



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH



Fruit

OF THE SPIRIT

HOLY SPIRIT  EMPHASIS WEEK
2014



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Message

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This Holy Spirit Emphasis Week, January 11-18, 2014 is entitled “The Fruit of the Spirit” and is based on Galatians 5: 22, 23. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is bombarded on every side by fleshly forces such as secularism, modernism, and liberalism. Natural means to withstand such challenges against the Church will be to no avail.

This is the reason why this special week is based on the spiritual disciplines that the Apostle Paul addressed to the Church in Galatia. As a church organization and as individuals, we will be able to study and to mediate upon topics such as, The Power of Love, The Premium of Joy, the Prize of Peace, the Preciousness of Longsuffering, the Picture of Gentleness, the Promise of Goodness, the Product of Faith, the Process of Temperance.

Your commitment to this spiritual experience will guarantee tremendous benefits to the church family. Let us continue our quest for revival and reformation so that we can be ready, helping others to be prepared to meet our King in glory. Maranatha!

Kern Tobias
President, Caribbean Union Conference



The Power of Love

SABBATH JANUARY 11 | PS. DESMOND JAMES

INTRODUCTION:

I once read a story about a little boy who was a patient in a hospital. As the nurses tended his wounds and nursed him back to health, they would conclude by saying, “I love you.” One day, the little lad asked his nurse, “What is love?” For one moment, the nurse was paralyzed and stunned as she struggled to define love. Then finally she pulled him to her chest, squeezed him, kissed him, and said, “That is love!” The little boy looked up with a sparkle in his eyes and his childish dimples rippled into a broad smile as he exclaimed, “I like love!”

Yes, we all like love! From my house to your house to God’s house, we all like love. Yet, love is one of the most neglected phenomena in the world and the church today. Our world is dominated by a loveless culture. We hate, we hurt, and we destroy. You name the problem in our world and in our lives and it spells the absence of or the improper understanding of love: Be it domestic discord, packed prisons, crowded courts, national terrorism, political corruption, economic injustice, human exploitation, family feud, broken relationships, . . . You name it! It all reverts to the fact that people have not learnt to live according to the laws of love.

Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself” (Luke 10:27). We must demonstrate unbounding love for the body of believers and humanity. The rulers of the world prefer the enforcement of power over the demonstration of love. To them, love is too simple, too sentimental, or too weak. They fear that, if they speak of love, they will become vulnerable to the enemies’ attacks.

How many Christians have been known primarily as a people of love? They shall know that we are Christians by our love. God intended it to be our outstanding mark of identification. What is the first thing we tell others when we begin to explain who we are and why we do what we do? Is it the enormity and vitality of our love?

We take more pride in boasting of our numbers than in boasting of our love. We would rather make our budgets fatter than make our love greater. We would rather be steadfast to Robert's Rules of Order than to the consistent obedience of Jesus' command to love one another. If love was the primary criterion for holding office in the church, would we qualify? Someone rightly said that we all need transformation from the love of power to the power of love.

WHAT IS LOVE?

Love is such an overworked word. It is so often used that it is abused and misused: so much so that when we hear it, it does not elicit the attractive force of the reality and vitality of love. It is often difficult to talk about love because it has been used to define anything from the most frivolous impulse to the most sublime commitment. It is easily lost in ambiguities, often not readily understood, or not clearly expressed. It crisscrosses a wide range of definitions from representing the paradigm of the ideal relationship to the flippant tongue and careless words which make light and cheap what is holiest and highest. We love our veggie burger! We love our car! And yes, we love our spouse.

GOD IS LOVE

The greatest news in our world today is that God is love. 1 John 4:16 declares; "God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him" (NIV). John says that God is love. God and love are inseparable. We cannot have God without love and we cannot have love without God. God is love and there is no way to relate to God except in the ways, works, and words of love. It is the essence of our being.

BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). John's invitation is not just simply intended to emphasize the importance of what follows, but it is a distinct command to do the thing, to look, to look again and to ever look and live in the habit of devout contemplation of that infinite and wondrous love of God. What John calls us to contemplate with wonder and gratitude is not only the fact of this marvelous love, but also the glorious end to which it has

been given us. All this lavish bestowal of love, unspeakable as it is, may be regarded as having one great end—that man should become, in the deepest sense, His children. Let us stop and really open our hearts to these enormous realities! Ponder this classic summation in the book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

“Oh, the mystery of redemption! The love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of the love that ‘passeth knowledge’? Through endless ages, immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore (p. 63.3). Can you take it in?”

THE LOVE THAT IS GIVEN

We are called upon to come with our little vessel to measure the contents of the great ocean, to plumb with our short line the infinite abyss, and not only to estimate the quantity, but the quality of that love, which in both respects, surpasses all our means of comparison and conception. Properly speaking, we can do neither the one nor the other, for we have no line long enough to sound its depth, and no experience which will give us a standard with which to compare its quality. Such love is without parallel. But John would have us do all that we can do. That is, look and ever look at the workings of that love until in beholding we become changed by love. We can no more “behold what manner of love that the Father has bestowed on us” than we can look with undimmed eyes right into the middle of the sun, But we can in some measure imagine the tremendous and beneficent forces that ride forth on its beams and reach their journey’s end unwearied and ready for their task as when they began. However, the imagination faints in trying to grasp its enormity. Even though we are ninety odd millions of miles from the center of the system, yet we are warmed by its beams, and touched for good by its power in a thousand ways. How mighty the Power which produces these effects! In like manner, who can gaze into the fiery depths of the infinite Godhead, into ardors of immeasurable, incomparable, and inconceivable love? But we can look at and measure its activities, we can see what it does, and so we can, to some degree, understand it, and feel after all that we have a measure for the immeasurable, and a comparison for the incomparable. Thus, we can behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.

LOVE AND THE CROSS

According to John, the most wonderful revelation to every man's heart of the depth of the Divine heart lies in the gift of Jesus Christ. "For God so love the world that He gave His only begotten son" (John 3:16). Inspiration asserts that "the more we study the Divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern the innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child" (Steps to Christ, p. 15) That is why we call it the wondrous cross. Ah, He carried so much love with Him to Calvary. "My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride" (Watts, 1707, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross). My egotism or my arrogance does not mean anything. I turn to the cross and I see there a love which shrinks from no sacrifice, but gives Him up to death for us all. I turn to the cross and see there a love which is evoked by no lovableness on my part, but comes from the depth of His own Infinite Being who loves because He must and who must because He is God. I turn to the cross and see there manifested a love which sighs for recognition and which desires nothing of me but the repayment of my poor affection, and longs to see its own likeness in me. I see there a love that will not be put away by sinfulness, short comings, or evil but pours its treasures on the unworthy like sunshine on a dunghill. I look at the cross and see there mirrored Jesus' loving care. His care cries aloud to every ear in tones of more beseeching entreaty and imperative command to 'behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.' Yes, it is stronger than death and sin. It is armed with all power. It is boundless and endless in its measure—measureless; and in its quality, transcendent – for God's life is God's love. It is His great gift to me. By the death of shame and suffering, He paid man's ransom. What self-sacrificing Love is this!

THE POWER OF THE LOVE THAT MADE US SONS

The Son of God became the son of man so that the sons of men may become the sons of God. Through transgression, the sons of men became subjects of Satan. Through the faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the sons of Adam may become the sons of God. What a value this places on man! Inspiration concludes that it is 'Theme for the most profound meditation' (Steps to Christ, p. 15).

Of Christ's relationship to His people, there is a beautiful

illustration in the laws given to Israel. When, through poverty, a Hebrew had been forced to part with his patrimony and to sell himself as a bondservant, the duty of redeeming him and his inheritance fell to the one who was nearest of kin (Lev. 25:25, 47-49; Ruth 2:20; Desire of Ages, p. 327~3). The national law enabled a person who lost all credibility of having anything at all to be redeemed. All his property and his freedom could be redeemed by his next of kin. So, the work of redeeming us and our inheritance lost through sin fell upon Him who is “nearest of kin” unto us. It was to redeem us that He became our Kinsman.

God came nearer to the human race than any other creature so that the human race may be endowed with Divine nature. Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or even lover is the Lord, our Saviour. He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, and our Brother. Jesus “is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11). ‘To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to be the sons of God.’ (John 1:12) Thank God, sons who became prodigals and slaves can become sons again.

WHEN LOVE LEFT CHURCH AND WENT DOWN THE JERICHO ROAD.

The price paid for our redemption—the infinite sacrifice of our heavenly Father in giving His Son to die for us—should give us exalted conceptions of what we may become through Christ. But it also means two things: every human being is related to every other human being and “whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1John 4:21).

Love is demonstrative! It is best demonstrated instead of debated. Jesus illustrated this best in a magnificent story which began with a theological discussion on the meaning of eternal life and concluded in a concrete expression of love on a dangerous road. Jesus is asked a question by a lawyer who has been trained in the details of Jewish Law, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life” (Luke 10:25)? The question is not so much designed for information but intended to trap Him, but we cannot trap Jesus.

Jesus answered the scholar’s question with a question, “What do you read in the law?” To which the thoroughly-schooled lawyer shot back, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” It was the familiar Shema of Israel and that he had known as

a memory verse from kindergarten days. However, he added a more familiar line from the ancient law just to be safe, “And thy neighbor as thyself” (vs. 27).

Like us today, the lawyer wanted to turn the conversation of love into an abstract theological discussion. But Jesus, determined not to be caught in the “paralysis of analysis,” pulls the question from mid-air and places it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Jesus, the master storyteller, weaves a story straight out of the daily news about a Jewish victim, a Jewish clergyman, a Jewish Elder, and a Samaritan businessman. This man was considered a half-breed from a people with whom the Jews had no dealing.

A “certain man,” Jesus exclaims, went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers who stripped him, beat him, and departed leaving him half dead. By chance, a certain Pastor appeared but passed by on the other side. Later, an Elder came close, looked at him, and passed by. Finally, a certain man who was of a different ethnic class, faith, and religious persuasion appeared. When he saw the wounded man, he was moved with compassion and love. He administered first aid and placed him on his beast. Today, he would have put him in his SUV. He took him to an inn and paid the host for his needs with the guarantee to take care of the excess if such proved insufficient. When Jesus gets to the end of the story, Jesus turns to the lawyer and recasts the lawyer’s question. “Which one of these is thy neighbor?” And when the lawyer wouldn’t even mention the name but instead mumbled, “The one who showed him mercy;” Jesus drove home the punch line, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). In *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen G. White gives a rather terse but poignant summary of the moral of this story. She says “Thus the question, ‘who is my neighbor?’ is forever answered. Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class determination. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbour is everyone who is the property of God!” (p. 503).

HOW LOVE BEHAVES

Jesus demonstrated in this story that love is not a passive commitment to a particular creed but a dynamic participation, a concrete expression of compassion on life's roadsides. There are three behaviors that should define and shape our love ethic:

Love is not myopic

Love is not colour blind. It looks beyond the externals. The Pastor and Elder saw only a bleeding body. They did not see a human being. The tragedy in life is that our cultural blinders have caused us to see people as entities, numbers, and labels. We see men and women as Kittitians, Trinidadians, Antiguan, Barbadians, Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Pentecostals, etc. we fail to see them as fellow human beings who are made from the same stuff that we are made of. We were moulded in the same Divine image. If the Samaritan had considered the wounded man as a Jew first, he would not have stopped, for the Jews were engaged in passive ethnic cleansing. He saw him as a human being—a brother—who was a Jew by accident.

The good neighbour looks beyond the externals and discerns those inner qualities that make all men human beings and brothers. Your neighbour may be a racist, a bigot, a homosexual, a drug addict, a drunkard, even a crooked politician. He or she is a certain man or woman on the many Jericho roads of life who needs our love. We are all in the same fix, the same mess - sin. Some of us are just in it more deeply than others. We are victims of the human condition which is fundamentally sinful. *Sin is an estrangement due to the lack of love or the improper love of self to the exclusion of God and of others.*

Love goes beyond the call of duty

The Samaritan did not just do what duty demanded, he did what he delighted in doing. With his own hands he bandaged his wounds and put him on his beast. He could have left him there or put him in front of the inn. Today, some of us would have put him in a taxi and paid for it not wishing to dirty our leather-seated vehicle, or we would have called the ambulance.

Love is more than pity. Pity looks down and responds with little impersonal concern. But love—compassion—gets down, and puts one's soul in it. When you put yourself in someone's place, feelings, pain, agony and burdens, you are not just doing something for them; you are doing something with them. His love did not just compliment. His love was complete.

LOVE IS RISKY

It could be inferred that the Priest and Levite did not stop because of many good reasons. Perhaps they were too busy with their pastoral and ecclesiastical agendas. Maybe they were afraid that they too may become victims. The Jericho road was a dangerous path which could expose them to unforeseen attacks.

The Priest and Levite asked themselves, 'if I stop, what will happen to me?' But the Samaritan asked himself, 'if I do not stop, what will happen to him?' Love always reverses the question! We often hesitate to love or demonstrate love because we ask ourselves what will happen to my job, my prestige, my status, or my good name. Jesus shows us that the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort but where he stands at times of challenges and controversy.

The true neighbour risks his privileges, his position, and even his life for the welfare of others. In the dangerous valleys and the hazardous highways of life, love will lift some bruised and beaten brother to a higher and nobler life.

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

What's love got to do with it? Everything! For in essence, the gospel is "go make lovers of all men!" Go demonstrate, authenticate, and elucidate the power of love in your life!

There is no real religious experience which does not express itself in love – Music without love is noise; worship without love is pretense; preaching without love is empty; praying without love is selfish; work without love is drudgery; faith without love is fanaticism; intelligence without love is arrogance; competence without love is fear; power without love is oppression; freedom without love is chaos; life without love is death; truth without love is impossible; the Bible without love is incomprehensible; God without love is a contradiction in terms. The Church without love is nothing but a closed club of contented cronies.

In the First Century Church, it was the power of love that turned the Greco-Roman world upside down and transformed pagan culture into Christianity. They demonstrated and articulated unbounded love for the believers and for humanity at large. It was love, not the correctness of doctrine, not the rigor of logic, and not the perfection

of morals that astounded but attracted pagans to Christianity. The heathens were made to exclaim with wonder when they saw how the Christians loved one another for the heathens hated each other. Let us have an encore!

CALL

Let us go to the highways and byways of life and make lovers of all men! Jesus is the best example of what authentic love looks like and the Seventh-day Adventist Christian is the best example of the transforming power of love in one's life. I want to declare it with my lips and demonstrate it in my lifestyle. But before we can "do," we must "be." So I entreat you to look again. Behold! "See, from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet? Or thorns compose so rich a crown? ...Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all" (Watts, 1707, 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross').

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38 – 39).

*Pastor Desmond James
President, South Leeward Mission*

Children's corner

The CHRISTIAN TREE

The twins Dwayne and Denae were very excited, they had just moved to Myrtle Town where Daddy was assigned a new job. Today was their first Sabbath in the big church on the corner of the street. "I wonder if the Sabbath School children will be friendly to us." Dwayne whispered in his sister's ear as they came out of the car. Before Denae could answer, Mother was at the Primary Sabbath School room. A smiling teacher was at the door. She welcomed Mother, Dwayne and Denae and showed them where to sit.

On the large wall in the room was a beautiful banner with the words "THE CHRISTIAN TREE" written on it. Under the banner was a huge picture of a tree. Denae was curious as to what the banner meant. She did not have to wait for long for after the welcome the singing and the prayer; the teacher said that for the next few weeks they were going to study from the Bible the fruit that that Jesus wants those who love him to bear.

The class read from Galatians 5:22 and 23.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law"

A boy in the class was asked to read, Matthew 7: 16-20

"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."

Then Ms. Browne, the teacher said, "The "good fruit" that Jesus wants all Christians to bear is the fruit of love. Jesus wants us to love Him and to love all people.

"The Bible tells us in Galatians 5:22, that "...the fruit of Spirit is love", she said.

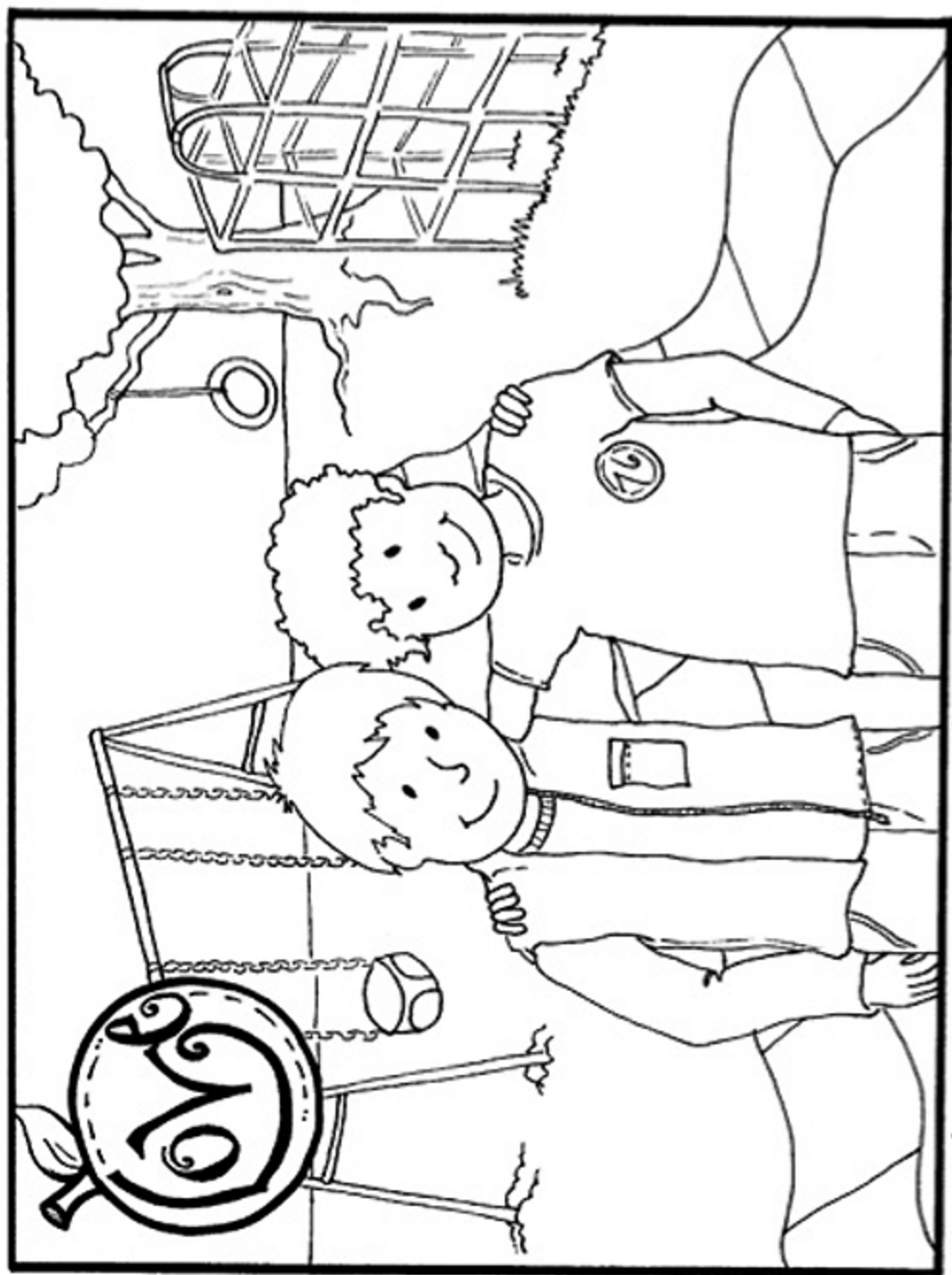
(Sing theme song)

ACTIVITY:

1. How can we show God that we love Him?
2. What can we do to let our parents and other family members know that we love them.
3. Tell us one thing you will do on this Sabbath to show that you are bearing the fruit of love

PRAYER:

Copy and Distribute the 'Love' coloring page to each child.





The Premium of Joy

SUNDAY JANUARY 12 | PS. TONEY MAPP

JOY AND PRAYER IN SUFFERING

Margaret Sangster Phippen wrote that in the mid-1950's her father, British minister W.E. Sangster, began to experience some uneasiness in his throat and he noticed a dragging in his leg. When he went to the doctor, he found that he had an incurable disease that caused progressive muscular atrophy. His muscles would gradually waste away, he was told; his voice would fail, and he would soon lose his ability to swallow.

Despite this diagnosis, Sangster threw himself into his work in the British home missions, figuring he could still write and he would have even more time for prayer. "Let me stay in the struggle Lord," he pleaded. "I don't mind if I can no longer be a general, but give me just a regiment to lead." He wrote articles and books, and helped organize prayer cells throughout England. "I'm only in the kindergarten of suffering," he told people who pitied him. Gradually Sangster's legs became useless. His voice went completely. But he could still hold a pen, albeit shakily.

On Easter morning, just a few weeks before he died, he wrote a letter to his daughter. In it, he said, "It is terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice to shout, "He is risen!" -- but it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout." (From a sermon by David Scudder, *The Four Hallelujah's*, 10/25/2009)

I have shared this story here because the joy I wish to talk about is not derived from favorable circumstances, nor is it the result of interjected periods of pleasure, neither is it always expressed as laughter. This is a different type of joy. This joy that is derived from the Holy Ghost and found in those who are possessed by him, and who have made Him their possession, is not sold in stores or peddled by pushers. This Joy is neither connected to present nor even to pleasant circumstances. This joy is so critical to have that the life lived without it bows too low to the grave, while the life that has it could never be enslaved. The Bible declares the fruit of the spirit is joy!

The fruit of the Spirit? First of all, let's talk about the concept of fruit that is here indicated. Years ago I heard someone say that love was the fruit and that joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, etc. were all seeds of that fruit. Given who I am, things like this must make analytical sense to me, so this fruit seed concept troubled me a lot. Instead, I found myself preferring the concept of fruit as a cluster of grapes. In this way a single grape is a representation of one characteristic outgrowth of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

One of the reasons why I am challenged with the idea of seed is the fact that most seeds in fruits are not edible and often they are not ingested. They must be spewed out of the mouth. They are not sweet. Moreover, they often serve as a type of barrier, if not a deterrent to the enjoyment of the succulent pulp. As far as I am concerned, this fruit of the Spirit is juicy stuff. If truth be told, if there is any fruit seed operations, it will be the struggle that I experience, seeking to retain the juicy pulp of the fruit of the Spirit in my mouth while trying to spit out the seed of sin. When it comes to the fruit of the Spirit, for me, it is all fruit.

Let me further add that no one could have the Spirit and not give evidence of the full cluster. Watch this: see how they are all connected. When you lose your love for someone, you lose your joy as well; out goes your peace. Suddenly your ability to take pressure or to suffer long just melts away. Since "they are the ones who are wrong" you can no longer find the low road of meekness, and goodness has abandoned you; your sleep gets affected and /or you begin to over eat or drink (comfort food): in has stepped intemperance. After a while you begin to wonder how you came so low. What happened to all this living by faith? Every single grape is implicated.

Let's turn our attention to joy. The fruit of the Spirit is joy. What is joy?

Joy is a state of mind and an orientation of the heart. It is a settled state of contentment, confidence and hope. It is something or someone that provides a source of happiness. It appears 88 times in the Old Testament in 22 books and 57 times in the New Testament in 18 books.

DEFINITION OF JOY

Webster's dictionary definition: 1) to experience great pleasure or delight: REJOICE, 2) the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires: DELIGHT.

Hebrew dictionary definition: 8057. *simchah, sim-khaw'*; from H8056 *blithesomeness or glee, (religious or festival):-- X exceeding (-ly), gladness, joy (-fulness), mirth, pleasure, rejoice (-ing).*

Greek dictionary definition: 5479. *chara, khar-ah'*; from G5463; *cheerfulness, i.e., calm delight:--gladness, X greatly, (X be exceeding) joy (-ful, -fully, -fulness, -ous).*

Definition of happiness - The comparison and contrast between happiness and joy may reveal that while at times they may behave alike (a sense of gladness), they are however, different in several respects.

Happiness is external. It's based on situations, events, people, places, thoughts and things. As one writer says, happiness puts all its eggs in someone else's basket, and hopes that outside situations, people, or events will align themselves with its expectations. When this goes well the end result is happiness.

Happiness is connected to the emotions and as such is easily upstaged by the arrival of a new situation, particularly one requiring or evoking a different emotional expression, like anger for example.

Joy on the other hand may only be philosophically connected to the emotions so as to help us define it as a feeling; but in reality, it is a gift which may better be seen as an attitude or state of mind. Joy is connected to the Holy Ghost. Joy is not dependent on external circumstances for its existence, nor on favourable conditions of continuity for its longevity. Good fortune does not even have to be 'resident' for joy to be 'president'.

Ellen White once said, *"The Lord designs that His people shall be happy, and He opens before us one source of consolation after another, that we may be filled with joy and peace in the midst of our present experience. We are not to wait until we shall get into heaven for brightness and comfort and joy. We are to have them right here in this life.... We miss much because we do not grasp the blessings that may be ours in our afflictions.....Our happiness comes not from what is around us, but from what is within us; not from what we have, but from what we are."*
– (ML 185.5)

HOW TO GET THIS JOY

The song writer said "this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me... the world didn't give it and the world can't take it away." The source of this joy, we have been saying, is the Spirit of God. The fruit

of the Spirit is joy, but this is not just a New Testament reality.

The Psalmist David expresses this truth this way in Psalm 16:8 – 11, “ I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope... Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”.

A slightly different rendering of the passage might read, “The only reason for my gladness and deep inner rejoicing, and for my immovability in spite of situations, is the fact that I have set the Lord constantly before me. You see, in His presence is fullness of joy and at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore, seeing He never leaves me in any doubt regarding the turns and twists of life”. Brethren the source of this joy is God Himself. To want this joy without wanting the Father, Son or Holy Spirit is self- defeating, both for time and eternity. David once said, “The Lord is my shepherd.” He then went on to show what the results of that are: he provides for me; he protects me, even when the paths of righteousness wind down into the valley of the shadow of death, I am not afraid. Even in the face of my enemies my cup runs over; and this is going to happen for the rest of my life so I am not going anywhere.

This joy is not the result of human effort or the pursuits of what some refer to as karma. It is a ‘present’ of his presence

In the 1930’s, Abraham Harold Maslow, an American professor of psychology, founded humanistic psychology. One of the things he created to explain his theory was a visual aid which he called the hierarchy of needs. This is a pyramid indicating the level of human needs and includes physical, emotional, and psychological needs. At the top of the pyramid is the high point of self-actualization. Here Maslow envisioned moments of extraordinary experience, known as peak experiences, profound moments of love, understanding, happiness, or rapture, during which a person feels more whole, alive, self-sufficient, and yet a part of the world. While I do not agree with any idea of man arriving at his best self apart from God, what is interesting to me is, that people who are said to have arrived at the top of their game are said to have grown past the pedestrian needs of food and friendship. They have found a purpose that is larger than themselves. They are more fulfilled by the focus on the other-self, and endure and achieve such greatness often in very grave, difficult and trying circumstances.

Three such individuals, well known to many, are Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Theresa. I will submit however, that what they accomplished and who they became cannot be separated from the place God had in their lives.

HOW TO KEEP THIS JOY

Jesus, speaking to his disciples in John chapter 15, points to the two most critically essential factors for keeping your joy. The first is to abide in him and the second is to obey his commandments. Both of these are predicated upon a love thing: the Father loving me and I loving you and you staying in love with me by your obedience to me. Then Jesus says something in verse 11 that must not be missed by today's disciples. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Jesus wants us to have joy that is full and joy that remains. In the face of so much that wants to empty your life and those things that walk out on you, you need a joy that is both full and that will remain. In this one text we find a joy that is abounding (speaks to its quality), abundant (speaks to its quantity), and at the same time abiding (speaks to longevity). What a joy this is.

REASONS WHY THE SPIRIT WANTS US TO HAVE JOY

1. It is essential for the setup in Christ

1 Pet.4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

2. It is essential for the set-backs in witnessing

Acts 13:49-52 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Everyone of us engaged in witnessing know first-hand the reality of rejection. But what keeps us going time and again is not that which has happened around us but what is happening in us. It is the joy of the Lord that is our strength. (Neh. 8:10) Even when the

setback to my witness is the result of my own shortcomings, I cannot get back to serving until I get back my joy.

David further makes the point that when sin had left him such, he could no longer hear joy nor gladness, so Psalm 51:8-12, he cries out, “Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit”.

Notice how he makes the connection between the Holy Spirit and joy in God’s salvation. 12 “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” It is like he was saying, please restore the joy and hold me up with the same spirit that can keep such joy in me. Now notice what follows in verse 13 “Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee”. Once the joy is restored, and I am upheld by your spirit, then..will I teach transgressors...This joy provides the hope of the come- back from the setback.

3. It is essential for keeping in focus, eyes that are set on glory

This side of Jordan, it is easy to lose focus on what really matters: heaven at last. Sickness and disease that seem to come from nowhere; the loss of a child or loved ones through death; broken homes and breaking marriages; pre marital complications of sex, STD’s and babies; academic and employment challenges especially for sabbath keepers. Add to this list the things people do to us and the things they say about us. This is so both within and without the church. It is enough to have many persons forget that they are SDA’s. I like to say they get their SDA mixed up and now they are SAD. But we are too close to the end for that. Keep the focus.

Here is how to do that: Heb. 12:2 “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”. Our safety is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and let the joy that is in us, which in troublesome times is displayed as hope, cry out to the joy that “is set before” us. Keep in mind that it will not always be like this. Trouble won’t last always. Death will not have the last say. “Weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning”. Psalm 30:5

The patriarch Job, in the face of all his losses demonstrated that he possessed this joy. It is only a secure, contented joy that could make him exclaim “though he slay me yet will I trust him”. Or “the lord giveth and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the lord”. But perhaps none more striking than when he exclaimed in Job 19:25-27 “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” This joy does not fear death

As a third-century man was anticipating death, he penned these last words to a friend: “It’s a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians-- and I am one of them.” *Today In The Word*, June, 1988, p. 18.

This joy is the attitude of the Divine Spirit, in the face of adversity which confuses the enemy. It sees as its goal, the will of God. This joy is the out-growth of faith and implicit trust that you are, despite of how it looks, traveling in the will of God. Such was the attitude possessed by the Apostle Paul when in 1Thes. 5:18 he declares “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Time and again he will say, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice.” (Phil. 4:4). And again in Rom.8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.”

LET NOTHING STEAL YOUR JOY

The story is told about a Master who illustrated a message to, and through a servant of his. “Do you promise to do whatever I tell you?” asked the Master gravely. “I swear I shall do anything.”

“Very well. How many animals do you have?” He replied, “A cow, a goat and six chickens.” “Take them all into the room with you. Then come back after a week.” The disciple was appalled. But he had promised to obey! So he took the animals in. A week later he came back, a pitiable figure moaning, “I’m a nervous wreck. The dirt! The stench! The noise! We’re all on the verge of madness!” “Go back,” said the Master, “and put the animals out.” The man ran all the way

home and came back the following day, his eyes sparkling with joy. “How sweet life is! The animals are out. The home is a paradise—so quiet and clean and roomy!” From One Minute Wisdom, Anthony De Mello

I end by telling you to put the ‘animals’ out. Everything that is making your life a burden and you know it doesn’t belong there, put it out. If it is making you and your place smell bad, put it out. If it keeps you from forgiving others or even asking them for forgiveness it needs to go. Every attitude that is robbing you of precious blessings; every thought that keeps you fretful and worried; if it keeps you from getting into God’s presence get rid of it. If it robs you of your joy and takes to Holy Spirit from you put it out.

As you put them out, and as you lose stuff keep in mind that whatever you go through here remember, all of it is just light affliction that worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And like Jesus, in the face of adversity, while the weight of the sins of the world (yours and mine) crushed out his life, looked ahead, so must we. The writer to the Hebrews described for us the secret of Jesus’ overcoming saying “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Heb 12:2

Keep your joy. Keep looking ahead. Something better is yet to come.

APPEAL

1. There are three groups of people here tonight those who have this joy and are determined to keep it; those who have had this joy but lost it; and those who never experienced such joy. If you belong to any of these categories please stand

2. If tonight you want to say, “Lord, please restore the joy, and uphold me with thy Holy Spirit”, leave where you are and come, I want to pray with you.

(Note to reader - end the prayer with these words found in Jude 1: 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.) Amen.

*Pastor Toney Mapp
President, Tobago Mission of SDA*

children's corner

When Dwayne and Denae entered their Primary Sabbath School room the next Sabbath morning, a picture of a very large soursop was on the tree that Ms. Browne called "The Christian Tree". On the soursop was a large label that had the word "LOVE" written on it. Ms. Browne told the class that all the true followers of Jesus, those who called themselves Christians bore the fruit of love in their lives. She also told the children, that "Love, the fruit of the Spirit, showed itself in many different ways.

To help the children understand this fruit of the Spirit, Ms. Browne took a huge ripe soursop from her bag. She broke a piece of the soursop and showed the children the segments inside. "Children", she said, "Each segment of this soursop helps to make this fruit a soursop. They are all part of the whole fruit." "So", she explained, "Those who are Jesus' true followers, will have His love in their lives. They will demonstrate this love by being joyful, having peace, being patient, gentle, good, faithful and self-controlled.

Once again the children read Galatians 5:22, 23 from their Bibles: ***"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."***

"When we love God and we love our fellow humans, our lives will be joyful, no matter what the situation we find ourselves in" Ms. Browne said. "Joy, the fruit of love, means that we are delighted and happy, no matter what happens to us, because we know that God loves and cares for us."

Nehemiah 8:10 tells us, ***"The joy of the Lord is our strength"***
(Have the children repeat this text, until they know it.)

THEME SONG

ACTIVITY

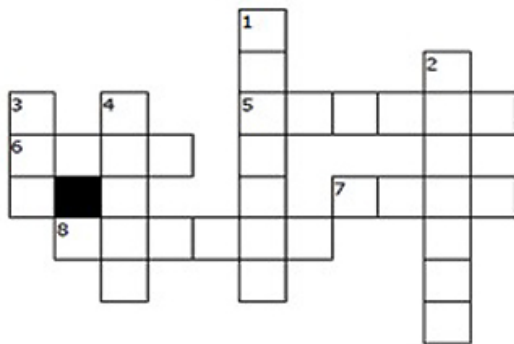
PRAYER:

1. Pair the children
2. Give each pair a scenario, and have them mime how they will demonstrate joy.
3. Sample scenarios
 - The family was planning to go to the beach, but heavy showers of rain began falling.
 - You studied all of this week's words for a test, and the teacher decided to give last week's spelling words for the test.
4. Distribute the worksheet to each child.

A Heart Full of Joy

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." John 15:11 (NKJV)

Puzzle is based on John 15:9-17



ACROSS

- One who has authority over another person
- To do what you are told; follow the rules
- To hold dear, to like or desire greatly
- A person that you like very much

DOWN

- An order which a person is expected to obey
- Someone that performs duties for a master
- A state of happiness or delight
- To gain knowledge, skill, or understanding

JOY
MASTER

OBEY
FRIEND

LOVE
LEARN

SERVANT
COMMAND



The Prize of Peace

MONDAY JANUARY 13 | PS. WAYNE ANDREWS

In the book of Galatians, chapter 5 verse 1 the Apostle Paul admonishes the churches in Galatia: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” The members were moving away from their Christian experience of righteousness by faith and charting a new course of righteousness by works. He is reminding them that faith sets men free to enjoy liberty in Christ. Freedom in Christ means: freedom to produce the fruits of righteousness through a Spirit - led lifestyle.

In verse 16 the apostle states emphatically: Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Verses 19-21. Man, in spite of all his good intentions, can only produce the works of the flesh. It is only as one is walking in the Spirit, i.e. having an active faith relationship with Jesus Christ, that the produce can be different. This miracle is wrought only through the indwelling of the Spirit.

The prize of peace is a coveted attainment; everyone without exception wants peace. But what exactly is peace? The new Oxford Dictionary defines peace as freedom from noise or anxiety, and freedom from or ending of war. While the achievement of these is laudable the apostle had much more in mind.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu, former Anglican bishop in South Africa, rose to world fame during the 1980s as an opponent of apartheid. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984; The Sydney Peace Prize in 1999 and the Ghandi Peace Prize in 2007. Yes, the world took note and applauded his efforts. However, the peace the Apostle is talking about is a peace that transcends everything else. And this peace is for all who choose to be led by the Spirit.

As we explore John chapter 14 verse 17, greater insights are given to us as to what the apostle had in mind. Jesus was soon to be crucified. He was about to leave His disciples. While He was with them they experienced peace because Jesus is the Prince of peace. The peace Jesus spoke of, though, was not the absence of noise or anxiety or war, but an inward peace.

His peace consists of three crucial points:-

1. Peace of soul or mind
2. Peace from anxiety
3. Peace from guilt

JESUS IS SHARING HIS PEACE

He said: *My peace. My peace is a possessive clause which means that what is being offered belongs to Him.*

This peace is not inherent in us. Yes, we need it, we must have it to survive, our very lives depend on it. But this peace is not purchased at a grocery store.

This peace provides the homeostasis-- the state to maintain internal equilibrium.

This peace provides the balance in a world that is out of control.

This peace provides the mental poise to deal with life's vicissitudes.

This peace is a product of the Holy Spirit.

The works of the flesh is the natural product of human nature. It is what we do naturally.

However, when we submit to be led by the Spirit, we are acted upon and the result is fruit bearing. In this fruit cluster peace is manifested.

To bear the fruit is not the natural product of human nature but of a power wholly outside of man.

There is but one fruit of the Spirit and that fruit includes all of the Christian graces.

The Greek *eirēnē* - peace, is better understood when Jesus was relating to His disciples

In John 14:27. Jesus said to His disciples: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

When Christ was about to leave the world He committed His soul to His father; His body was given to Joseph of Arimathea to be decently interred; His clothes fell to the soldiers; His mother He left to the care of John. But what did He leave for His disciples? He could have left silver and gold, but He chose to leave something infinitely better - HIS PEACE.

The servant of the Lord postulates: “The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through everyone who receive Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit...” (MS 41, 1897).

In the beginning the Holy Spirit brooded over the chaos to bring about the cosmos.

With the entrance of sin the homeostasis in man was disrupted. In the heart where peace dwelt, fear, consternation, forebodings took root. It is only as one allows the Spirit to brood within his chaotic state, can one have peace.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit must not just impress us, but be allowed to act upon us to transform us, and to give us peace.

The legacy of peace that Christ has bequeathed provides that which is truly good.

Ephesians 2:14 states: He Himself [an emphatic declaration] is our peace. Not another but by Him and through Him we find peace.

This peace is not a mere formality of greeting, but a real blessing. All around one can see peace signs, yet there is an absence of peace. The peace that Christ gives is not as the world gives. The smiles of the world cannot give it, nor do the frowns of the world take it away. The peace which Christ gives is infinitely more valuable than what the world gives. The world's peace begins in ignorance, consists of sin, and ends in endless troubles. Christ's peace begins in grace, consists of no sin and ends in everlasting peace. The peace of Christ within is manifested in the way we treat our families, in the way we relate to our neighbours, it is manifested in the way we treat our enemies. The prize of peace is when we are at peace with God and our fellow man.

W.D. Cornell; 1889 wrote the song "Wonderful Peace" in the Seventh-day Adventist hymnal # 466. "Peace, peace wonderful peace coming down from the Father above; Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray, In fathomless billows of love."

HE IS OUR PEACE!

"And the God of peace, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

*Pastor Wayne Andrews
President, South Caribbean Conference*

Children's corner The CHRISTIAN TREE

The Christian tree in Ms. Browne's class now had a banner with the word "Joy" next to the word love on the picture of the soursop.

"Today," said Ms. Browne, "we are going to talk about another way we show love to God and our fellow humans." She held up a poster with the word "peace" written on it. "What is peace?" Ms. Browne asked the children.

"Being calm" one boy said.

"The absence of war" another boy said.

"Not worrying" Denae said.

"You are all correct" said Ms. Browne.

Then she told the children, "When we are true Christians, loving God and all people, peace is seen in our lives. Peace is a segment of the Christian fruit of love. Peace is available to all of Jesus' followers who choose to follow Him each moment of their lives.

"Just before Jesus went back to heaven, He promised that those who follow Him will have peace amidst all the confusion of life. Let us read about this in John 14:27"

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"Let us read Philippians 4:4-7 to see how we can get the fruit of peace in our lives."

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

So children we see that peace comes from God. Peace also comes when we pray. In addition, when we have peace, we do not worry.

Let us bow our heads and ask God to give us His peace.
(Have children repeat this prayer after the leader.)

Dear God,

We love you. Please help us to love you more. Please give us your peace, so that we may be calm, when bad things happen to us. Please help us to trust You and be like You. We pray this prayer in the Name of Jesus. Amen.”

ACTIVITY

Pair each child with an adult, have each adult place his/her right hand on the child's shoulder and bless him/her with the words of II Thessalonians 3:16

“Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.”



The Preciousness of Longsuffering

TUESDAY JANUARY 14 | PS. JOHNSON FREDERICK

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, - Galatians 5:22

INTRODUCTION

The longsuffering nature of God is a prominent quality of His character; without it man could not be saved. As a direct outgrowth of love, it tempers God's wrath against man's persistent rebellion and gives man a chance to respond to God's relentless love in an environment that is non-judgmental and accepting. The divine quality is not an abstraction left to the exclusive domain of philosophers and theologians; it is a practical attribute that reveals how God relates to imperfect mankind and how imperfect humans should deal with each other. In salvation history, we see models of God's longsuffering nature in His dealing with rebellious Israel; Hosea's dealing with his unfaithful wife; the father's dealing with his prodigal son; and Jesus' dealing with disciples who were ill-natured and self-centred. The Holy Spirit is eager to give God's people that divine gift of longsuffering now.

UNDERSTANDING LONGSUFFERING

But what does the word "longsuffering" mean in the context of Scripture? In the New Testament, the Greek word "Makrothumia" (longsuffering) literally means "long-tempered". It is the opposite of anger and the embodiment of self-restraint under provocation. God's long-suffering is often associated with His mercy and compassion towards mankind (Ex.34:6, Num. 14:18, Psa. 145:8 etc.). Yet, God's longsuffering, though related, is distinct from His mercy. In exercising longsuffering, God first exercises control over Himself, and repeatedly shows mercy to the wicked, though He has the power

to avenge Himself. *Thus, divine long-suffering is mercy repeated again and again in the face of repeated injury by the offender.*

But divine longsuffering is even more impressive when we consider God's power to act as He pleases without any one asking, "what doest thou?" Further, God's longsuffering is neither a sign of weakness nor moral indifference. The wicked misconstrues this divine excellency. *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set to do evil"* (Eccl. 8:11). Instead, it is a demonstration of His love and mercy to the sinner again and again, consistent with all his attributes including His justice. God still shows longsuffering to the world today amidst a sustained, calculatedly evil, unjust and ungodly culture. He is still "longsuffering to us-ward not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9).

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22 states clearly, that longsuffering is an integral part of the fruit of the Spirit. It is not innate or hereditary. One can only be longsuffering when one lives by the Holy Spirit. "So I say, Live by the Spirit," Paul declares, "and you will not gratify the desires of your sinful nature" (Gal. 5:16, NIV). What is natural to man is his sinful nature. When the Holy Spirit is in control, He transforms the old nature of the Christian into a spiritual nature that bears fruit in its entirety as outlined in Galatians 5: 22, 23.

Scripture denounces superficial, half-hearted spiritual change. The imperative is evident: "Be filled with Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). The presence of the Spirit in the Christian brings new life. In fact Paul in Romans 8:11, asserts that the Holy Spirit gives resurrection life. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The word "quicken" in the text literally means "make alive", presupposing that the sinner was dead in his trespasses and sins prior to the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is a radical process. This is why it is called a crucifixion in Galatians 5:20 and a rebirth in John 3:3. And the Holy Spirit is that seed (sperma) in 1John 3:9 which dwells in us and gives us total victory over the crippling dominance of sin. A life, therefore, that is filled with the Spirit will spontaneously bear fruit—the fruit of the Spirit, including longsuffering. For the conscientious Christian, there is no other alternative.

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF LONGSUFFERING

Christ modeled divine longsuffering excellently. The apostle Paul testifies that he, the worst of sinner, was a recipient of Christ's unlimited patience [longsuffering] (1Tim. 1:16). He was, thus, shown mercy again and again until Christ saved him, a self-righteous Pharisee. Hallelujah! Who then can be saved without the unlimited patience/longsuffering of Christ?

However, Jesus' dealings with Peter represent, most poignantly, the extension of divine longsuffering to a struggling sinner. In spite of Peter's "carelessness of spirit and unsanctified temper", Christ saw salvific potential in Peter and sought him with unlimited patience. In the book, *Desire of Ages*, the prophetess says of Peter: *"The eye of Christ rested upon him, reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death,--the Saviour read it all, and He said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone"* Christ (139).

Clearly, Christ loved Peter just as he was and patiently pursued him for what he would become. He saw a diamond in the rough that with longsuffering care would become desirable and precious. Ultimately, it was Christ's pity and patience with Peter even as the rooster confirmed his denial of his lord that drove him back to Gethsemane where he wept bitterly. That was the beginning of a transformed Peter. How true! "The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" (2Peter 3:15).

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT WITH ALL LONGSUFFERING

Divine longsuffering is relational. God is longsuffering with mankind and man in turn should be longsuffering in his dealing with his fellowmen. The good news is that with the receiving of the Holy Spirit comes the gift of the Spirit enunciated in Galatians 5; 22, 23. The excellency of Christ is not yet fully radiant in His Church because the Church is yet to be filled with the Holy Ghost. There will only be revival when the Church is filled with the Spirit, and reformation will only be evident when the fruit of the Spirit is seen in the practice of His people.

Yet the imperative is urgent. The apostle Paul declares: *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel*

against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also [do] ye. And above all these things [put on] charity, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:12-14).

As a Church we need to be Longsuffering in Soul-winning.

Our labour for souls must not be treated as a take-it-or-leave-it enterprise. Nor must we approach the salvation of others as a five week venture. We must pursue the task of saving souls in all longsuffering with much prayer and love. In the manner that some crops need more time in their readiness for harvest, some souls need more teaching, prayer and urging before they respond positively to the gospel. How often we demonstrate irritability and disgust when people don't respond in a given time. We need to give sway to the Holy Spirit; let Him soften and woo hearts to the kingdom of God. Our role is to preach and teach with urgency and power, and yet to relentlessly pursue those who seem too deliberate in their response.

The prophetess gives wise counsel in the above regard: While some minds are quick to catch an idea, others are slow to comprehend new and startling truths which involve great changes and present a cross at every step. Give them time to digest the wonderful truths of the message you bear them. {Ev 177.1}

As members we need to be longsuffering with fellow members.

In the body of Christ every member is different yet precious. So were the disciples of Christ—different and precious. Thomas was doubtful, James and John were fiery and power hungry, Peter was impulsive and quick-tempered, and the list goes on. But Christ never gave up on them. He patiently rebuked, encouraged and restored them as they slowly developed in spiritual maturity. Here is how the prophetess describes John's conversion experience: “But as the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. *The strength and patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, that he beheld in the daily life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration and love.* Day by day his heart was drawn out toward Christ, *until he lost sight of self in love for his Master” (Steps to Christ. 73).*

In the body, there are Johns and Peters too. Some are too timid; some are too self-assertive and ambitious; and some too quick-tempered; yet all are potential candidates for heaven. Like Christ, irrespective of the struggles of our brother we need to lovingly and patiently seek to restore him. Didn't Scripture declare, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). And Jesus in Matthew 18:10 states: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." There is still too much resultant bitterness and rancor in our attempts to reconcile differences with each other. Let us imitate Christ in all longsuffering and meekness.

As members we need to be longsuffering to each other in the family.

Imperfections are most obvious and glaring in the family. The home environment tends to encourage spouses and children to be less inhibited in their expression of strengths and weaknesses, joys and sorrows. That's O.K. The home should be a laboratory where character is developed. There is potential for the explosion of human chemistry, but properly directed there is great potential for phenomenal outcomes. In marriage, intimacy is not achieved overnight, and in child-rearing values take a mighty long time to stick.

In cultivating our home garden, we need more patience than a farmer. In our dealings with each other we should take heed of inspired counsel: All may possess a cheerful countenance, a gentle voice, a courteous manner; these are the elements of power. Unkindness, complaining, and anger shut Jesus from the Dwelling (D.A. 421-

422). Furthermore, “This work requires heaven-born patience, willing to *work* and *watch* and *wait*” (Ed. 292). This is good counsel for both marriage and child-rearing. We must stubbornly work to achieve satisfaction in our family. Let’s make family life priority. There is no other alternative.

CONCLUSION

Divine longsuffering is a precious attribute of God made available only through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. When the Christian is filled with the Spirit he will bear fruit, the full fruit outlined in Galatians 5: 22, 23. Thus, this divine quality must be Spirit-cultivated and nurtured. We should be grateful for God’s patience toward us, and pattern our longsuffering towards our fellowmen after models set by Christ. This precious quality will strengthen our witness to the world, buttress our inter-personal relationship with fellow-believers, and encourage our families to grow in a more nurturing environment. May God help us to admit our imperfections and cling to His perfection as we seek to imitate Him in all longsuffering.

*Pastor Johnson Frederick
President, St. Lucia Mission*

children's corner

The word 'peace' was placed close to the fruit of love on the Christian Fruit Tree in the Primary Sabbath School room. This tree was becoming more and more beautiful, Dwayne thought as he came into the room.

He whispered to Denae, "I wonder what Ms. Browne will speak about today?" Soon the teacher came into the room, greeted the children and sat down. She just sat and sat looking at them without saying a word.

"When are we going to begin singing?" one of the children asked.

"It's time to begin" another one said.

But Ms. Browne just kept sitting and looking at them.

"That's strange" thought Denae, "I'll just wait and see what will happen"

Some children began wandering around the room, then Ms. Browne spoke.

"Children, I was sitting here doing and experiment with 'patience'. I wanted to see how many of you would quietly wait until I began our Sabbath School program today. Congratulations to all the boys and girls who calmly waited on me to begin. Today we will add the segment of 'patience' to our fruit of love. Jesus' fruit bearers are patient. They know how to persevere in a calm way until their goal is achieved."

Are you patient? What do you do when you want something and your mother tells you to "wait a while" before you could get it?

How do you behave when you want to go outside to play with your brother or sister and he or she is taking a long time to put on his or her shoes?

Jesus wants us to be patient. He wants us to learn to wait on Him to work in our lives. He wants us to learn to wait on others who are helping us. The Bible tells us that God is patient with us. When we remember that, we need to be patient with others. Let us read II Peter 3:15

"Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation"

The Bible passage we have been reading all week says, part of the fruit of the Spirit is "longsuffering," that is another word for patience.

Let us read Galatians 5:22, and 23 again.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

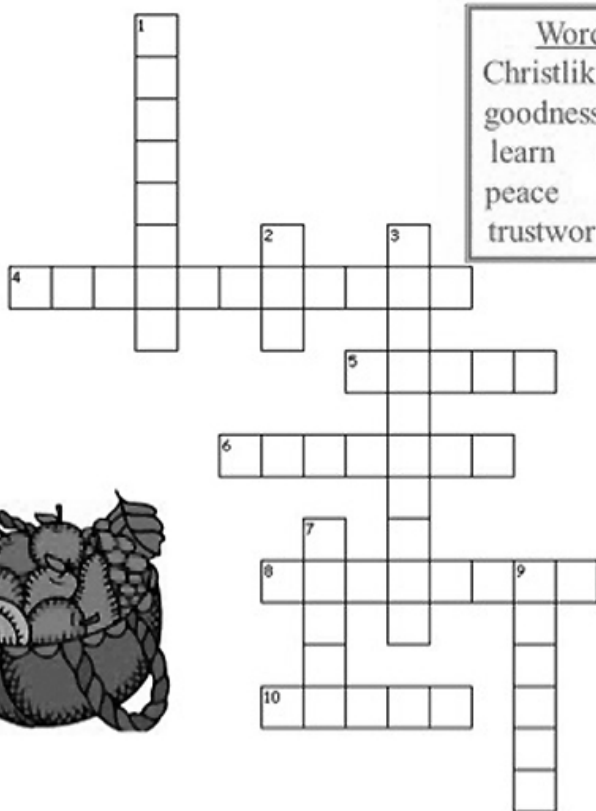
THEME SONG

ACTIVITY

1. Share with us two things you can do at home to show that you are patient.
2. What can you do at school to be patient?
3. Distribute the Activity Sheet

PRAYER: (Children are to pray in pairs, asking God for His Holy Spirit to help them to be patient.)

Fruit of the Spirit Crossword



Word List:
Christlike gifts
goodness healthy
learn meekness
peace Spirit
trustworthy joy

Across

4. This fruit of the spirit is a bit like faithfulness or being dependable.
5. God will give us these fruit or ____ if we ask and work on it.
6. Just like real fruit, the fruit of the Spirit also makes us this inside.
8. This is another word for gentleness.
10. If we try to ____ by reading the Bible we will understand how to become more fruitful.

Down

1. Having this fruit means you will turn away from bad choices.
2. This fruit of the Spirit is about being more than just happy.
3. When we have more fruit of the Spirit we become more ____.
7. Being full of this means that you don't worry but believe God to take care of things.
9. This part of God helps us develop the different fruit in our lives.



The Picture of Gentleness and Meekness

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15 | PS. RICHARD JAMES

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

As we are in the middle of a week of special emphasis on the Holy Spirit, I would like to direct our attention to the key text, pertaining to the fruit of the Spirit, mentioned in the Apostle Paul's epistle to the churches of Galatia. Paul wrote "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22, 23.

Before we consider the topic "**The Picture of Gentleness and Meekness**" permit me to call your attention to a few preliminary points. **First**, we must take note of the fact that the Greek word translated as **fruit** in the phrase "fruit of the Spirit", is in the singular, and it means that which is "produced by growth" and that the Holy Spirit is the "source" or the "cause" of the fruit. **Second**, an important question that we must examine is: What is the difference between gentleness and meekness when referring to the fruit of the Spirit? **Third**, Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians chapter five is more of an itemized account rather than a description of the graces that naturally develop in the life of a Christian, when that life is under the Holy Spirit control. Therefore, to arrive at a fuller picture of a gentle, meek and mild Christian we must consider the wider context of the Galatians picture.

THE MEANING OF MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS

What is the word picture of gentleness and meekness? Or what is the quality of gentleness and meekness? The biblical picture of gentleness and meekness should not be confused with feebleness, spinelessness and indolence. Nor should we accept the mistaken viewpoint that

the Bible's picture of gentleness and meekness somehow connotes something which is not strong or able to endure hardship. Being gentle and meek should not be confused with weakness of either personality or character. We must not mistake "meek" for "weak." The Greeks never viewed the gentle and meek person as being a pushover or a "piece of cake." Neither is the biblical picture one of an individual who is easily taken advantage of or defeated.

Actually, the Greek word translated as gentleness means "kindness" and "refers to a kindly disposition toward one's neighbors, showing goodness and concern towards others, sympathetic kindness." It implies treating people in ways that will bless and help them. In like manner, the meaning of the Greek word translated as meekness is "mildness," "gentle submissiveness," and "controlled strength." It implies the "ability to bear reproaches and slights without bitterness and resentment." What then is the main difference between gentleness and meekness? The main difference is that gentleness relates more to action while meekness is more of an attitude. Therefore, meekness is most seen in bearing and enduring injury patiently, while, gentleness is exercised in outward actions relating to others.

An illustration by Donald Gee, an English Pentecostal Bible Teacher, makes the biblical meaning of gentle meekness clearer. "A guide was taking a group of visitors through a factory. One of the things he showed them was a giant steam hammer capable of flattening an automobile. Then the guide put down a walnut and had the hammer break the shell without hurting the meat of the nut. What an illustration of gentleness as power under perfect control!" This is a truly beautiful picture that comes close to the biblical meaning of "kindness" and "controlled strength." The Christian that is really gentle and meek is someone who is kind, calm and submissive while possessing great power and strength of character which is always under the control of the Holy Spirit. Ellen White provides us with a truly balanced picture of biblical meekness when she writes: "Meekness is a precious grace, willing to suffer silently, willing to endure trials. Meekness is patient and labors to be happy under all circumstances. Meekness is always thankful and makes its own songs of happiness, making melody in the heart to God. Meekness will suffer disappointment and wrong, and will not retaliate. Meekness is not to be silent and sulky" (Testimonies for the Church, Vol.3, p.335).

THE MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF CHRIST

Biblical meekness and gentleness is compatible with great power and authority. The lives of Moses, of whom the Bible says that he “was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3), David and Paul are very worthy examples of meek heroes. But the life of Christ was the example par excellence of meekness and gentleness. Speaking to His disciples Jesus said “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart :”(Matthew 11:29).Not only did Christ speak of Himself as being meek but His meekness was also evident in everything He did. And, while the meekness of Jesus is seen in relation to other human beings, it is even more evident in His submission to the Heavenly Father’s will in the Garden of Gethsemane. Thrice, Jesus prayed to remain submissive to His Father’s will, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39), when He staggered and suffered superhuman agony as the sins of the world were rolled upon Him

Jesus was a Man of great strength of character who displayed meekness by His submissiveness to God. It is in the life and ministry of Christ that the concept of gentleness and meekness finds its true meaning, where there was a need to temper real power and courage with grace and humility. We see this concept in a stanza from a well known hymn:

*“He could have called ten thousand angels
To destroy the world and set him free
He could have called ten thousand angels
But he died alone, for you and me”*

And in the Pauline example of meekness par excellence in the Son of God, **“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”**(Philippians 2:6-8, NIV). This passage presents the followers of Jesus Christ with an astonishing example of how to exercise power and authority in our daily lives, a picture of the meekness and gentleness of Christ in action. Christ is our model and we need to plant our feet in His steps.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENTLENESS AND MEEKNESS

Gentleness and meekness don't come naturally for the Christian. Galatians 5:22 tells us that these graces are "produced by growth." We have to "*become humble learners, and ever to remain as pupils in the school of Christ to receive from the Master lessons of meekness and lowliness of heart.*" (Testimonies for the Church, Vol.4, p.527). Jesus said to His disciples "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30). We are invited to establish a relationship with Christ that will help us to develop the Christian graces of gentleness and meekness. This relationship needs our cooperation for the development of these precious Christian graces. We have to submit ourselves to the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit in order to develop gentle meekness. Moses learned meekness during the 40-year intermission from Egypt as a herder of sheep and Paul needed a desert education, to temper the great enthusiasm he had as a leader in Judaism, after his conversion to Christ. That is why Mrs. White says that "*The precious graces of the Holy Spirit are not developed in a moment. Courage, fortitude, meekness, faith, unwavering trust in God's power to save, are acquired by the experience of years.*" (Testimonies for the Church, Vol.8, p.314).

The story of David is another wonderful illustration of the development of gentle meekness in "God's graduate school of character-building." His encounters with the lion, the bear and his whipping of Goliath required courage and faith in God on a short term basis. But the trials of a longer lasting nature, like his turbulent encounters with King Saul during the marathon eleven fugitive years, were harder for him to bear. He suffered terribly under Saul's unjust and unkind treatment. Nevertheless, as he matured in the graduate school, he demonstrated an extraordinary degree of meekness or controlled strength. His experience teaches us that meekness develops amid storm and cloud and darkness, as well as in the sunshine. Ellen White helps us with further insight on this point when she writes: "David's grief at the death of Saul was sincere and deep, evincing the generosity of a noble nature. He did not exult in the fall of his enemy. The obstacle that had

barred his access to the throne of Israel was removed, but at this he did not rejoice.”(Patriarchs and Prophets, pp.695, 696). What an amazing character! This is a very pretty picture of the gentleness and meekness of the sweet psalmist of Israel.

MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS- INDISPENSABLE GRACES

Meekness and gentleness are two Christian graces mentioned by New Testament writers as cardinal virtues. Jesus’ teaching in the third beatitude “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5), makes it clear that developing meekness is a matter with eternal significance. Developing meekness for the children of God is about sealing our destiny. It’s about condemnation or sanctification. This is why the Apostle Peter warns us in his epistle, regarding our deportment, and especially our women folk: “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” (1Peter3:4).God values very highly the ornament of “a meek and quiet spirit” and His children should endeavor to excel in seeking for this heavenly “jewel of inestimable value.”God doesn’t value very highly the absence of the meek and quiet spirit in the lives of His children and the failure to develop gentle and meek character. Ellen White helps us to appreciate this point on the heavenly adornment of meekness when she writes: “This adorning will possess attractions for many in this world, and will be esteemed of great price by the heavenly angels, and above all by our heavenly Father, and will fit the wearers to be welcome guests in the heavenly courts” (Testimonies for the Church, Vol.3, p.367).

It is important for us as Adventist Christians to understand that our success in ministering on Christ’s behalf is connected to us becoming more gentle and meek in character. When we are lacking in these cardinal graces our service robs God of the right to reveal His glory through our lives. We have to let gentleness and meekness characterize and strengthen our ministry inside and outside of our churches and our homes. Paul writing to Timothy says: “And 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 peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Timothy 2:24, 25).And, Mrs. White

adds: “ One smile of pleasure, one peaceful, approving word spoken in the spirit of meekness, would be a power to soothe, to comfort, and to bless. The government of self is the best government in the world. By putting on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, ninety-nine out of a hundred of troubles, which so terribly embitter life, might be saved” (Testimonies for the Church, Vol.4, p.349). What a wonderful picture of the spirit of meekness!

CONCLUSION

The picture of gentleness and meekness, par excellence, is beautifully exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We have all been invited to enroll in the school of Christ that we may learn “His way of life,” that is, his way of gentleness and meekness. Gentle meekness is a part of God’s character as He moves triumphantly in mighty power and victory. God wants you and me to be meek heroes. He can help us to become meek heroes and He has left this attractive picture of how we can become meek heroes: “Life is disciplinary. While in the world, the Christian will meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If injuries and insults are meekly borne, if insulting words are responded to by gentle answers, and oppressive acts by kindness, this is evidence that the Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart, that sap from the living Vine is flowing to the branches. We are in the school of Christ in this life, where we are to learn to be meek and lowly of heart; and in the day of final accounts we shall see that all the obstacles we meet, all the hardships and annoyances that we are called to bear, are practical lessons in the application of principles of Christian life. If well endured, they develop the Christlikeness in the character and distinguish the Christian from the worldling” (Testimonies for the Church, Vol.5, p.344).

*Pastor Richard James,
President, Guyana Conference*

Children's corner

When the children arrived at Sabbath School the next Sabbath they were very surprised to hear a 'tweet tweet' sound coming from a box in the corner of the room. Although Ms. Browne was showing them to their seats, each child wanted to go to the box to discover what was making the sound.

Ms. Browne said they had to wait. All eyes were fixed on the box. Soon the other teacher went to the corner of the room and lifted the box. Immediately, all the children got silent. They were very curious to see what was in the box. The teacher put the box in the middle of the classroom and all the children peeked in. "Oh, they are so-o-o-o cute", one little girl said. "They are pretty", said Dwayne. "Could I take one home?" asked Denae.

In the box were six fluffy baby chicks. Ms. Browne told the children that they could each hold the chicks, but they had to hold them gently.

"Today," she said, "we are going to learn about gentleness. Those boys and girls, men and women who have Jesus as their best friend and live for Him are gentle. Gentleness means that we are calm, we are tender. A gentle person is kind to people and animals. When you held the baby chicks earlier today you were gentle."

God wants us to be gentle with our words. He wants to be kind to others. When we are gentle we show that we are bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Let us read again the Bible passage that tells us the kind of fruit Jesus wants us to bear.

Galatians 5:22, 23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law"

The Bible says that we are to be gentle, for Jesus is coming to earth very soon. Let us learn this passage from Philippians 4:5

"Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand."

ACTIVITY

1. Have children repeat Philippians 4:5 until they know it. Use actions to assist in the process.
2. Sing the theme song and pray
3. Distribute the 'Gentleness Activity Sheet to each child.

Decoder Puzzle

A	W	S	G	H	T	Y	U	I	J	F	O	V	R	K	N	P	L	Q	M	X	B	E	Z	D	C
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 11-14-8-9-6 _____
- 18-12-13-23 _____
- 10-12-7 _____
- 17-23-1-26-23 _____
- 17-1-6-9-23-16-26-23 _____
- 15-9-16-25-16-23-3-3 _____
- 4-12-25-16-23-3-3 _____
- 11-1-9-6-5-11-8-18-16-23-3-3 _____
- 4-23-16-6-18-23-16-23-3-3 _____
- 26-12-16-6-14-12-18 _____

KINDNESS
FAITHFULNESS

JOY
PEACE

FRUIT
LOVE

GOODNESS
GENTLENESS

PATIENCE
CONTROL



The Promise of Goodness

THURSDAY JANUARY 16 | PS. DERMOTH BAPTISTE

INTRODUCTION

Someone once echoed this prayer, “O God! Make the bad people good and the good people nice.” Wouldn’t this world be a much better, safer place if this prayer is experience in everyone’s life? I would like to live in a world like that, and then leave it for the next generation. The reality is that since the foundation of time God refers to His creation as “good.” As God spoke into existence each phase of His creation, He saw that it was good! What does this mean? I believe the point here involves expected function. ***God’s creation did what He intended it to do. It accomplished its purpose. It met His expectations. And that is one of the basic ideas of the promise of goodness which the Spirit wants to manifest in our lives.***

“O God make the bad people good and the good people nice”

The fruit of the Spirit is goodness. What do you think of when you hear the word goodness, or the phrases a good sermon or a good job? It refers to something that meets a certain standard, someone’s expectations. It fulfills the goal of the job. The sermon does what sermons are suppose to do- change lives. The meaning of goodness often depends on the context. A good book is different for different people and purposes. A good book for scholarly research is quite different from a good book for bedtime reading; and what is good recreation for one person may not be for the next.

What do you mean when you say you had a good experience? Each person may mean something different, but I believe there is one principle in common, the idea that there was some kind of benefit to us. A good deed benefits someone in some way. It is an act of kindness.

And what is a good friend? Probably the common quality above all others is someone who is dependable, someone you can count on to be there for you at times of need. The relationship benefits you.

Finally, what is a good heart? It is sincere, honest, and moral. But who defines morality? For Christians, God is the One who defines moral goodness. He sets the standards, and it is His expectations that must be met. The Scriptures reveal an ultimate and absolute definition of goodness.

From our common usage of the idea of goodness, I see three aspects that all are derived from the first. Goodness, or the idea of being good, means that the thing fulfills its purpose or the expectations for it. In the ultimate context of God's expectations, goodness includes the second aspect of morality, and that is defined by God. The third aspect is that in most situations the purpose or expectation involves some form of benefit.

The first place in the Old Testament where something is called good is Genesis 1. As God spoke into existence each phase of creation, He saw that it was good. What does this mean? How could it have been bad or evil? I believe the point here involves expected function. God's creation did what He intended it to do. It accomplished its purpose. It met His expectations. And that is one of the basic ideas of the goodness the Spirit wants to manifest in our lives.

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph says to his brothers who had sold him into slavery, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about his present result, to preserve many people alive" (NASB). God had a purpose, which was to save many lives. God's good purpose in every situation is ultimately to save lives. Joseph suffered some very hurtful things, but they turned out to be of great benefit to him and for many others. They fulfilled the purpose of God, His redemptive purpose.

The sense of moral good versus evil is seen in Genesis 2 in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Evil here has the idea of rebellion against God. The character of God defines moral goodness. Exodus 33:19 shows this when in response to Moses' request to see God's glory the Lord says: "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD [Yahweh], in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." This says that all the Lord is represented by His name, is called His goodness, and is expressed in merciful, gracious love which offers forgiveness and salvation to all who will receive it. This association

of goodness, forgiveness, and love is seen also in Psalm 86:5. Thus, there is an overlapping of goodness with other fruit of the Spirit such as kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and, of course, love. Goodness is a quality of God associated so closely with Him that people use it as a euphemism for Him when making an interjection, such as “Oh, goodness!”

Besides describing the character of God, goodness describes His acts on behalf of His people, the benefits of His salvation. At the end of Psalm 23 David confidently proclaims: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

Finally, Amos 5:4–15 is a powerful passage which parallels seeking the Lord with seeking good and doing good for others. Verse 6 says, “Seek the Lord that you may live,” and verse 14, “Seek good, and not evil, that you may live” (NASB). The good in this context is the opposite of oppressing the poor and the needy. Verse 15 indicates it is hating evil and loving good by maintaining justice in the courts. Seeking good meant seeking to benefit rather than harm the needy, thus demonstrating the kind of saving, redemptive purpose God has.

Significant New Testament references must include the commendation of the servants in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:21(NIV), “Well done, good and faithful servant!” Good is associated with faithfulness, and it refers to conduct which goes even beyond expectations in taking care of the master’s capital. These servants made an extra effort and even took a risk to bring their master gain and benefit, because of their commitment to him. Goodness involves going beyond the mere requirements.

Luke 8:15, talks about good ground and then speaks about a person with an honest and a good heart who hears the Word and responds to it. So here goodness involves the honesty of receiving God’s Word repentantly, then responding in faith and obedience, and accomplishing His purpose for one’s life.

One of the most famous and interesting passages is Luke 18:18,19. The rich young ruler calls Jesus good Teacher, or Master in some versions. “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good, except God alone” (NIV). We can talk about good people and good things in terms of human standards, and our expectations for them, but when it really comes down to it, who sets the ultimate standard and expectations for goodness except God? Jesus was challenging the young ruler to consider the truth that He was God

come in the flesh, and that appreciating God's holiness and the gift of His Son would end the thinking that there is anything one can do to earn salvation. Third John 11 says that the one who does good is of God. True goodness can only flow out of a life right with God and yielded to Him.

An important example is Barnabas in Acts 11:24. He is called "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith" (NIV). He encouraged others, according to chapter 4, and was generous and honest. Later, in giving Paul a chance and then Mark a second chance, he showed great patience and unselfishness which reached out to benefit someone else. He demonstrated the connection between being filled with the Spirit and these qualities in one's life.

Romans 15:14 says the Christians in Rome were "full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another" (NIV). They were able to benefit and to help one another fulfill God's purpose in their lives. They were characterized by God's moral qualities.

Ephesians, chapters 4 and 5 give specific ways that goodness is to be expressed in our lives. Some of these are, beginning in 4:25, speaking truthfully, not sinning in our anger, not stealing but doing something good. We are not to do hurtful, harmful things but helpful, beneficial, useful things. Then, continuing in verse 29, we are to build up one another with our conversation. We must get rid of all malice and be kind, compassionate, forgiving, imitators of God and Christ, living lives of love. In this way we are in alignment with the Holy Spirit and avoid grieving Him.

Furthermore, verses 5–12 of chapter 5 remind us that God's goodness in His people avoids sexual immorality, impurity, greediness, all disobedience, and fruitless deeds of darkness. On the contrary, God's children live as children of light and seek to please the Lord, "for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth" (verse 9, NIV). Here Paul clearly parallels righteousness and truth with goodness. Finally he calls for us to be filled with the Spirit, worshipping God, blessing others, and submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

This brings us to Paul's context in Galatians. He is clarifying the gospel message of our salvation by grace through faith. He shows that it means freedom from bondage, freedom from condemnation, and freedom from bondage to our old sinful nature. In 5:6 Paul says that what matters is faith working through love. This freedom is not

to mean license, he says in 5:13, but serving one another in love. We are exhorted in 5:16-25 to walk in the Spirit, or live by the Spirit and bear good fruit. This is the opposite of fulfilling the works of the old sinful nature which are sexual immorality, hurting other people with strife, and wild, drunken, destructive behavior from alcohol.

Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit, like his list of the works of the flesh, seems to have a lot of overlapping. Goodness following right after kindness seems to be closely associated with it. In fact, that same Greek word for kindness (*chrestotes*) used in Galatians 5:22 appears in Romans 11:22, translated goodness in the King James Version where it refers to the goodness and severity of God. I believe there are many ways in which all the fruit are interrelated. To understand goodness one must understand all the fruit.

A demonstration of God's kind of goodness is called for in Galatians 6 where Paul appeals for gently and humbly ministering to others who are stumbling. We are to carry each other's burdens and care enough to get involved with one another to prevent moral and spiritual ruin.

Finally, verses 7—10 read, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (NIV). We must keep sowing to the Spirit, which means we must keep seeking God and letting His qualities be developed in us and flow through us by the Spirit. When we do, we will benefit others; we will reach out beyond our own selfish needs and be self-giving, or generous as some translations refer to this fruit. God's goodness goes beyond what is legally right, goes the extra mile, and gives what is needed and what will benefit, build up, and bless others.

The fruit of the Spirit must continually be cultivated. We do not produce them once for all time. We need to sow to the Spirit continually so goodness will be expressed in our lives instead of the old selfish qualities. If I meditate on envy, jealousy, lusts, worries, or fears I am going to reap from them some very selfish evil fruit in my behavior and relationships. I may explode all over someone and cause great harm rather than good. But when I sow to the Spirit by

meditating on God's qualities through the Word, I will bear good fruit of kind, generous, beneficial acts toward others. I will help others experience God's forgiving, restoring love in Christ through faith. I will also live a morally pure life according to God's holiness. Bearing goodness means God can depend on me to be honest, repent of my sins, and turn away from evil. We need to continually seek to express this goodness in our responses and actions toward others.

In conclusion, think of your favorite Julie mango. What do you expect it to be like when you bite into it? What are the qualities of a good mango? Now, think about what you are like when someone bites into you. Do they receive goodness from you? Remember, only God in you is good.

CHIP IT AWAY

There is a story about a man who had a huge boulder in his front yard. He grew weary of this big, unattractive stone in the center of his lawn, so he decided to take advantage of it and turn it into an object of art. He went to work on it with hammer and chisel, and chipped away at the huge boulder until it became a beautiful stone elephant. When he finished, it was gorgeous, breath-taking.

A neighbor asked, "How did you ever carve such a marvelous likeness of an elephant?"

The man answered, "I just chipped away everything that didn't look like an elephant!"

If you have anything in your life right now that doesn't look like love, then, with the help of God, chip it away! If you have anything in your life that doesn't look like compassion or mercy or empathy, then, with the help of God, chip it away! If you have hatred or prejudice or vengeance or envy in your heart, for God's sake, and the for the other person's sake, and for your sake, get rid of it! Let God chip everything out of your life that doesn't look like tenderheartedness.

It is a delightful and profitable occupation to mark the hand of God in the lives of ancient saints, and to observe his goodness in delivering them, his mercy in pardoning them, and his faithfulness in keeping his covenant with them. But would it not be even more interesting and profitable for us to remark the hand of God in our own lives? Ought we not to look upon our own history as being at least as full of God, as full of his goodness and of his truth, as much a proof of his faithfulness and veracity, as the lives of any of the saints who have gone before? We do our Lord an injustice when we suppose

that he wrought all his mighty acts, and showed himself strong for those in the early time, but doth not perform wonders or lay bare his arm for the saints who are now upon the earth. Let us review our own lives. Surely in these we may discover some happy incidents, refreshing to ourselves and glorifying to our God. Have you had no deliverances? Have you passed through no rivers, supported by the divine presence? Have you walked through no fires unharmed? Have you had no manifestations? Have you had no choice favours? The God who gave Solomon the desire of his heart, hath he never listened to you and answered your requests? That God of lavish bounty of whom David sang, “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,” hath he never satiated you with fatness? Have you never been made to lie down in green pastures? Have you never been led by the still waters? Surely the goodness of God has been the same to us as to the saints of old. Let us, then, weave his mercies into a song. Let us take the pure gold of thankfulness, and the jewels of praise and make them into another crown for the head of Jesus. Let our souls give forth music as sweet and as exhilarating as came from David’s harp, while we praise the Lord whose mercy endureth forever.

The thought processes of a child are very different from those of a mature person. A child thinks only of himself and his desires, his wants and needs making up the heart of his world and completely occupying his focus. Certainly for the sake of survival, every baby comes into this world as a narcissist, thinking only of its own needs. But with healthy growth of the mind comes a natural change in focus from inward to outward. The thought life of a mature believer must be well trained because the greatest battlefield for the Christian is the mind. Proverbs 23:7 “For as he thinks within himself, so he is” (NASB).

What we think about powerfully influences who and what we will become. Our actions, our attitudes and habits are born in the mind, an offspring of the thought life we entertain.

We can literally change our lives by changing how we think – but we cannot do it alone. God’s standard and guideline for the thought life is very clear and demanding. In fact, it’s downright impossible without God’s power at work in our lives.

Philippians 4:8: “Think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected” (NCV).

We choose what we watch and read, the conversations we have and the time we spend in the Word. If the mind is not filled with good, trust me, the enemy will fill it with bad. The human mind will always set itself on something. In this passage, Paul is challenging us to wisely choose that setting, taking charge of our thoughts by inviting the Holy Spirit to empower God's standard for the mind.

It is time for us to allow the Holy Spirit free reign in training our mind, harnessing our thoughts and measuring them by God's standard. If we don't make up our mind, our unmade mind will unmake us. In order to live right we must think right. How about you? Have you made up your mind?

LET'S PRAY

Lord, I confess to You that my thoughts are not pure. I have allowed the world and outside influences to pollute the mind that should be set on You.

*Pastor Dermoth Baptiste
President, St Vincent & the Grenadines Mission*

children's corner



The first song that the children sang in Sabbath School that morning was, “God is so Good” Ms. Browne had the children sing it slow, then fast, then in rounds.

“Today,” she told the children, “we will be speaking about goodness. Who is the person that is always good?” she asked the children. There was a big shout of “God” by all the children together.

Let us sing the song the children sang right now. (Sing “God is so Good”)

Psalm 73:1 tells us:

**“Truly God is good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.”**

How does God show His goodness to us?

(Get several responses from the children.)

(Have several posters/ banners to display to the children that show God’s love for us.

(e.g. falling rain, sunshine, flowers, family, the cross, etc.)

God is good, and those who love Him and serve Him have His goodness as fruit in their lives.

What can we do to show goodness to those in our homes and in our communities?

(Allow for several responses from the children).

(Read Galatians 5:22,23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law”

Because God is good to us and we are His followers, let us plan a big project to show goodness to people in our community.

ACTIVITY

1. Have a large cardboard box with the label, “Food Drive”
2. Solicit the help of children to bring dry and canned food to their next meeting.
3. Plan a time with the children and their parents to distribute the food supplies to needy families in the church and community.

PRAYER

Fruits of the Spirit– word search

F	A	D	G	H	E	C	S	E	A	J	R	K	K	R	Y
F	R	S	D	L	O	V	E	H	S	W	A	H	I	U	F
S	R	U	J	E	K	U	E	A	S	D	V	D	N	X	N
X	E	C	I	H	G	E	D	S	E	W	S	A	D	G	J
H	U	D	J	T	A	H	E	D	S	J	O	Y	N	E	H
A	X	D	S	N	O	J	K	R	U	Y	U	O	E	N	S
E	F	A	I	T	H	F	U	L	N	E	S	S	S	T	C
E	H	R	W	A	W	S	T	G	E	X	V	E	S	L	T
P	G	S	C	D	E	Y	E	H	H	J	U	R	I	E	E
E	C	N	C	M	R	Y	H	D	E	S	A	H	A	N	J
A	Z	E	D	A	J	E	J	U	R	S	I	O	K	E	V
C	M	G	O	O	D	N	E	S	S	F	P	S	E	S	M
E	E	H	S	J	K	F	L	L	H	O	P	I	D	S	V
A	S	E	P	A	T	I	E	N	C	E	C	A	R	O	Y
A	D	S	E	W	Q	C	D	H	D	E	H	J	R	I	R
L	O	N	G	S	U	F	F	E	R	I	N	G	S	D	T



Word to search

LOVE	FRUIT OF THE	PATIENCE	KINDNESS
PEACE	FAITHFULNESS	SUFFERING	SPIRIT
JOY	GENTLENESS	GOODNESS	LONG



The Product of Faith

FRIDAY JANUARY 17 | PS. EDWARD BLACKMAN

As I walked with my son over the hills and the plains, I took some time to tell him stories of our Great God. I told him about creation, the patient and persevering Noah and also how our ancestors were faithful to God. He asked questions such as: How is it that God just spoke and everything came into place, and how on earth was it possible for the ark to float when there was no trained captain on board? Daddy, why can't I see God? Why do we have to bring a sacrifice? Thank God, as his dad I was able to answer those questions by telling him that God is a mighty and awesome God, and even if we do not understand everything, we must accept them in faith. There was silence for a long while as we continued walking. I answered with pain in my heart when my son suddenly broke the silence and asked his last question: "Dad, we are going to bring an offering to God, we have the wood, and we will find the stones on Mount Horeb, but the lamb - Dad where is the lamb?"

The stories penned in the scriptures about Abraham are widely known, and one of the impressive verses says: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him", Genesis 18: 19. Can the same be said of us? "Abraham "the friend of God" set us a worthy example. His was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice". Patriarchs and Prophets, pg. 128.

Genuine faith is a blessing in the life of a Christian when faith is the product of obedience. Obedience empowers us, and that was precisely the case with Abraham. But when we disobey God we manifest a lack of trust in what God can do through us and for us. The church of the pioneers was spiritually strong because they showed their love for God by being obedient to His word. "It is

those who, with love for God and their fellow men are striving to help others, that become established, strengthened, settled in the truth. The true Christian works for God, not from impulse, but from principle; not for a day or a month, but during the entire period of his life” – Testimonies, vol. 5, pg. 393.

Another example of obedience and revival is found in the story of king Jehoshaphat. When the king and his people humbled themselves before God, sought His presence and brought glory to His holy name, God with His might destroyed the entire army that intended to attack His people. Where there is obedience God shows His power. While Moses was leading the Israelites from the desert to Canaan, Balaam the backslider was paid by the king of the Moabites to curse the Israelites. Instead of cursing he blessed them.

God protects his people who live in accordance with his will. “And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” – Hebrews 11: 32 – 34. True faith is trust in God, with the assurance that He loves us and knows what is best for us. Our will must be subjected to His will.

THROUGH FAITH THERE IS ACCESS TO POWER

The Bible is full of personalities who practiced a genuine active faith in God. By faith Daniel in the lion’s den defied the lions and used their tummy as cushions for his night’s rest. Let us look at Moses. Moses is an excellent example of one who sacrificed his freedom and the luxuries of life to obey God and stand on the promises. His faith was one that put others first and self last. This faith is similar to that of his parents when they placed him by the river believing that God would protect their son and that He had a greater plan with his life. By faith Elijah knowing that it had not rained for more than three years, hearing no thunder and seeing no lightning believed that what God had promised was going to happen. He sent his servant over and over again to a point overlooking the Mediterranean to see whether the Lord had kept His word. He did not lose hope; he had faith in a God who is faithful and his faith was rewarded.

“Much depends on the unceasing activity of those who are true and loyal; and for this reason Satan puts forth every possible effort to thwart the divine purpose to be wrought out through the obedient. He causes some to lose sight of their high and holy mission, and to become satisfied with the pleasures of this life. He leads them to settle down at ease, or, for the sake of greater worldly advantages, to remove from places where they might be a power for good. Others he causes to flee in discouragement from duty because of opposition or persecution. But all such are regarded by heaven with tenderest pity. To every child of God whose voice the enemy of souls had succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed: “What doest thou here?” – Prophets and Kings, pg. 171 – 172.

When we study the stories of these Bible characters we realize that they had one thing in common; that is obedience. They were all obedient to the instructions and directions of God. We must demonstrate obedience to Him by the way we live our lives, ways that are pleasing to Him. True and active faith sees opportunities where others see difficulties. It sees open doors that no man can shut, and if shut cannot be opened without force. “By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.” Hebrews 11:8.

Abraham, the first of the three patriarchs mentioned in the Bible, walked many miles to sacrifice the lamb God had asked him to. This promised son that God had given him at a very old age was to be given back by demand. We may wonder why God made this demand of Abraham, but God knew that Abraham loved him. He had even stepped out in faith and left his home to go to a land unknown to him. Did God need more evidence of his love? Abraham passed the test, yes he did. He obeyed his Master because he loved God. He obeyed even though it hurt. His eyes were on things above not on things on the earth. Abraham was looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. His obedience was the product of faith.

FAITH IS ACTION

“The season of distress and anguish before us will require faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger, faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he persevered and

was determined. Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God". The Great Controversy, pages 621-622.

Faith is not merely professing with the lips. It has to take full possession of the soul. It is more than just believing; it is the way we live on a daily basis. Some Christians are more ardent than others because they have devoted their lives fully to God. Active faith is not dormant; it will be portrayed in the life of a true believer. Faith without works is dead. If there is no genuine faith, the shouting, singing and praising on Sabbath morning is merely religious entertainment, leaving us starved, powerless and aching.

The story of Charles Blondin, a famous French tightrope walker, is an excellent illustration of faith in action. Blondin's greatest fame came on September 14th, 1860, when he became the first person to walk on a tightrope that was stretched 11,000 feet (or more than a quarter of a mile) across the mighty Niagara Falls. People from both Canada and America came from miles away to see this great feat. He walked across, 160 feet above the falls, several times... each time with a different daring feat - once in a sack, on stilts, on a bicycle, in the dark, and blindfolded. One time he even carried a stove and cooked an omelet on the middle of the rope! A large crowd had gathered and the buzz of excitement ran along both sides of the bank of the river. The crowd was astounded. Blondin carefully walked across - one dangerous step after another - pushing a wheelbarrow with a sack of potatoes in it. Then at one point, he asked for the participation of a volunteer. Upon reaching the other side, the crowd's applause was louder than the roar of the falls! Blondin suddenly stopped and addressed the spectators: "Do you believe I can carry somebody across in this wheelbarrow?"

The crowd enthusiastically yelled, "Yes! You are the greatest tightrope walker in the world. We believe!" "Okay," said Blondin, "Who wants to get into the wheelbarrow?" As far as the Blondin story goes, no one did at the time. They said they believed, but... their actions proved that they really did not believe.

Similarly, it is one thing for us to say we believe in God, but it's true faith when we believe God and put our faith and trust in His

Son, Jesus Christ and obey Him. The pen of inspiration wrote the following about faith in action in the book “Patriarchs and Prophets”, page 290:- “God in His providence brought the Hebrews into the mountain fastnesses before the sea, that He might manifest His power in their deliverance and signally humble the pride of their oppressors. He might have saved them in any other way, but He chose this method in order to test their faith and strengthen their trust in Him. The people were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, God would never have opened the path for them. It was “by faith” that “they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.” Hebrews 11:29. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they believed the word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel divided the sea to make a path for their feet”.

The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin ahead, bondage or death. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, “Go forward.” We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves around our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, “Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly; “but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things”.

GENUINE FAITH BRINGS HONOR AND GLORY TO GOD

As God’s people, the time has come when our faith will be constantly tested. 1 Peter 1:7 says: “These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith - of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed”. Faith in action is demonstrated in moments of joy as well as in moments of distress. This faith will be visible in the midst of disasters or misery. In Daniel 3:16-18, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said in reply: “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up". Genuine faith means complete trust in God even if we have to give up our lives for Him.

When the story of the three Hebrew boys and that of Job are compared, we see that Job also honored God in a time of calamity. Even though Job was suffering, was ridiculed, and accused on his sick bed, he held on to the One who gave Him life. He chose to remain faithful to God. Even though he was suffering physically and mentally, he was still strong spiritually. Financial difficulties can cause us to waver as Christians if we allow them to. We pay our tithes, bring a faithful offering and yet we are confronted with the loss of our jobs, outstanding bills, accumulating debts, and helpful electronic appliances that quit just when there is no money to repair them. We may wonder - why give offerings? This is the time when we need to obey and practice genuine faith in the One who never fails us, who will never leave us nor forsake us. Job was determined to obey God come what may. In Job 13:15 he says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." In other words, Job said that nothing would stop him from believing and obeying; not the loss of his children, friends, wealth nor health.

Genuine faith in Christ:

- *stands when all else begins to crumble*
- *holds on when others want to let go*
- *trusts when others are doubting*
- *gives us strength when we are weak*
- *heals broken families and relationships*
- *brings honor and glory to God*

In the book *Christian Service*, page 41, Mrs. Ellen .G. White states: "A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all needs. To seek this should be our first work". When that godliness is attained our faith will be steadfast, unshakeable. She also emphasized in the book *Testimonies to the Church*, Volume 7, pages 211-212 that "our great need is faith in God". In the closing

scenes of earth's history, the church needs a greater manifestation of faith in God. If we say we believe the admonitions in the Bible, we need to live in accordance with its precepts. "Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the word of God, and striving to conform their lives to its precepts.... God calls for a revival and a reformation" - Prophets and Kings pg. 626.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we claim to believe in the seventh-day Sabbath, but are we really keeping the Sabbath or are we just going to church on the seventh day? Jesus taught that keeping the Sabbath also means that we should do good and be a blessing to others on that day. Apart from doing good we also need to spend more personal time with our Creator, do more personal witnessing, and study the Scriptures with others. Are we really keeping the 4th commandment which we so often preach about? Do we really believe in this commandment? Through Mrs. White, God gave us the health message. Do we really believe in that message? Remember that the product of faith is obedience.

We are living in an age in which disobedience to parents manifests itself in many homes, even in Christian homes. Do our young people still believe in the 5th commandment? If young people profess that they believe in the Bible, then they should be obedient to their parents because the product of faith is obedience. Let us exercise more faith each day. May people not only hear what we believe, but see from our acts what we believe. It is my wish that we as God's people will earnestly pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit in greater measure in our lives, while making preparation for the "latter rain," ever demonstrating genuine faith, and thus bringing glory and honor to His holy name. "Remember that the Lord Jesus is the Master Worker. He waters the seed sown. He puts into your minds words that will reach hearts". – Testimonies, vol. 9 pg. 41. The more we put our faith into action the more people will be drawn to Christ. "True success in any line of work is not the result of chance

or accident or destiny. It is the outworking of God's providences, the reward of faith and discretion, of virtue and perseverance. Fine mental qualities and a high moral tone are not the result of accident. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them". – Prophets and Kings, pg. 486.

*Faith of our fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife,
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life.
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to Thee till death.
(SDA Hymnal 304, third stanza)*

*Pastor Edward Blackman
President, Suriname Mission*

Children's Corner

The Christian Fruit Tree was nicely decorated with a very large label of the word love, and smaller labels of joy, peace, gentleness and goodness around it.

Denae, Dwayne and the other children came into the Sabbath School room all excited. They were wondering what other fruit would be added to the Christian Tree that day. The children did not have to wait for very long, for soon Ms. Browne held up a large poster with the word, FAITHFULNESS on it.

She then read a verse of Scripture from which they were reading for the past several weeks:

Galatians 5:22,23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law”

“What is faithfulness?” She asked the children.

“Faithfulness is believing firmly in something or someone” one boy said.

“Faithfulness is being loyal” another boy replied.

“Faithfulness is being trustworthy” said a girl in the back of the room.

“Faithfulness is keeping my word” said Dwayne

“You are all correct.” Ms. Browne told the children.

“One way we show that we have the fruit of faithfulness in our lives is to follow Jesus’ example in the thoughts we think, the words we speak and how we treat our family members and other people.

“What does the Bible say about God and His faithfulness?”

Psalm 100 verse 5 is one of the many Scriptures that give us the answer. Let us read it together:

***“For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
His faithfulness continues through all generations.”***

God is trustworthy; we can depend on Him to love us always and to do what is best for us. He was faithful to our great grandparents. He is faithful to our parents, and He is faithful to us.

We can learn faithfulness by following God in all things. He wants each one of us to be as faithful as He is. Listen to what Proverbs 3:3 says:

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you.”

(Have children repeat Proverbs 3:3 until they know it.)

THEME SONG

ACTIVITY PRAYER

1. What can we do to show that we are faithful to God?
2. How can we be faithful to our family?
3. How can we be faithful to our friends?
4. Complete the FAITHFULNESS WORKSHEET.

Faithfulness

Faithfulness means being firm in what you believe or being loyal.

Finish the verse that tells about something Paul firmly believed in. Write in the letter that comes before each letter in the box.

“This is a faithful saying . . . that

D	i	s	j	t	u
---	---	---	---	---	---

K	f	t	v	t
---	---	---	---	---

d	b	n	f
---	---	---	---

j	o	u	p
---	---	---	---

u	i	f
---	---	---

x	p	s	m	e
---	---	---	---	---

u	p
---	---

t		w	f
	a		

t	j	o	o	f	s	t
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

; of whom I am

chief.” 1 Tim. 1:15

What is something that you firmly believe in?



The Process of Temperance

SABBATH JANUARY 18 | DR. CLINTON LEWIS

This morning we are concentrating on the final spiritual discipline or character trait every Christian must have that the apostle Paul addressed in his letter to the church in Galatia. I am referring to the discipline of **temperance** recorded in Galatians 5:22 - 23.

The Greek word *enkrateia* used by Paul and translated **temperance** in the KJV means **literally “self-control”** (Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Vol. 6, pg.982). The same meaning of “self-control” is found in Strong’s Hebrew/Greek Lexicon. In the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT), 339-340, the word means **“self-control” “dominion which one has over oneself or something.”** J. H. Thayer wrote that temperance means, *“the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites”* (New Greek-English Lexicon, p. 166-167). Jarrod Jacobs summarizes the meaning well when he wrote, “temperance has to do with the self-control of the mind, or will, and that all words and actions are also kept under control.”

MANKIND’S PROBLEM

We have been given tremendous insight into the human challenge to control self by the following words: “The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle” (Steps to Christ, p. 43).

Mankind has a constant struggle with self, with the fleshly nature and this is impacted today by the post modern ways of thinking of this age. Intemperance stares us in many areas: eating, drinking, sleeping, seeing, dress, labour, study, and the list can go on and on.

The wise man Solomon stated in the book of Proverbs that “Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.” (Proverbs 25:28, NIV). An individual without temperance or self-control

can be led to suffer various kinds of problems, difficulties and indulgences. Failure to control self which includes our feelings, our appetites and our drives will result in their controlling us with adverse effects. The bad news is we do not naturally possess temperance or self-control.

OUR PATH TO TEMPERANCE

The good news is that we can all be in possession of temperance or self-control but I must hasten to add that it can only be received from the Holy Spirit. It is a gift of grace.

First there must be a total surrender of our lives to God without reservation. The path to true temperance or self - control begins with a change life. Conversion is the first key step to success in this matter. "Men will never be truly temperate until the grace of Christ is an abiding principle in the heart." (Counsels On Diet and Foods, pg. 35) Only a life changed and controlled by the Holy Spirit can be in possession of the fruit of the Spirit. In view of the above we all must make a conscious decision not to retain self but instead begin to develop self-control through a relationship with Christ.

In Romans 7: 15-18, the apostle Paul outlined his battle with self-control. Constantly he struggled with self, with the flesh, and with the sinful ways of the world. He cried out for help in verse twenty-four, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Thank God Paul found the answer. Only in total surrender to Jesus Christ is it possible. A relieved Paul joyously declared in verse twenty-five "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

God's inspired servant wrote the following two statements, "When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse but a decision of a sanctified will. It consists not in feeling but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is dead to self and alive unto God. Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering self to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as He sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere (Mind, Character, and Personality, p. 206)"

"The preciousness and importance of truth must appear, and will appear, when self is hid with Christ in God; then Jesus will be revealed in our lives. Our characters will be moulded after the divine similitude. Then the Holy Spirit will control the human agent. Men will possess the attributes of Christ" (Manuscript Releases, p. 50).

Have you come to that point of surrendering self, allowing self to be

hid or submerged in Christ which our heavenly Father requires? Are you experiencing that transformation of the whole heart, soul and character that one who is dead to self and alive to Christ enjoys? It is very important to note that in harmony with scripture God's servant says self is hid, self is submerged, not illuminated or removed. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit controlling the human agent. This leads to the next point.

Secondly, we must decide to walk in the Spirit in order to develop temperance. In Romans 8:1, 4 the apostle Paul wrote, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Following our surrender is our walking in the Spirit. That walk according to Romans 8:4 literally means "walk about" "implying habitual conduct" (Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Vol. 6, pg.562). To walk after the spirit therefore means to habitually regulate our conduct according to the dictates and guidance of the Spirit. (Ibid, 562)

It is no accident that in Revelation 3:18 Jesus calls to anoint our eyes with eyesalve. We must ensure that there is oil in our lamps at all times like the five wise virgins in the parable of Matthew 25: 1- 12. There can be no revival and reformation without the Holy Spirit in our lives. There can be no temperance or development of any fruit of the Spirit without the Holy Spirit controlling our lives. The Author of the great change when self is hid or submerged in Christ, must remain in us accomplishing the work of sanctification. The apostle Paul in Romans 8:1, 4 calls it walking in the Spirit. Herein lay the victory of Jesus over every temptation and our victory:

"He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature" (DA, 123).

Thirdly, since self is not removed, victory over self is a life long struggle that requires a day by day surrender. The apostle Paul relates his experience in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." This daily death to self has to be our experience also. So that each day our experience will be what the apostle Paul states in Colossians 3: 10, "... you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

The pen of inspiration states it this way: "The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. (Ministry of Healing, p. 452).

“You need not be thinking that there is a special time coming when you are to be crucified. The time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified;” (The Upward Look, p. 283).

“Every day they will gain self control, until that which is unlovely and unlike Jesus is conquered.”(The Sanctified Life, p. 15)

Our unreserved surrender to God every day will lead us to experience incremental growth in Christ-likeness. We can call it sanctification or reformation but once we daily surrender to God it will happen in us. Each of us has much more land in our lives for the Holy Spirit to conquer. The secret to that lifelong, daily growth experience is well stated in the book Steps to Christ:

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be moulded more and more after the life of Christ.” --- Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ, p. 70

CONCLUSION

“The law of temperance must control the life of every Christian. God is to be in all our thoughts; His glory is ever to be kept in view. We must break away from every influence that would captivate our thoughts and lead us from God. We are under sacred obligations to God so to govern our bodies and rule our appetites and passions that they will not lead us away from purity and holiness, or take our minds from the work God requires us to do.” CH, p. 42.

As we conclude this week of Spiritual emphasis let us remember that God wants us to be Holy temples. He wants us to fulfil the high and noble purpose for which we were created. A victorious life is ours in Christ. He has made every provision for the accomplishment of this in us.

It is imperative that we daily surrender our all to Jesus that everything in us that is unlovely and unlike Jesus be conquered. May we keep our lamps trimmed, burning always and filled with oil. Lets us daily ensure we are accepting heaven’s free offer of “eyesalve” (Revelation 3:18). I humbly pray that the beauty of Jesus will be seen in all of us every day.

*Dr. Clinton Lewis
President, Grenada Conference*

Children's corner

Today would be the last day that the children in Ms. Browne's Sabbath School class study Galatians 5:22, 23.

They all read the Scripture passage together; some of the children could even repeat it from memory:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law"

SELF-CONTROL that was the fruit they were talking about.

Ms. Browne told the class, that self-control meant being in charge of your thoughts, feelings and actions.

She then asked the children what they thought that self-control was. Denae was the first to answer. "Self-control is doing something because it is the right thing to do, although it is not easy or you don't want to do it." she said.

Ms. Browne told the children, that sometimes self-control is difficult but if they asked Jesus to help them have self-control He would help them. Then she read from the Message Bible, Proverbs 25:28, which said:

"A person without self-control is like a house with its doors and windows knocked out."

The children were amazed when they heard this passage of Scripture.

One boy said, "Sometimes when my grandma asks me to put away my toys before I go outside to ride my bike, I get angry and slam the door to my room. I guess I need to control my feelings."

"Yes" the class agreed.

"I need to stop eating so much candy when I go to my friend's house," another child said.

"Children" said Ms. Browne, "I see that you understand the importance of self-control. This fruit is very important, but we cannot have it in our lives without the help of the Holy Spirit.

"Let us pray now and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to love God and to have self-control."

(Allow three children to pray specific prayers for the Holy Spirit to help them to love God and develop self-control.)

THEME SONG

Self-Control



Self-control is the ability to control your emotions and behaviors when you get angry.

Sometimes we lose self-control when someone makes us mad. Can you name a time when you lost self-control? _____

When we lose control we sometimes do things that we may not be proud of. Here is a list of things that people do when they lose control. Check each behavior that you have experienced when you have lost self-control.

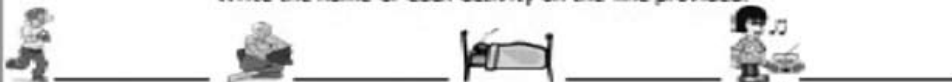
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scream | <input type="checkbox"/> Call names | <input type="checkbox"/> Slam doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Break things | <input type="checkbox"/> Take off | <input type="checkbox"/> Threaten others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hit someone | <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt yourself | <input type="checkbox"/> Throw things |

It is very important that you learn healthy ways to handle anger and stress before you lose self-control. Losing self-control can get you into a lot of trouble with your parents, your teacher and even with the law.

When you feel yourself losing control, try doing these behaviors INSTEAD.



If you feel yourself starting to get angry, try one of these activities to help calm yourself. Write the name of each activity on the line provided.



What other things can you do to help keep yourself from losing control?

Take control of yourself!

A big part of growing up is learning how to control your emotions in a mature, healthy way. Learning self-control can take a lot of time, hard work and practice. When you start showing others that have self-control, people will see how responsible and mature you have become. You will earn respect from your parents, teachers and your peers.

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We appreciate their commitment and know that you will be blessed by their presentations.

H O L Y  S P I R I T
E M P H A S I S W E E K


Fruit
O F T H E S P I R I T

Caribbean Union Conference
of Seventh Day Adventists