

Abiding In Him – Part 8

We came into the Kingdom of God through the doorway called salvation; we learned about faith, the fuel of the spirit realm; and then we endeavored to come to this place called abiding. We used our principles to abide by, to come to the place, to receive the fuller revelation of the abiding love of God, and then to manifest the fruit of abiding. Last time we ended with this poster showing the prism of love based on I Corinthians, chapter 13. On the left side are things that love is. It is patient, kind, rejoices with the truth, bears all things, endures all things, believes all things, and hopes all things. The old creation self has many components in contrast to this. You remember that love does not seek its own, love is not easily provoked, love does not take into account a wrong suffered, and love rejoices with righteousness, with truth, not with unrighteousness. All those aspects of seeking your own, being easily provoked, keeping accounts about wrong suffered, and rejoicing in unrighteousness and rejoicing in untruth are all components left over from the old creation self.

So today, we're going to end up at the fruit of the Spirit. But before we go specifically to the fruit, I want to take a more careful look at this left column by looking at what love is according to I Corinthians 13. As you go through these I want you to notice a remarkable resemblance to the fruit of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5. Love is a fruit of the Spirit and that's what we're specifically looking at here. Patience and kindness are also fruits of the Spirit and are directly mentioned here as being examples of what love is. And as we'll explore as we go along, gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit; gentleness is a precondition to patience and love is said to be patient. Likewise, goodness is a fruit of the Spirit. Goodness is a precondition to kindness. Joy is a fruit and rejoicing, the verb form is mentioned here. Faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit and is contained under the umbrella of bearing all things and enduring all things. Self control is a fruit of the Spirit and in an ultimate sense, self control to the max is denial of self; death, if you will, to the old creation. So the point that I'm making with these comments is simply this. The fruits of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5 are not to be thought of as separate from love. In fact, ultimately there is only one fruit, and that's love and out of that comes all the other fruits of the Spirit. All the other fruits are simply expressions of love when it's brought into full flower. All the other fruits, as I'll explore shortly, can be traced back to be found to be rooted and grounded in love.

Next poster. The next poster simply lists the fruits of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Ephesians 3:17 speaks of being rooted and grounded in love. So we're going to explore being rooted and grounded in love in relation to the various fruits of the Spirit, beginning with joy. We read about love rejoicing with the truth. Rejoice is a verb form; it's an action that flows out of an inner condition. The inner condition is joy. Joy is a euphoria that's experienced in the spirit realm when you're functioning in the truth based on how God views reality. So the cure of joylessness is the truth. And that's simply part of the truth setting you free. That's why Jesus could say so freely, I want you to have My joy that your joy may be full. Because Jesus is the truth, and thus, the fullness of joy, because He is love and love rejoices with the truth. So you can't distinguish love and truth and joy and separate them; because they're all extremely connected. The greatest truth that produces euphoria, that inner sense of emotional, overwhelming positivity is the knowledge of the love of God. Thus, the euphoric condition of the inner man when overflowing with the knowledge of the love of God is joy. When that's

operative, then we rejoice. When that's not operative, we don't rejoice. When it's always operative, we rejoice always as Paul admonished us to do. The main thing that renders it ineffective and produces joylessness is self focus. And the root of the old creation is self. Self focus means that we will measure and interpret the love of God based on how well or how poorly we judge that He's meeting our desires and our needs in the flesh here in the physical realm. But God will always poorly meet our desires when we're functioning in self focus; because self focus is contrary to His Kingdom principles. So when we're in self focus and assessing the love of God, the love of God will always appear to be adequate or inadequate or absent, but never fully received. So joy will not be produced and rejoicing will not occur. So remaining in self focus as a Christian precludes the joy of the Lord being our strength as we're told in Nehemiah 8:10. Thus, we will have little strength for the battle because we have little joy, because most of the time we're still in self focus, assessing God as opposed to receiving the love of God.

So joy is a fruit of the Spirit but it is rooted and grounded in love. No revelation of the love of God, no joy will occur, no rejoicing will occur. Webster, in fact, says that joy is the emotion excited or triggered by the acquisition or expectation of good. Now it should be obvious, we can only expect good when we know the love of God. Because if we perceive that an omnipotent God is full of wrath for us, and not love for us, we cannot have an expectation of good and no joy can occur. Joy, as a result of knowing the love of God, will lead to an optimistic expectation of all things which is a requirement for joy to be present. No optimistic expectation, no joy. So consequently, the love of God, and joy as the fruit of the Spirit, can be distinguished but never separated.

Now to briefly review just to keep everything in focus, remember we reviewed the gifts of the Spirit that flow out of the love of God for us. We are saved by grace through faith. We come into His Kingdom as His children. He gives us gifts as a result of His love. We've seen that we are to desire the gifts but we pursue love. This is about love, not specifically about the gifts. We're told in Scripture that the gifts are worthless, even carried to the extreme unless they result in love. Because the gifts are to bring us to God and God is love. We explored, remember, the love of God, the love of yourself, and the love of others that flows out of knowing the love of God. We've seen that joy is that inner emotional condition of positivity and optimistic expectation that flows out of knowing the love of God for you. So let's go on now to other fruits.

Beginning with goodness—to understand goodness, you have to first look at good. One of the definitions of good, according to Webster, is that which is conceived as fitting in the moral order of the universe. He also defines goodness as excellence or virtue. So think of good as the adjective form, the descriptive form, and goodness as the noun form. One is called or described as good when one has goodness. So what is our standard of good? Matthew 19:17 – There's none good but one and that is God. So God is our standard of good; so goodness is having the excellence or virtue of God. Well that kind of virtue can only flow out of one passion. That's love. When we have a passion for oneness with God as a result of His passion for oneness with us, we will operate in only that which fulfills that passion for oneness. And that fulfills goodness; because we will eliminate everything that is badness that interferes with the fulfillment of our passion for oneness with our God. So every moral choice presented is decided based on the fulfillment of the passion for oneness with God which is love. Virtue is what

results from that passion for oneness with God, Who alone is good. So goodness, itself, as an inner state is rooted and grounded in understanding love as a passion for oneness. Because anything that interferes with the fulfillment of our passion for oneness with our God, Who alone is good, we would call badness and turn from it.

Next is kindness—again kindness is a noun form and according to Webster, is the state or quality of being kind. So he uses the adjective form to define the noun form. According to Webster, kind means the following: benevolent, oriented toward someone else's well being, gracious, operating in unmerited favor toward someone else, proceeding from goodness, or operating in goodness. In other words, kindness and goodness are linked. You cannot do that which is not good and think it is kind. So kindness and goodness can be distinguished, but even themselves cannot be separated. Goodness is that inner state of godly virtue. Kindness is that gracious benevolence that flows out of that inner state of goodness. And such acts of kindness are always oriented toward someone else's well being and always operating in grace, giving someone better than what they deserve. If you give them only what they deserve, what they have earned, then that cannot be called kindness. So kindness is rooted and grounded in goodness; and goodness is rooted and grounded in love. In fact, a simple way of understanding grace is to define it as goodness plus kindness. Goodness, that inner state of godly virtue, that is then expressed as unmerited but benevolence for someone else for their well being. So goodness expressed as benevolent acts always gives better than a person deserves which is kindness.

So we can fall into the trap of trying to separate the fruits of the Spirit. Today I'm speaking to you to remind us of the connectedness of the fruits of the Spirit so that we understand we can distinguish them but we can never separate them. Love, grace, goodness, and kindness can be distinguished in our English language, but can never be separated as functional, spiritual realities in the Kingdom of God.

Next, look at peace. Webster defines peace as a state of tranquility or quiet, freedom from fears, freedom from agitating passions, freedom from moral conflict. So for instance, a man engaging in adultery has agitating passions. Well, if he's a Christian, will have a moral conflict and will operate in fear that he will be discovered. So any man, as a Christian, having an affair will never have peace. Peace will be precluded. So what is the root of peace? Well, the absolute root is Romans 5:1 – Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So peace comes from knowing the love that God has for you, primarily expressed as saving you by grace through faith and that not of yourself. It is a gift from God. So peace is a settled, undisturbed, quiet, tranquil condition of the inner man that flows out of the knowledge of the love that God has for you, particularly as expressed by the cross of Christ. We will live in that constant peace when we simply follow the admonition of Isaiah 26:3 (in the King James version) where speaking of God, it says that – You God will keep the man in constant peace if his mind is stayed on You, or kept on You, fixed on You. Well, what is that other than abiding in God or in New Covenant terminology, abiding in Jesus Christ? So peace, as a New Testament Christian, is a fruit of abiding in Jesus Christ. In fact, you can think of it as the following. We described abiding as constantly dwelling in the presence of God. So abiding in Jesus is constantly dwelling in the presence of the Son of God.

So, at abiding, what did we do? We looked at Who Jesus is, what He is, what He has done, what He is doing and what He will do. So peace becomes that settled, undisturbed, tranquil condition of the inner man who is constantly dwelling in full faith mindfulness of Who Jesus is, what He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do. Because if you are abiding in Him with that definition, peace will flow. Because our war with God is over. There can be no peace in any realm unless you first have peace with your Creator including the eternal security. And that's really a different way of saying all that. The war with God is over and peace is what flows when your mind is stayed there on what is obtained through Jesus Christ.

Well, now look at gentleness. Webster defines gentleness as softness of manners or disposition. Thus, it means having an orientation of softness toward others, contrasted with hardness. But we need to understand that softness as a fruit of the Spirit does not occur in isolation. Softness toward others can only occur when one has a settled, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated inner state that we call peace. So gentleness flows out of peace. It's a manifestation of peace. It's your demeanor toward others when you have the inner state of peace. So gentleness is rooted and grounded in peace; and peace is rooted and grounded in the love of God.

Next comes patience. Webster gives the following definition. Bearing or enduring pains, trials or the like, without complaint, or with equanimity. He then defines equanimity as evenness of mind, calm temper, composure. So you probably see the connection of that with the exposition of love given in I Corinthians 13; because it says love bears all things and endures all things. That's what love does. The unstated implication of the description of love in I Corinthians 13, verse 7 is it doesn't just bear things; but it bears them with evenness of mind, calm temper, composure, and without complaint. Well, how do we know that? Because I Corinthians 13:4 says – love is patient. And what I've just given to you is the definition of patient. So love doesn't just bear all things and endure by clinching the teeth and grinding it out, it does so with calmness, with softness, with tranquility, with patience and gentleness, you see. Other definitions of patience given by Webster include exercising calmness without discontent, persevering, undisturbed by obstacles, delays, or failures. Well can you see that patience, as thus defined, is maintaining gentleness when under fire of contrary conditions? So patience is rooted and grounded in gentleness. And gentleness is rooted and grounded in peace. And peace is rooted and grounded in the love of God; no love, no gentleness, no peace, no patience, you see.

Next, look at faithfulness. Faithfulness is the noun form. Faithful is the adjective form; that is to say the descriptive form. So how does Webster define faithful? Full of faith, disposed to believe, especially in God, firm in adherence to promises, to contracts and to treaties, loyal, true in affection and allegiance, unswerving adherence to a person or thing to which one is bound by love, allegiance, and so on. So we can only have unswerving adherence and allegiance to God when we have a passion to be one with God. Because unswerving adherence to the things of God, is the behavior adopted and expressed by the one who wants to become one with God. So we know the love of God. We have a passion to become one with that God Who has a passion to become one with us. And thus, we are faithful to the things which will fulfill the oneness, the love of God. So faithfulness is rooted and grounded in the love of God.

The last fruit: self control. Understand control as defined by Webster. To check, to regulate, to keep within limits, to exercise directing, guiding, or restraining power over. Well, the self

referred to is our old self, our old creation, the old man, and our fallen nature that is in bondage to Satan or to sin. It's driven by seeking the fulfillment of its perceived self interest, an appetite, driven, remember, by self determination. That is what we exercise control over when we have self control in a spiritual sense. So, again, you probably recognize faithfulness to God and self control can be distinguished but not separated. They're two sides of the same coin. When one is exercising faithfulness to God, one is exercising control over self. When one is not exercising faithfulness to God, one is not exercising control over self because self is the root of the flesh and the flesh is hostile to God. Wherever faithfulness is, self control is. Wherever faithfulness is not, self control is not. So self control as a fruit is rooted and grounded in faithfulness to God; and faithfulness to God is rooted and grounded in love. And self control to the max is simply what is meant by die to self, deny self, and so on.

Now I'm going to use one verse as a summary verse. I'm not insisting that you interpret the verse the same way I'm interpreting; but I want to make what I would regard as a connecting truth with another verse. Romans 14:17 – The Kingdom of God (and that's not only what we are in as children of God, it's what we are to function in according to its principles.) The Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. So we pursue love; but love, itself, remember, is like the wind. It's invisible; but love, like the wind, is seen by its impact. So love is made visible when someone exhibits joy, peace, and righteousness. That is love made visible. And you recognize that joy and peace are specifically listed in Galatians 5 as fruits of the Spirit. But what about righteousness? Why does Paul tie together the Kingdom of God being joy, peace, and righteousness? Well righteousness can be thought of as the other fruits of the Spirit lumped together. So righteousness is what one has when one has goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, patience, and self control. If all of those are lumped together and you had to pick one word which could represent all of those, righteousness is a word that would apply.

Well, what about the phrase, "in the Spirit?" Well the Spirit, remember, is the power to produce it all. These are fruits of the Holy Spirit of God, God Himself. The Spirit does it, remember, by bearing witness of Jesus. John 15:26 – The love of God is poured out in our hearts when the Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus. Because Jesus is the revelation to us of the love of God; not just that He died for us, but the fulfillment of all that was intrinsic in the cross, of being forsaken by the Father, while receiving the fullness of wrath of the Father to pay the price for all sins for all men for all time. That is the cardinal revelation of the love of God and that's why we know love by this—that He delivered Himself up for us. And when we look at all that's involved when He delivered Himself up for us, that's when the fountain of the love of God flows and love is shed abroad in our hearts to fulfill Romans 5:5. It's done by bearing witness of Jesus, see. Everything is summed up in Jesus. The Holy Spirit didn't come to bear witness of Himself; He came to bear witness of Jesus, because Jesus is our revelation of the God Who is love. So love is then exhibited as a fruit of the Spirit. And all the fruits taken together are the Kingdom of God. That's what it looks like. That's how God is revealed on planet Earth through us as earthen vessels to others.

So to summarize...we learned that God's love gives us gifts of the Spirit. The gifts are to lead to love and are absolutely worthless otherwise no matter how highly developed. Love is the only true fruit because that's what God is. When love is put into the prism, we see subcomponents of

what love is and what love does. That shows us what we call fruits (in the plural); but which in reality are only expressions of what love is and what love does—hence fruit (singular). So that's the fruit of abiding in Christ; namely that we receive the revelation of the fountain of the love of God for us and then in all of its manifestations and expressions it flows as fruit through us. In fact, only when we love like that can we deny self, take up our cross, embrace that cross, and follow Jesus, and do so with love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, patience, and self control. It all begins with receiving the love that God has for you as revealed through His Son, Jesus and what happened on the cross. So as a practical Christian reality, attempting to function in the gifts of the Spirit without pursuing love, will lead to pride in the gift, to abuse of the gift, and ultimately to spiritual frustration in yourself and those around you who don't see Christlikeness. They don't see love. Attempting to produce the other fruits of the Spirit without love, will lead to frustration. Attempting to be like Jesus without love will result in frustration. Attempting to bear all things and to endure all things without love will lead to frustration. But we were told in Matthew 11:30 – Jesus said My yoke is easy; My burden is light. He didn't live in frustration. Why did He not live in frustration? Because He loved. So our frustration in our Christian walk is the revelation that we are not rooted and grounded in the love of God. And that frustration is working together for good, according to Romans 8:28. When you receive the revelation of what the problem is and then turn back to the solution. And that's part of what I'm doing in this series on Abiding in Him is to take our frustrations and our lack of the abundant life and turn us back to the point we tried to bypass which is the position of abiding in Him.

Next poster. So now, I'll give you a final exam on abiding in Him. We'll start at the top and work our way down. The question is, do you want to abide with Jesus? What about at death, II Corinthians 5:8 – absent from the body, present with the Lord in Heaven to which we would give a resounding—Yes! What about the rapture, for those still alive at the time of the rapture? I Thessalonians 4:17 tells us we'll meet Him in the air, to go to Heaven and always be with Him. Do you want to be with Jesus at the rapture, if He came today? We give a resounding—Yes! What about at the second coming? Revelation 19:14 says – Those in Heaven will come back with Him on their white horses, wearing white clothing, and so on. Do you want to abide with Jesus at the second coming? Yes! What about the millennial kingdom? Revelation 20:6 says – We will rule with Him on Earth, functioning under His authority. Do you want to be with Jesus when He comes back to rule in the millennial kingdom? To which we would give a resounding—Yes! Well, what about eternity future? Revelation, chapters 21 and 22 describes the New Jerusalem on the new Earth, with Jesus, ruling and reigning with Him forever. Do you want to be with Him in eternity future? The answer would be—Yes! Well, what about now? John 15:1-10 tells us basically, abide in Me. To which we would say, just not yet. Can you see that this approaches the oxymoron of saying no, Lord? Why Jesus would say, why do you call me Lord and not do what I say? Look at our answers; and I'm not trying to give you guilt. I'm trying to open eyes to see the idiocy, if you will, the irrationality of giving resounding yeses to every single point along the way on our map of being with Jesus and abiding in Jesus and with Jesus, we all say yes when it's future and commonly say, just not yet when it's now. So take that home; that's homework for your final exam about this series on Abiding in Him; not because I say it, but because I think this is what the Word of God says when we draw from the sum of His word as truth. And if that applies to you in whole or in part, then before the Lord, simply say, why do I do that? Let me go back to the place I tried to pass on this Christian journey and come

to that position called Abiding in Him. Where every thought is captured in obedience to Him, where everything is summed up in Him; and then go forward where we'll go the next time that I speak because we're going to begin taking up our cross. And except you abide in Him, your cross will be heavy. Your burden will be heavy. It will not be easy and you will be dragging your heels like pulling a stubborn dog on a leash every step of the way, of denying self, taking up your cross and following Him, except you abide in Him on the rest of the Christian journey.

So my time is up and I thank you for yours.