a verb.
2. Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*™ © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.
3. For further study read To Judge or Not to Judge at TruthOrTradition.com/judging
4. Richard Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1989), pp. 207-210. We believe Trench is correct, but not all Greek scholars agree, and that, combined with the fact that “longsuffering” is not used much in English any more, has caused many versions to read “patience” instead of “longsuffering.” However, when the two Greek words occur together, one of them must be translated as “endurance” or a similar word, which causes more problems.
5. For further study read Healthily Processing Anger at TruthOrTradition.com/anger
6. *Ibid.*, Trench, *Synonyms*, p. 209.
7. Scripture quotations marked (NASB) are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission.
8. The NASB correctly has the word “admonish,” not just “teach” or “instruct.” The Greek word contains the possible need for confrontation, not just teaching.
9. For a more complete understanding of the death penalty and biblical law, see our booklet, *The Death Penalty, Godly or Ungodly?* on page 3 of the enclosed price list. This booklet is also available online at TruthOrTradition.com/DeathPenalty

For further study on the Fruit of the Spirit, visit TruthOrTradition.com/fruit

The Vine

Let the Peace of God Rule

by Dan Gallagher

The other day I met with a woman who is a naturopathic physician specializing in helping people with their diets and nutrition. I generally feel pretty healthy, and believe I take moderately good care of myself, but it seemed like a good idea to be tested. My wife and daughter had also recently been tested and I saw how beneficial it was for them. With the prick of my finger a drop of blood oozed out and was placed onto a microscope slide. Placing the slide under the lens of the microscope the doctor said, “Well, I can see you are under a lot of stress.” I was amazed and asked in wonder, “How can you tell that so quickly by just looking at a drop of my blood.” Soon, I too was also looking at the picture of my blood on a computer monitor (the tool lover that I am, I was also impressed by the very sophisticated and expensive equipment she had). What I saw were red and white blood cells with occasional crystalline structures floating past the screen. She explained that the strands I was seeing were crystal structures made from cortisol, a hormone produced by the adrenal glands when we are under stress. I was surprised and thought to myself, “If that is what is in just one little drop of my blood then how much more is surely surging through my body.” I was also shocked to see the physical reality of what the stress in my life was actually producing.

Well, of course she was right on target. I think I was living in a bit of denial about my stress until I saw it on that slide. It’s easy to believe all is well, but my blood wasn’t lying. No one would really know the stress I am under by looking at me, but nevertheless, there it was in vivid color on that screen. As I drove home I reflected on the stress that we are all under and how damaging it must be to us. Too often I have rationalized and attempted to dismiss stress in my life by thinking that, “It seems to just come with the territory of life in these, so called, modern times.”

Later that evening I was with a number of other men as we gathered for our Men’s fellowship. A number of the men in our church have begun to meet during the week to pray, to connect, and to bear one another’s burdens as men of God. I told my blood test story to my brothers and soon we were all getting in touch with the variety of stressful things happening in each of our lives. We talked, and all agreed that we need to grab hold of the peace that God has given us. We sang praise music, prayed, worshipped in the spirit, and shared the Word of God. I felt some of the stress of life leave my body as I drew close to God. God promises that “Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble” (**Ps. 119:165**).

It was always God’s desire that man would live with tranquility in his soul. The psalmist wrote, “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety” (**Ps. 4:8**). One of God’s greatest gifts to mankind has been peace. Confessing Jesus as our Lord and believing that God raised him from the dead results in us having everlasting peace with God. The souls of men and women can finally rest with true and genuine peace.

Unfortunately, too often we forget that we have received peace. God has prepared for us a table in the presence of our enemies (**Ps. 23:5**), but it is still our responsibility to do the feasting. If I focus on the enemy I will lose my appetite, but when I focus on God and the gifts he has prepared for me, then I can enjoy a multi-coursed meal with Him and my other family members at the table. God exhorts us to, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace...” (**Col. 3:15**).

That night in fellowship we all discussed how our fellowship can be a sanctuary of peace. I don’t think there is a man or woman alive who would not want to have peace. What a privilege it is to be given the responsibility

of spreading the “Gospel of Peace.” Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (**John 14:27**). The world offers nothing but troubles and stress. Let’s make sure that our fellowships are tables in the midst of the enemy where we, and the others we invite to come, can feast on the peace God gives us.

Did you know that we have an entire topic on our TruthOrTradition.com website dedicated to the topic of “Leadership”?

Visit TruthOrTradition.com/leadership

For more on Community, visit TruthOrTradition.com/community

The Contender

What is the Spirit in the Fruit of the Spirit?

by John W. Schoenheit

Galatians 5:22 and 23 list the fruit of the “spirit,” and different theologians and Bible teachers have stated their opinions about what “spirit” refers to. The word “spirit” is, after all, a very flexible word with at least three different meanings in Galatians alone.¹ Most theologians are Trinitarian, and simply say that “spirit” refers to “the Holy Spirit,” the “Third Person of the Trinity.” For those of us who are Biblical Unitarians, however, that explanation is hardly satisfactory. What we will show in this article is that the fruit of the spirit is the fruit of the new, spiritual nature that each Christian received at the time he or she was born again. Then we will see that it is up to each of us to know what godly, fruitful Christian character is and strive to develop it in our lives.

Meanings of “Spirit”

The word “spirit” has quite a few meanings in the Bible, and it is often difficult to determine which usage is meant in a given verse. Some of the usages of “spirit,” alone or in combination with other words, are: God (Matt. 1:18); Jesus (2 Cor. 3:17 and 18; Rev. 2:7); the gift of God that was put upon certain believers who lived in the administrations of the Old Testament and Gospels (Luke 1:41 and 67, 2:25); the gift of God that is born and sealed in each and every Christian (Acts 2:38); angels (Heb. 1:14); demons (Matt. 10:1); beings that are identified as neither angels or demons, but which are spiritual in nature (Acts 23:9; Rev. 1:4); the natural life of the physical body, which is often referred to as “soul” but is actually a spiritual reality, not a material one (Luke 8:55); and the products of a person’s mind, such as his attitude, emotions, thoughts, or desires (Matt. 5:3; 2 Cor. 7:13; Gal. 6:1-KJV).² Because “spirit” has so many biblical usages, the best way to determine which usage is being referred to in any given verse is by looking at the context of the verse.

Before we begin our quest to determine the meaning of “spirit” in the phrase, “the fruit of the spirit,” we should point out that this is a study in which commentaries and articles done by theologians are almost totally unhelpful. That is because most of those in theological circles do not accept that there is such a thing as the gift of holy spirit given by God and born inside the believer. The first theologian we know of who understood and set forth many of the different usages of “spirit” was E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913) in his work, *The Giver and His Gifts*, written in 1905. Typical of most people breaking ground in new territory, he did not understand the fullness of the New Birth and the gift of holy spirit, but nevertheless, Bullinger is to be highly commended. Even though he was a Trinitarian, he recognized that not all the uses of the Greek phrase *pneuma hagion* (“Holy Spirit” or “holy spirit,” depending on the context) refer to what orthodox Christians call the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.³ Sadly, his important and ground-breaking work has been ignored by the Christian Church.

Historically, theologians have understood the “spirit” in Galatians 5:22 to be one of two things: the Third Person of the Trinity or the “human spirit,” which they understand to be the emotions and attitudes of the person. The majority of those theologians assert that “spirit” refers to “the Holy Spirit,” the third person of the Trinity, and Lightfoot’s explanation for that is typical: “Throughout this passage the *pneuma* is evidently the Divine Spirit; for the human spirit in itself and unaided does not stand in direct antagonism to the flesh.”⁴

The Conflict: Flesh Versus Spirit

In our study of what is the “spirit” of the fruit of the spirit, it is important to notice that the context of the fruit of the spirit starts in verse 13. Before that, the context is the Galatian Christians being troubled by outsiders. At verse 13, the context shifts to the behavior of the Galatians themselves.

Galatians 5:13 (ESV)

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

This is the first use of “flesh” in the section, and it also occurs in verses 16, 17, 19, and 24. In each verse it refers to the natural desires that are produced by the flesh itself that can sometimes be an obstacle to godliness, and also to the sin nature that manifests itself in our flesh. The reason that the translation “flesh” (KJV, ESV, NASB) is better than “sin nature” (NIV) is that we all have desires that are not essentially sinful or part of our sin nature, such as sleeping or eating, but which can work against our being godly if we overindulge our fleshly wants in the wrong time or place. The word “flesh” represents the arena in which both our sin nature and fleshly desires work against us.

Already in verse 13 we see the conflict between the “flesh” and godliness. We have freedom in Christ, but we are to use that freedom to live godly lives, not to indulge our sin nature and our fleshly, worldly desires. We are to serve one another in love, and if we do not, we will end up being spoiled, selfish people who bite and devour each other (v. 14). The solution to how we can live without indulging the flesh is given in verse 16:

Galatians 5:16 (ESV)⁵

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

If we Christians will live by the spirit, we will not indulge the flesh and thus hurt each other. But what is the usage of “spirit” in this verse? We know from the scope of the subject of holy spirit that in the Old Testament God put His gift of holy spirit on believers to facilitate communication with them and so they could manifest His power.⁶ Furthermore, we know that in the Administration of Grace in which we live, God’s gift of holy spirit is born in us and gives us His very nature.⁷ Via this gift, both God and Jesus work in the believer to be godly and powerful. Thus, the context rules out usages of “spirit” such as God, Jesus, or angels. Evidence is added to that conclusion when we realize there is no article “the” preceding “spirit” in the Greek text, which says we are to “live by spirit.” Generally, when there is no article, the word “spirit” refers to the gift of God, holy spirit.

We should make the point that the context also eliminates our attitudes and emotions as the meaning of “spirit” here. When it comes to our fleshly passions, our attitudes and emotions are more a part of the problem than a part of the solution. Our attitudes and emotions do not by nature resist the passions of the flesh, but in fact often augment them. This is especially clear in verse 18, which says that if we are led by “spirit” we are not under law.⁸ Surely being led by our attitudes and emotions does not free us from laws that govern our lives; if anything, laws help us to control them.

We are left with two distinct possibilities for what God means when He says, “walk by spirit.” The first is that “spirit” in this verse refers to the gift of holy spirit in manifestation, that is, the gift of holy spirit we received when we were born again as it is manifested externally (which happens as God energizes it when we have faith).⁹ The second is the new spiritual nature that we have as a result of having God’s spirit born and sealed inside us.

As we pointed out above, the context and our knowledge of the scope of the subject are the clearest guides to the meaning of “spirit.” In this context, “spirit” is contrasted with the “flesh,” which we saw was our sin nature and our natural worldly desires. Furthermore, if we live “by spirit,” we “...will not gratify the desires of

the flesh.” That rules out the gift of holy spirit in manifestation, i.e., the gift of holy spirit as it is manifested as speaking in tongues, prophecy, a message of knowledge or wisdom, miracles, etc.¹⁰ Manifesting the gift of holy spirit by speaking in tongues, doing healings, etc., does not restrain our flesh.

Both the Bible and history show us that many people who powerfully manifest the gift of holy spirit are unrestrained in the flesh. In the last few decades, scandals involving Church leaders from many denominations have rocked the Christian world and shown us all too clearly that manifesting the power of God does not mean that one’s sensuality and flesh have been restrained. Furthermore, verses such as 1 Corinthians 13:1 show us that a person can speak in tongues, a manifestation of holy spirit, and not have love, a fruit of the spirit. Some people who manifest the gift of holy spirit much in their lives never fully develop the wonderful virtues that are listed as the fruit of the spirit.

As we read Galatians 5 carefully, we see that the “spirit” in the phrase “walk by spirit” is in direct contrast to the “flesh,” our old sin nature, and furthermore, that living by spirit restrains our fleshly desires. From this it is clear that “spirit” is referring to our new, spiritual nature that we received when we got born again. Bullinger saw this, and commented on verse 16: “Walk spiritually, or according to the new nature; and then ye will not fulfil the lust of the flesh (or the old nature).¹¹ He also pointed out that the usage of “spirit” in verses 17 and 18 was also the new nature.

The Christian’s New Nature

What is the new nature of the Christian? When we were born again, God placed His spiritual seed in us. At that time something was “born” in us (1 Pet. 1:23). What was born in us was the very nature of God, which is why 2 Peter 1:4 speaks of us having “divine nature.” God is holy, and God is spirit, so another way He describes what was born in us is “holy spirit.” God’s gift of holy spirit, His very nature, is now our new nature, sealed inside us when we believed (Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:13). Because it was created in us, we are called “new creations” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The holy spirit we have today is very different from the gift of holy spirit that existed before the Administration of Grace, which is why John 7:39 says there was no “spirit” before Jesus was glorified (which is very clearly translated in the NRSV¹²).¹³ In contrast to what God gave “upon” people in the Old Testament, the holy spirit He promised to pour out in the Millennial Kingdom will be “in” people, and will work in them to live godly lives. The spirit God will pour out in the Millennial Kingdom is what He has now given to us by grace.¹⁴

This new kind of holy spirit that God created and sealed inside us by grace gives us a new nature that is holy, which is why Christians are referred to as “saints” (literally, “holy ones”) in the Epistles to the Christian Church (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; etc.). Unfortunately, the word “saints” does not communicate the full truth of the Greek text, which reads *hagios*, and is the same Greek word translated “holy” in the phrase “holy spirit” (or, as in most versions, “the Holy Spirit”). Translating *hagios* as “holy” in the phrase “holy spirit,” but “saints” when referring to Christians, obscures a very important truth: we Christians become “holy” when we get “holy spirit.” The gift of holy spirit gives us a new, spiritual nature, which makes us holy.¹⁵

The moment a person becomes a Christian, he receives a new, holy nature. From that moment on he has two natures, an old, sin nature, and a new, spiritual nature. The new holy nature we have works in us to be godly, just as our sin nature works in us to be ungodly. These two natures struggle against each other inside us, which is the lesson Galatians 5:17 teaches.

Galatians 5:17 (NASB)

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

The Greek scholar and translator Kenneth Wuest has a very insightful translation of verse 17 that he worked up from the Greek text, paying attention to the subtle meanings of the words: “For the flesh constantly has a strong desire to suppress the Spirit, and the Spirit constantly has a strong desire to suppress the flesh. And these are entrenched in an attitude of mutual opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you desire to do.”¹⁶ The new holy spirit nature born inside us constantly battles against the old sin nature inside us.

The new nature within us is very different from the holy spirit in manifestation. The new nature is resident within us all the time, whereas the manifestations of holy spirit occur only as the holy spirit born in us is specifically energized by God in cooperation with our decisions to utilize them. Our new holy spirit nature is part of us, it is in every cell of our being, and it makes us spiritually powerful people. That the gift of holy spirit is “in” us means that it is born in us and woven into the very fabric of who we are, just like our old nature. Perhaps an apt analogy in regard to both natures is that of immersing and soaking a garment in purple dye. The dye permeates every fiber of the material to the end that it can only accurately be described as a “purple shirt.” Both a shirt and purple are what it is.

Referring to the gift of holy spirit born inside me, I used to say, “The gift is the God-given ability.” While that is true, there is, I believe, a deeper truth. The gift is not separate from “me,” but born, sealed, and infused into me. It is my new, divine nature. Thus, it is more accurate to say, “The gift gives *me* the God-given ability.” It is not as if “the gift” is powerful and “I” am not. No, *I* am powerful because God gave me the gift of holy spirit that is now my new nature.

Christ in Us

The Bible says I have “Christ in [me]” (Col. 1:27), which is figurative language meaning that the very nature and power of the risen Christ was born into me, and into each Christian.¹⁷ That gift of holy spirit, that Christ in me, is my new divine nature, which is as much a part of who I am as my old sin nature. And just as my sin nature pulls me toward sin, my new, divine, Christ-in-me nature pulls me toward being like Christ in every way.

Most of the Christians with whom I have spoken about “Christ in you” focus on the power of Christ that each Christian has and how the Christ in us makes us spiritually powerful like Christ. “Christ” in us does indeed make us spiritually powerful, but that is not all it does. It influences us to be like Jesus in every way. Bullinger speaks accurately about our new, divine, nature, and how it is in conflict with our old nature.

The presence of this New Nature necessitates conflict with the Old Nature: and this conflict is therefore the best assurance that we are “in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17). This it is whichever [always] distinguishes the true child of God from the mere professor. The true believer always has an abiding sense of inward corruption; while the merely religious person never has it at all, and knows nothing of it.¹⁸

Once we understand that the “spirit” in this context is our new nature, our new, divine, Christ-in-me nature, the verses in Galatians 5 make sense, and the “fruit of the spirit” becomes easy to understand. Verse 16 says that if we live our lives by our new, holy, spiritual nature, we will not gratify the lusts of our flesh, and verse 17 tells us why. Just as our old sin nature pulls us to sin, our new holy nature is struggling to be godly. The struggle will end only with our death or the Rapture. Which of the two natures has the upper hand in our lives? The one we support by the free will choices we make. Verse 18 states a similar truth to verse 23, that those who walk by their new, holy nature, manifesting the character of God, are not under law, that is, they have no need for laws to keep their lives in check by threats and punishment.

The next five verses (19-23) expand upon what we have just seen in verses 16-18, that the flesh and the new spiritual nature are at war. The Bible lists the works of the flesh (our old nature) and then the fruit of the spirit (our new nature), thus portraying the vast difference between them.¹⁹ The specific things mentioned in each list are important for a few reasons. First, they help us evaluate whether we have more of the flesh or spirit showing

in our lives. Although there is good in the worst of us and evil in the best of us, our free will, our daily decisions, and our determination (or lack thereof) to be godly will put us in one category more than the other.

Second, we need to realize how far down the flesh will drag us if we do not battle it—all the way to having no inheritance in the kingdom, which should wake us up and be plenty of motivation to live godly lives.²⁰ Third, the two lists vividly portray the lifestyle of those who strive to live godly lives in contrast to the lifestyle of those who do not. For some people, the fleshly indulgence of illicit sex, selfishness, and drunkenness is all they want, while for others, love, peace, and joy seem much more desirable.

The lesson of this section in Galatians is quite clear. Each Christian has a sin nature and a new nature, each of those natures is vying for supremacy in our lives, and one of them will dominate the other. There is no such thing as “neutral territory” or a “de-militarized zone.” The sin nature and the new, holy nature are at war, and will not call a truce and agree to “share us.” God wants us to be totally sold out to Him, and our flesh nature wants us to give ourselves to it with abandon. In the end, we, by our freedom of will, decide and determine what will shine forth from us.

The Strength of Our Free Will

Many of us would confidently assert that we have felt the powerful pull toward ungodliness that our sin nature and fleshly desires have on us, while at the same time stating we are not as aware of the influence of our holy nature. But just how strong is the “pull” our sin nature exerts on us? From God’s perspective, the influence of the sin nature is not nearly as strong as most Christians seem to think it is. After all, we do not have to have a sin nature to be tempted. Adam and Eve had no sin nature, but when they were tempted they fell into sin from the strength of the temptation and their lack of will-power. Furthermore, the Word says that Jesus was “...tempted in every way, just as we are...” (Heb. 4:15). He never gave in to any of his temptations, but we can be sure they were real and difficult to deny.

In our modern world, being a “victim” is very popular, so the idea of being a victim of our sin nature (“I just couldn’t stop myself”) is appealing to the “it’s-not-my-fault” crowd, who shift the blame just as Adam did (Gen. 3:12). However, if we take an honest look at our lives, we will realize that in many things we are not as obedient to God as we would like to think. The Bible tells us to bring our thoughts captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), and to think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Nevertheless, the vast majority of us regularly ignore that admonition and expose ourselves to all kinds of things that are more worldly than godly. Furthermore, we often do not hold to the biblical admonition to be content with food and shelter (1 Tim. 6:8), but instead expose ourselves to many kinds of advertisements that produce discontentment in us.

Some things we expose ourselves to in the visual media, the songs and music we listen to, and some of the excesses in which we indulge, produce ungodly desires within us. Those are real desires, and they feel like our sin nature urging us to sin, when in fact they are just the fruit of our own disobedience. For example, if we watch television shows and movies with sexual themes and sexual innuendos (and worse), and listen to music that elicits sexual desires, later, when our thoughts and feelings turn to illicit sex and sexuality, that is not our sin nature, but the fruit of our disobedience.

We often confuse the fruit of our sin with the tugging of our sin nature because the ungodly desires we have are separated in time from the sin we commit or the lack of wisdom we exhibit. We may not feel the effect of our free-will decisions for days, weeks, or months. For example, it may be hours, days, or weeks after watching a sexual movie or listening to hours of music with sexual themes that we have inappropriate sexually oriented thoughts and feelings that require serious effort to overcome. Our free-will decisions have an effect, and the seeds, good or bad, we plant in our minds will grow and produce a noticeable effect. This is why we should be diligent and aggressive about keeping the commandments of God.

Both our old nature and our holy nature are working in us. However, neither of them is overpowering, and we, by our free-will decisions, choose which will have the upper hand.

Go For the Godly Fruit

We have seen that the “spirit” in the “fruit of the spirit” is our new spiritual nature that we received when we were born again. We also saw that this new nature is trying to produce wonderful and godly things in our lives, and that it is at war with our old nature, the flesh. We further saw that our will, what we decide to do, casts the deciding vote in what will be manifested in our lives.

The “fruit” are called “the fruit of the spirit” because they are the fruit that our new, spiritual nature would produce in us if it were free to do so. However, due to our sin nature and our flesh, and due to the fact that we have free will and are subject to our own choices, producing the fruit of the spirit requires active cooperation between our free will and our new, divine nature. Our divine nature cannot grow the fruit of the spirit on its own.

A Christian who makes the free-will choice (yes, it is a *choice*) to be unloving or impatient or without self-control will see his flesh dominate his life. On the other hand, the new nature of holy spirit is constantly at work to produce fruit in us, and if we make the decision to develop the fruit of the spirit, we can do so. We can be assured that God is committed to help us have the fruit of the spirit fully developed in our lives.

Addendum: Bullinger and Wierwille²¹

As I have studied the subject of the fruit of the spirit, it seems that both Bullinger and Wierwille had important pieces of the puzzle, but neither fully saw the whole picture. As I have read and re-read their work on the subject, I have recently come to the following conclusion:

Wierwille clearly understood that when a person got born again, he received the gift of holy spirit born inside him. He also understood that holy spirit within us could be energized by God and produce the manifestations of holy spirit. What he seems not to have fully understood, or at least never wrote clearly about, is that when we get born again, the new birth infuses us totally and becomes a new nature in us that produces an effect on us as real and profound as that of our old flesh nature.

Wierwille focused more on the power that holy spirit gave us and how it makes us spiritually powerful. He spoke of the gift as the God-given ability. Wierwille’s focus on the power we have via the gift of holy spirit shows up in how he thought of “Christ in you” (Col. 1:27) as referring to how spiritually powerful the Christian is—and we are! But that is not all “Christ in” us does. As our new nature, it exerts an influence to be like Christ in every way.

In contrast to Wierwille, Bullinger clearly grasped that holy spirit born in the person became his new divine nature and exerts an influence to make him holy. Thus, he called the holy spirit inside us our “New Nature.”²² But Bullinger, who did not manifest the power of holy spirit by speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, etc., never connected our new holy spirit nature with the power we have. He never put the manifestations of holy spirit together with the New Nature.

Both Bullinger and Wierwille made important points about the gift of holy spirit. When we combine their insights, we arrive at a much more complete understanding of what God has given to us. God gives us holy spirit in birth. When born inside us, the holy spirit infuses us totally and becomes our new, “divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), which, like our old nature, has an influence on us. Our old nature tugs on us to live by our fleshly desires, while our new divine nature tugs on us to live in godliness. The new nature inside us makes us capable of living godly lives full of the fruit of the spirit. Also, the new nature in us makes us spiritually powerful

people, capable of manifesting holy spirit by speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, and the other manifestations listed in 1 Corinthians 12.

Notes:

1. "Spirit" in Galatians refers to several things, according to the context: our new divine nature (5:16, 17, 18 and 22), our "attitudes and emotions" (6:1-KJV), and, by the figure of speech Synecdoche, the whole person (6:18).
2. For a more complete understanding of the usages of "spirit" in the Bible, see our book *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*, Appendix B, "Usages of Spirit in the New Testament."
3. Bullinger's book, *The Giver and His Gifts* (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI reprinted 1979), is an important work in the field of the gift of holy spirit. The book was reprinted by Kregel in 1985 with the title, *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*. For questions on the Trinity and the identity of Jesus Christ, see our book, *One God & One Lord: Reconsidering the Cornerstone of the Christian Faith* and TruthOrTradition.com/trinity. For questions about the gift of holy spirit versus the Third Person of the Trinity, see our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ* and TruthOrTradition.com/power
4. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, reprinted 1993), p. 210.
5. The ESV is the *English Standard Version*, which came out in 2001, and is an "essentially literal version." It tries to stay literal to the text except when the original would not be well understood if followed literally. It is much more literal than the NIV, yet often seems to represent a better "feel" of the text than the sometimes slavishly literal *New American Standard Bible*. We use it in this section because it keeps the literal "flesh" instead of adopting the "sin nature" translation of the NIV.
6. See our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ*, Chapter 3, "Power from on High," and TruthOrTradition.com/power
7. See our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ*, Chapter 6, "The Gift of Holy Spirit Today," point # 5, pp. 47 and 63-67.
8. Although most English versions say "the law" or "the Law" in verse 18, the Greek text does not have the definite article "the" before "law." The verse reads that those who are led "by spirit" are not "under law." Thus, the use of "law" in this verse refers to any and all laws. People who are led by spirit are not slaves to laws, but will never need the control they provide to keep themselves and others unharmed in every way.
9. This is the meaning taken by Victor Wierwille, *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today* (American Christian Press, New Knoxville, OH, 1982), p. 284.
10. For a better understanding of the manifestations of holy spirit, see our book *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*, Chapter 8, "Walking in Power: The Manifestations of Holy Spirit." For further online study on all nine of the manifestations see TruthOrTradition.com/9
11. E. W. Bullinger, *The Giver and His Gifts* (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI reprinted 1979), p. 148.
12. Scripture quotations marked (NRSV) are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
13. See our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ*, Chapter 6, "The Gift of Holy Spirit Today," pp. 45 and 46, and Appendix C, "The Promised Holy Spirit."
14. See our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ*, Chapter 3, "Power from on High." Appendix C, "The Promised Holy Spirit."
15. It is important to realize that a Christian is "holy" by virtue of his holy nature, not his godly behavior. This is different from the Old Testament, when holy nature was not available and holy behavior made one holy. See our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ*, Appendix A, "The Administration of the Sacred Secret," especially point "D," "Holy Ones," pp. 214 and 215. For further study on the Sacred Secret, see TruthOrTradition.com/secret
16. Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1944), p. 154. In his book, Wuest gives the rationale for his translation.
17. The exact figure of speech is *Hypocatastasis*, a comparison by implication.
18. E. W. Bullinger, *The Giver and His Gifts* (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI reprinted 1979), p. 18.
19. It is interesting to note that after correctly assessing that the "spirit" in this section of Galatians refers to the new nature, Bullinger switches in verse 22. He seems to lose focus on the "fruit" of the spirit, and refers to "the fruit of the spirit, or spiritual gifts of the great Giver, the Holy Spirit" which to him is the Third Person of the Trinity. He does not explain why he would make this sudden and major shift in the middle of a cohesive context.
20. Having no inheritance, no rewards, in the Kingdom is not the same as not being saved. When Christ sets up his kingdom on earth, some people will have lands and houses as their inheritance, their reward for obedience, and some will not. See our book, *The Christian's Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*, Chapter 6: "Rewards in the Future Kingdoms." For further study see TruthOrTradition.com/hope
21. We compare Bullinger and Wierwille here because they are the only two people we are aware of who have done exhaustive verse by verse studies of the holy spirit that show the genuine flexibility of the word "spirit."
22. E. W. Bullinger, *The Giver and His Gifts* (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI reprinted 1979), p. 17-19.

Partner Profile

Carlos & Coretta Rodriguez

2 Corinthians 5:18

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

As we see from this verse, we Christians are called to reconnect people back to God. My family and I support Spirit & Truth Fellowship because that is what this ministry is all about.

As a young child, I grew up in a Christian home, and my parents taught me about God. The older I got, the more I wanted to know. The problem I ran into was that what I was being taught in church was not coinciding with what I was reading in the Bible. I spent many years not knowing what to do about those contradictions.

Back in the early 1990s, when I had no computer, a longtime friend told me about the Spirit & Truth website. I went to my sister-in-law's house to use her computer to gain access to the site, and that "click" has changed my life in ways I could never have imagined. I knew for the first time that I was going to have access to information that would set me free.

My first bookstore order from this ministry was for more than \$800, and my desire to know more continues to grow daily. The love, patience, and help I experienced at my first Spirit & Truth Fellowship Bible Study Camp was an experience that helped me learn to use Bible Works 7.0, a great research tool.

My family and I thank God daily for the ministry's teachers and the staff at the Home Office. Although under staffed and working in crowded conditions, they continue to do their best for the Body of Christ, and of course for God and our Lord Jesus.

As for the importance of the websites, remember that **2 Corinthians 4:4** says, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." We must continue to fight the good fight! Since I first visited TruthOrTradition.com in 2001, it has continued to grow in ways that I know have blessed many. It is through the financial support of this ministry's Partners and Contributors that this ministry functions, and we are proud to be among them.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

If this ministry can reach people like my family via the Internet, I know it can reach many others around the world. Let's continue to serve those who are looking for Truth.

In Him,
Carlos, Coretta, Chalise, Chanel, and Chad Rodriguez
Hampton, Virginia.

Freedom from Behind Bars

by Grady B. Rogers

[This is the fifth in a series of columns written by Grady, an inmate at an Indiana correctional institution, and a member of John Lynn's weekly prison fellowship until he was moved to another facility.]

Galatians 2:19-21

(19) For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.

(20) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

(21) I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

We are not righteous because of what we do or do not do; we are righteous because of what Christ did—period.¹ However, that does not give us a license to sin. Because of our love for our Lord Jesus we live according to the Word. When we do mess up, we repent, turn around, and get back on track.

Each column of *Freedom Behind Bars* builds upon the previous columns, and I pray you will follow the whole series, as my goal is to help my Christian brothers and sisters understand me and others who are in a prison system. There is a tremendous need for the Good News that we in Spirit & Truth Fellowship have to be brought to those behind bars, and for us as Christians to show felons how to live successful lives in all categories. Not everyone in prison should be here, and even for those who should be, God is a God of second chances. As per Matthew 25:35-40, we must take an active role to make a difference for them, because "Truth Matters."

I graduated from high school in 1979. I did not see the necessity of going to college nor did I have the means to do so. Consequently, I went to work as a restaurant manager for Taco Tico. I got married at age 19, and thought the only thing necessary for a successful marriage was to marry a Christian, which I did. In 1980 I went to work as an assistant manager at a Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers. I worked my way up to store manager, supervisor, and then to training managers.

I was very, very successful, to the extent that Wendy's wrote a big article in their national magazine about how low my manager and employee turnover was compared to the national average. I ran at about 45% annual turnover, while the national average was about 250%. The company used me to go into stores that were not doing well, and I would turn them around very quickly.

In 1984, while still employed by Wendy's I began to buy homes. The country was in a recession, and my local area was in a depression. I saw the opportunity to accumulate real estate below market price and rent it out until the economy turned around. By 1987 I had produced significant profits and equity, so I left Wendy's (despite their pleading with me to stay and making me an unbelievable offer, especially for someone only 26 years old) and began to work for myself in real estate, as well as a variety of other business ventures. While I was at Wendy's, I witnessed to many people about the Lord, but I could see a far greater opportunity to help people in their marriages, finances, and spiritual lives by being in real estate, so I launched out on my own. [To be continued...]

SIDE NOTE: In the last couple of weeks, I led two more guys to the Lord. Please pray for Chris and Ron, who are now part of our family and who are coming to a knowledge of the truth. God continues to open doors for me to witness to inmates, staff, and even people outside this prison. He is giving me favor and I am using it for His

purposes. Please pray for me to help others find *freedom behind bars*. [Please send any questions or comments to Spirit & Truth Fellowship and I will gladly reply.]

Note:

1. Read our booklet *Righteousness - Every Christian's Gift from God* at TruthOrTradition.com/Righteousness

Articles of Interest:

Carefree - Fruitful and Unfruitful Thinking - TruthOrTradition.com/carefree

Finding Happiness in an Unhappy World - TruthOrTradition.com/finding

The Armor of God - Stand! - TruthOrTradition.com/armor

Failing Forward - TruthOrTradition.com/failing

Facing Trials with Joy

by Carolyn Pais

Do you have a serious problem? Is there a difficult circumstance in your life that is causing you to lose sleep? If so, take a moment to smile and be glad about it. Okay, so you think that's weird. Well, take a look at this:

James 1:2

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

I just said, "smile and be glad"! God says to "consider it **pure joy**"!!!!

Over the years and many trials of many kinds, I've realized that the "worry myself sick" approach or the "if I would have..., beat myself up approach are both fruitless. Actually, the word "torture" best describes them. On the other hand, I have found that asking "why" can be beneficial to a certain degree, usually to learn from a mistake. But to stay in the "whys," spending hours thinking and rethinking why you are experiencing this trial can also waste precious time and be, well, more torture. Besides, a good portion of our trials are due to the fact that we are in a spiritual battle¹ and we have an Adversary² who wants to see a big "L" looming over us, "L for Loser"!

Here's a thought. If you're the analyzing type (or even if you're not), think about why we should "count it pure joy." In 2 Corinthians 12:10a, Paul said: "That is **why**, for Christ's sake, I **delight** in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties...." By the way, do any of those words describe your problem? It's obvious that there is a reason why we should and can "delight" or "consider it pure joy" when we face a trial.

So let's start in James 1:3, which begins with the word that usually starts off the answer for all "why" questions: "**because** you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance." The next verse tells us why it is so important to persevere during a trial: "Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Surely you do not want to be immature, incomplete, and always lacking something, so consider it pure joy when you face difficult circumstances, because persevering through them is causing you to become the person you truly want to be! Perseverance, doing what is right even when it's hard, produces character (Rom. 5:3 and 4.) Every person of great character persevered! The opposite of perseverance is to give in and well, sin (lie, cheat, rage, slander, stay bitter, sulk... I could go on and on!) The next verse is extremely helpful.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Trials come in many shapes and sizes, and wisdom is a key ingredient for standing strong in your tribulation. Much of what we are to do during a trial is clearly written in the pages of God's Word. Sometimes, though, we need specific instructions, so ask God, and He will tell you "without finding fault," even if our foolishness got us in the predicament we are in! Isn't that wonderful?

There is another reason to delight while in a trial.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

Who would not want to see Jesus Christ help them take care of their problem? Our Lord’s grace is sufficient for us, no matter how difficult our situation is. His help is always enough to get us through. The best part is watching him do it!

A couple of years ago I started a journal called, “Grace Abounds,” which is a record of events that took place because of God’s grace, such as answers to prayers and the unusual ways they came to pass. Besides delighting in seeing what He does in circumstances that I am powerless to make right, I love recording the praise report! As I write, I usually notice even more details that could have been only through divine intervention. This has helped me “...boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses...” Now when a challenge comes my way, I think about the joy I will have recording how the grace of my Lord got me through.

So when difficulties come your way, smile, be glad, count it pure joy, and be determined to persevere, to do what’s right. Remember you are not alone, for Jesus Christ’s power is available to you. Ask for help; his grace is sufficient to get you through. You can rejoice because as you persevere, you are preparing for a great praise report!

Notes:

1. For further study on the spiritual battle, visit TruthOrTradition.com/warfare
2. Does the Devil truly exist? Visit TruthOrTradition.com/Devil

Did you know that we have two topics dedicated to helping you become like Christ?

For more info visit TruthOrTradition.com/liketopic

Also, visit TruthOrTradition.com/liketopic2

Figures of Speech

Asyndeton & Polysyndeton

by John W. Schoenheit

The ability to communicate by words is one thing that sets apart mankind from all other creatures. God is the Author of language, and no one has ever used language as precisely as God does in the Bible, including His use of figures of speech. When most people say, “a figure of speech,” they are speaking in general terms of something that is not true to fact. However, genuine “figures of speech” are legitimate grammatical and lexical forms that add emphasis and feeling to what we say and write. Recognizing and properly interpreting the figures of speech in the Bible has many advantages. It helps us to understand the true meaning of Scripture and enables us to more fully enjoy the richness of the Word of God. It is important that we become at least somewhat familiar with the figures of speech in Scripture, of which there are more than 200 varieties.¹

In this issue of *The Sower* we are going to cover two contrasting figures, *Asyndeton* and *Polysyndeton*, which we might refer to in English as, “No Ands” and “Many Ands.” Mankind has always used lists and/or referred to multiple things in a single sentence, and so grammatical rules have arisen in each language to communicate how the list should be written. The standard grammatical practice in Hebrew, Greek, and English is to write the list and place the word “and” before the last item. Thus, we would write, “When you go to the grocery store, get milk, eggs, butter, **and** bread.” We do not write, “...get milk **and** eggs **and** butter **and** bread,” nor do we write, “...get milk, eggs, butter, bread.”

The proper rules of grammar for making lists or stating things in sequence opens a door of opportunity for the figures of speech *Asyndeton* and *Polysyndeton*. From God’s perspective, there are three ways He considers lists. First, if each item in the list is important, but not especially emphasized, then He uses proper grammar. Second, if each item in the list is individually important and especially emphasized, then He uses the figure of speech *Polysyndeton*, placing an “and” before each item. Third, if the items in the list are not to be individually emphasized, but instead what is important is the general sense of the list, or a concluding statement that occurs afterward, He uses the figure of speech *Asyndeton*, which does not have an “and” before the final item in the list.

Asyndeton

Asyndeton purposely leaves off the “and” that would ordinarily connect the last two items in the list, making the list seem to run by very quickly to its conclusion, thus emphasizing the conclusion. For example:

Who to invite

In Luke 14:13 and 14, Jesus said, “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Proper grammar would have placed an “and” between “the lame” and “the blind” in verse 13. By not putting the “and” in the sentence, the list runs along to its conclusion: “and you will be blessed.” Jesus was not emphasizing the individuals to invite, as if a blind person which he mentioned, was more important than, say, a deaf person or a mentally ill person that he did not. He was emphasizing that if you invited that type of person, you would be blessed. The point in *Asyndeton* is not the individual members in the list, but the sense of the list and/or its conclusion.

Out of the heart

Mark 7:21-23 (ESV)

(21) For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

(22) coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

(23) All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

To be proper grammar, there should be an “and” between “pride” and “foolishness” in verse 22. Not putting it there deemphasizes the individual sins and emphasizes the conclusion—that such things defile the person. We all know there are many things that defile a person that Jesus did not mention in this particular list. Unfortunately, some versions, such as the NIV, try to “help” the English reader by adding the word “and” between “pride” and “foolishness,” but that obscures the point God is trying to make. Many lists in the Bible have the final “and,” and this one could have it if God had wanted it. Adding the final “and” does not help the Bible reader, it obscures truth.

The Fruit of the spirit

Galatians 5:22 and 23 (ESV)

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit² is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

(23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

It is so difficult to walk in the fullness of the fruit of the spirit that we Christians put great emphasis on each individual fruit. However, we should note that from God’s standpoint, they are each part of a list that runs to the conclusion, “against such things there is no law.” The “such things” should alert us to the fact that there are other wonderful fruit of the spirit that are not mentioned here, such as perhaps holiness or generosity. The new spiritual nature we received when we got born again leads us to godliness in all aspects of life, which is why in another place we read about the fruit of righteousness (Amos 6:12; Heb. 12:11; James 3:18). There is no law of God, and there should be no law of man, against living a godly lifestyle. We should add that, as in the previous example, the NIV and some other versions add the word “and” to the fruit of the spirit, obscuring the truth of what God is trying to say.

Polysyndeton

In contrast to *Asyndeton* (No Ands), in which no item in the list is specifically emphasized, God uses *Polysyndeton* (Many Ands) when He wants to emphasize each item in the list. For example:

Who to invite

Our first example of *Polysyndeton* is in stark contrast to the first example of *Asyndeton*, in which Jesus was making the point that if you invite those who are normally not invited, you will be blessed. After that teaching, he told a parable to further clarify his point. In the parable, a homeowner made a great banquet and invited his guests, but they all made excuses for not coming. The homeowner was outraged, and told his servants: “...Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor **and** crippled **and** blind **and** lame” (Luke 14:21- ESV). In this case, the homeowner, in his anger, wanted his servants to bring each kind of person who seemed the least likely to be invited to such a feast. The homeowner did not want any unfortunate person left out, so he emphasized each category. Again, the NIV and some other versions are unhelpful because they translate the *Polysyndeton* out of the text.

Famine

Haggai 1:11 (KJV)

And I called for a drought upon the land, **and** upon the mountains, **and** upon the corn, **and** upon the new wine, **and** upon the oil, **and** upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, **and** upon men, **and** upon cattle, **and** upon all the labour of the hands.

In this case, the severity of the famine is pointed out by emphasizing each thing that will be affected by it. Again, many modern versions do not pay attention to the *Polysyndeton*, and translate the *Polysyndeton* out of the Bible.

Witnesses

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem **and** in all Judea **and** Samaria, **and** to the end of the earth.”

Christians are supposed to share their Christian faith with others, and every single place on earth where people live is important to God and must be reached with the Good News. God drives home that point with this important *Polysyndeton*.

One conclusion we can certainly draw from this study is that if the English-reading Christian is going to get what God is trying to communicate from the Bible, it is imperative that translators do a good job in bringing the Hebrew and Greek into English. When they do not, astute students of the Bible should take the time to make a marginal note so as not to miss God’s emphasis when they read the Bible.

Notes:

1. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1968).
2. The word “spirit” in this verse refers to the new nature in each Christian, so it is not capitalized.

For an 8 part video series on Tools for Basic Bible Study, visit TruthOrTradition.com/tools

For many more figures of speech used in the Bible visit TruthOrTradition.com/figures

Also, for Keys to Understanding the Bible, visit TruthOrTradition.com/keys

The Miracle of a Seed

by John Lynn

The theme of this issue of *The Sower* is the Fruit of the Spirit. When we hear of “fruit,” we might think of its prerequisite, a seed. Think about holding a single apple seed in the palm of your hand. It doesn’t look very impressive, very appealing, or very tasty, does it?

Nonetheless, you are holding a miracle in your hand. Of course, if you keep holding it, you will never see the miracle come to pass or savor its benefits. That’s right, you need to bury it in the ground. And what happens if you do? The life that is in that seed takes root and produces A LOT OF APPLES. One estimate said that an apple tree will produce several thousand apples in its lifetime. Think about piling up all those apples next to that one little brown seed, from which they all came into being. Oh no, *that’s* not a miracle.

Genesis 3:15 is the first reference in Scripture to its subject from thereon: **Jesus Christ**, and what is he called? The “seed” of the woman. This powerfully reminds us that if he obeyed God and walked out his ministry to mankind all the way to the Cross, he would be buried in the ground, come forth to new life, and produce millions of regenerated humans after his kind. **John 12:23-27** shows how that vision motivated Jesus to endure what he did for us.

John 12:23-27

(23) Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

(24) I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

(25) The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

(26) Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

(27) “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

The good news of the Gospel is that once a person confesses Jesus as Lord and believes in his heart that God raised him from the dead (**Rom. 10:9**), he is born again of God’s **incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23)** and is **guaranteed** of having everlasting life when the Lord Jesus comes for us. Even if a Christian dies before Christ comes to meet us in the air, that spiritual seed will bear fruit in a new body at the Lord’s appearing. Jesus promised that as The Seed, he would give life to all who believe in him:

John 5:25 and 26

(25) I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

(26) For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have **life in himself**.

The chief property of a seed is that it has life in itself. And now that glorious life of our Savior dwells within the “earthen vessel” of each person who has made him Lord. Despite our sinful nature, we have limitless potential to be like our Father and our Lord. Once we are born into God’s family, He wants us to feed on His Word and grow strong so that we live a powerful Christian life and manifest the heart of the Lord Jesus. And we can.

For further study please read our booklet, *Becoming a Christian: Why? What? How?* At TruthOrTradition.com/salvation

Fuel for the Fire

Ya Can't Find Something That Was Never Lost!

by Criston Anderson

For some time now, I have wondered where the Lord has placed me in the Body. Perhaps I am an ear, eye, leg, or toe. Which, if any, of the “equipping ministries”¹ have been given to me? The Word says that the Lord Jesus gave ministries to men and women to build up the Church.

Ephesians 4:11-13

(11) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

(12) to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

(13) until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

There’s a lot of talk today in Christianity about finding/discovering one’s ministry. Countless books have been written and many teachings have been made available for Christians to chew on—all to answer the question, “How do I *find* my ministry?”² For some reason, the use of the word *find* threw me off.

If we have to find our ministry, where is it hiding? Is it something that we must achieve or obtain? Must we climb the highest mountain of faith, swim across the deepest sea of forgiveness, discover the hidden cave of leadership, or tunnel far beneath the earth’s surface where we will then be graced with a ministry from the Lord? Wait a minute, I thought it was a *gift*. “It was **he** who **gave** . . .” Sometimes, things that are actually very simple can become complicated because of a small focus error. Instead of becoming focused on finding our specific ministries, would it not be more beneficial to stay focused on seeking the Lord? As we submit to Jesus as the Head of the Body and bear the fruit of walking by the spirit, then we will naturally walk into the ministry to which God has called us. It’s so simple, but so true. “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:30).

An apple tree doesn’t exactly *try* to produce apples, nor does a peach tree *strive* to produce its peaches. The fruit of a tree grows naturally as the tree itself becomes rooted and is nourished with sunlight and water. If I am a Criston-tree, then as I become rooted and grounded in the Word and soak up the “Sonlight” of God, I will bear Criston-fruit in my season. I am who God made me to be, and I have what the Lord intended for me to have. For example, I won’t have to *strive* to prophesy if God has given me the ministry of a prophet. Sure, the Lord may have to build my confidence through trial and error as I learn to hear his voice, but eventually I will notice that members of the Body truly respond well when I prophesy.

The same is true for every kind of ministry available, and for every Christian’s walk. A ministry is something we are given so that we are able to bless the Body of Christ. It will develop on its own as we draw closer to God. And until the Lord reveals to us what our ministries are, we can, trust in the LORD with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding; in all our ways acknowledge him, and he will make our paths straight (Prov. 3:5 and 6). All the different kinds of trees that bear different kinds of fruit have the same basic needs in order to grow: ground, water, sunlight, and some carbon dioxide. Likewise, as each of us becomes mature in Christ, we will serve the Body with what is naturally produced by our faith. Let’s be who we are in the Body of Christ!

My new focus is to boldly manifest the spirit of God and grow up in Christ to see what the Lord will bless me with as I continue to be faithful to our God and Father.³ There is no need for me to complicate the process of finding my ministry; it is actually a brilliantly smooth maturing of my walk in the spirit. The same is true for you. Let's continue to serve God and His people with everything we have to give in full confidence that "...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

Notes:

1. Ephesians 4:11 mentions five specific ministries in the Church that are especially given by the Lord Jesus to prepare and equip Christians for service to God. Scripture does not refer to these ministries collectively by any particular name, so different Christian groups have referred to them in different ways. Some call these five ministries (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) "gift ministries," but that is misleading because each Christian has a gift ministry, that is, a ministry he or she is to carry out in the Body of Christ. "Ministry" simply means "service," and every Christian has been specifically enabled and empowered to serve. These five ministries have also been called "ascension gift ministries," but again, after his ascension Jesus gave each Christian a ministry (Eph. 4:8). The Word of God says that the purpose for these five ministries is "for the equipping" of the believers (Eph. 4:12-NASB), and many other versions recognize that "equip" or "equipping" is an excellent translation in this verse. Whenever possible, we of Spirit & Truth Fellowship do our best to use the vocabulary of the Word of God to describe the spiritual realities in the Bible, and so we refer to the five ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11 as "equipping ministries." For further study please visit TruthOrTradition.com/equipping
2. To watch a 30 minute video on How To Find Your Ministry visit TruthOrTradition.com/find
3. For further study on all nine manifestations of the spirit visit TruthOrTradition.com/9

Dear Sower

Website Feedback

Thank you for putting together such an informative website.

I have spent time reading about the manifestations of holy spirit. In the past several months they have been the focus of my studies and application of God's Word. I have not been disappointed in my expectations and have received an abundance of revelation and several significant impartations have occurred. I am planning to take my time and study more.

Thanks again,
Will Brooks

Editor's Note:

For further study on all nine manifestations of the spirit visit TruthOrTradition.com/9

Very first Sower Issue

WOW! Let me say it again! WOW!

I just got my 1st issue of *The Sower* and I am very impressed. I have not finished reading it yet but I find it very interesting and informative! Thank you so much!

God bless you and thanks again for that free gift! I don't think I would have ever understood manifestation versus gift without your magazine!

Rhonda
Grand Blanc, Michigan

Editor's Note:

To read the May/June issue of *The Sower* that is dedicated to the manifestations of the spirit, visit STFonline.org/backissues

Video Teaching Ministry

Praise God for your teachings! They have helped me with many questions and encouraged me to read the Word more often.

Also, your video teachings are brilliant. I am able to understand God's Word so much easier.

Chris Marlow

Editor's Note:

To watch our teaching videos online visit TruthOrTradition.com/video

A Better Pastor

Thanks and thanks and thanks and thanks again.

Your informative lessons are helping me be a better Pastor. Thank you for being online (TruthOrTradition.com) and allowing me to grow through the knowledge God has given you. You are an asset to all that come in contact with you. Great insight!

May God continue His blessings on your Ministry,
Pastor Miriam Keller

MySpace & iPod

Thank you soooo much! I cannot express in words how happy I am that your stuff is available to watch for free. The teachings are awesome!!!

Thanks for putting them on your MySpace page. I am going to put them on my iPod!!! Bless you!!!!

Marilyn
New York

Editor's Note:

To visit us on MySpace, please go to MySpace.com/TruthOrTradition

Blessings from New Zealand

WOW!!!! Just stumbled onto your site (TruthOrTradition.com).

I prayed for a leading, and voila, I found you guys. Just wanted to encourage you, as I've just been chomping away on your teachings on the apostle/apostolic and then on the Sacred Secret. I'm so full I need to go away and digest it --- ha ha ha!

I pray for you and this ministry and an increase of favor for you as you continue in this walk, be blessed from a Kiwi (New Zealander) sister at the other side of the globe.

Blessings,
Tracey Fawcett
New Zealand

Editor's Note:

Every day we receive at least 2,000 visits from all over the globe. Countries like China, Russia, Iran, India, and yes, New Zealand.