

Patience, Kindness, Goodness | 12.08.13

One of the traditions growing up in the my house was shopping on Christmas Eve. I came across this poem and thought it fit well with those experiences.

"'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the mall,
All the people were shopping for gifts, big and small.

There was pushing and shoving, with nary a care,
Eye gouging and tugging, and pulling of hair.

The children were screaming for Santa to see,
They wanted Playstation, XBox 360, and Wii."

When out from the speakers a gruff voice did explode,
'There's a sale down at Walmart, half-price I am told!'"

The stampede that resulted, rattled my core
as with smile on my face I crashed through the door

On cash, or on visa, it matters us naught
all the gifts that we've purchase all the lines that we've fought

Be you husband, or children, handicap or elder,
Get out of my way or You'll get run over

Christmas time is hear! The lights, the decorations, the songs, the movies, the traditions ... and ... well ... the people.

On Tuesday a report came out that revealed Christmas is sixth most stressful event in life. Yep, up there with divorce, moving, purchasing a house and changing jobs, comes Christmas. You'd think the birth of the Savior would relieve stress not create stress.

However, a majority of people say holiday family gatherings causes the greatest strife and fighting within marriages, children, and relatives.

Now, I don't mean to be pessimistic, but statistics show this be true from the number of suicides, divorces, and family disturbances, related to holiday gatherings.

How should believers deal with consumer driven Christmas?

How do we handle the stress of family gatherings, friends, work parties, and all the other expectations during the next 3-4 weeks?

How does faith, promote godly living during the craziest time of year?

Turn to Gal 5

I believe our study in Galatians reveals the key to handling all of life's circumstances, most of all the difficulties of the holidays.

God's best, is experienced when believers walk by the Spirit, believing the promises of Jesus.

READ Gal. 5:16-24

In Gal. 5:16-24 God commands believers to walk by the Spirit. When a believer does, **God promises three results.**

The first promise God gives to those who walk by the Spirit is

1. **You are no longer under the law.** Paul offers over a dozen results of living by faith in 2:15 through 5:15. He sums those results in 5:18 *“if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.”*

God's promise for the law's requirement was Jesus. Jesus fulfilled the law for those who believe. Jesus became the curse for man. Jesus redeems those who believe. Jesus gives life to those cursed who believe. **Jesus is God's promise to his righteous requirements in the law.**

The second promise God gives to those who walk by the Spirit is

1. **Believer's will not give in to the desires of the flesh.** The flesh's desires are evident as pointed out in verses 19-21.

How does God deliver on this promise?

God's promise for YOUR flesh is His Spirit. His Holy Spirit is given to all who believe at repentance and faith. His Holy Spirit is the confirmation of adoption, and sonship. His Holy Spirit is His compelling agent in our lives revealing God's nature in us. **The Holy Spirit is God's solution for our fallen sin nature.**

The third promise of God gives to those who walk by the Spirit is

2. **Believer's produce the Spirit's fruit.**

The fruit of the Spirit is 9 attitudes or attributes packaged into one fruit.

These 9 attributes characterize each and every work produced by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not only God's solution for overcoming the believer's natural desires toward sin, the Spirit is also God's solution for bearing God's attributes to the world.

I believe at this time of the year, more than ever, believers must exhibit the fruit of the Spirit.

As Phil Robertson would say, producing the fruit of the Spirit will make you **HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY!**

To help illustrate the fruit of the Spirit each of you has been given a paper plate.

Several weeks ago I used an apple illustrate Love, Joy, and Peace.

- The Spirit produces Love which is at the core or center of everything a believer will do. Love is of God.
- The Spirit produces Joy which feeds the fruit even as a stem. Joy is the nourishment of the soul which produces righteous Spirit lead works.
- The Spirit produces the seeds of peace, held by love, nourished by Joy, and although the world and our circumstances around us are troubling, Spirit produced peace is sheltered from all forms tribulation.

These three attitudes are produced by the Spirit for every thought, action, and conversation of the believer! Love, joy, and peace are our core!

So take a moment to draw a core.

Right in the middle right out LOVE

Draw a stem, with a line and on that line write JOY.

Now, under LOVE, draw three seeds and write PEACE under them, maybe you want to put arrows.

At the core of every Spirit lead person is love, joy, and peace.

If we move out from the core into the meaty or fleshy part of the fruit

We find next three attributes produced by the Spirit.

These attributes are PATIENCE, KINDNESS, AND GOODNESS.

Don't get ahead of me with your plate. You will need to be Patient.

I like pie during the Holidays! Apple pie is hard to turn down. I have enjoyed hundreds of apple pies and from my memory I do not recall any of them having a seed, or stem or a core, not one of them had skin. All were made of the meaty part of the apple.

That's the part we enjoy most. It's sweetest, juiciest, and contains the most vibrant tastes. Yet to get to it you must bite through the skin. The apple gets cut, peeled, and distressed.

I think of patience, kindness and goodness as the fleshy part of an apple; Under the skin, but most desirable because they are sweet.

Likewise, for those who walk by the Spirit, their sweetest works are often out of distress through patience, kindness, and goodness.

I. The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, and PATIENCE.

In the Greek, patience is two words shoved together.

Makro + thumos. Macro means long or large, thumos means temper.

Literally translated, it is **long-tempered**. The KJV appropriately uses the word longsuffering. The Spirit will produce works that are long-tempered.

We use the opposite phrase **short temper** to describe people who are easily angered. This is a work of the flesh Paul described as **fits of anger**.

The contrast of flesh and Spirit are clear, the flesh has a short tempered demanding me, me, me, the Spirit produces a long temper, a patience that does not demand me.

When I think of patience I think of ... passively waiting. However this is not the meaning.

Patience, kindness, and goodness in English are often thought of as passive qualities. However, the Greeks thought of them as active.

The Galatians would have understood patience to mean the ability to restrain one's, feelings, emotions, and passions toward retribution.

Patience has the capacity to be wronged and not retaliate. It enables us to bear injury without avenging ourselves. Patience bears up under oversights and wrongs afflicted by others without retaliating.

If you have ever been patient toward one who has bit into you, you know patience is very active. Patience requires much effort to restrain yourself. This is the patience the Spirit produces.

We do not live in a culture where this type of patience is practiced. In all things, our culture demands to have it now. We want things to be fair and just. This is true in our commerce and also in our activities.

- Patience is exhibited in the store when the price is wrong. Are you enraged, complaining about how awful the store is and how many times in the last month they have gotten the price wrong or is the Spirit producing long temperedness. Are you willing to be wronged for the sake of patience?
- Patience is exhibited today after the service when you go out to lunch and your waitress is busy with another table. She fails to re-fill your drink, is tardy to take your order, or doesn't offer you dessert. So you don't tip, and maybe you demean and demoralize, or does loving patience pour from the Spirit within? Are you willing to unjustly be the forgotten one?
- Patience is exhibited when a brother in Christ sins against you, offends you, or does not act according to your preferences. Patience does not seek revenge, return offense for an offense, or conjure up some scriptural platitude for preferential superiority. Patience seeks reconciliation and restoration.

The Spirit produces an attitude of patience similar to His own patience described in Romans 9:22.

22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath, and to make known his power, **has endured with much patience** vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,²³ in order to (for the purpose of) make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

God is described as long suffering. He is patient.

10 times the bible says, God is “slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.”

God, for a period of time, will overlook the wrongs done to him. He is patient. Think of his dealing with Israel. God’s patience does not overlook wrongs but rather points his love, his grace, and his mercy.

This is what the attitude of patience must do for the believer. Patience must point to the love we have received in Christ, the grace we have experienced through the gospel, the mercy we have cherished in eternal life.

The Spirit produces patience when you are wronged. SO ...

- When you are cut off on the hwy or in the parking lot, be patient.
- When your dinner is not exactly how you ordered it, be patient.
- When your in-law says something snide, rude, or offensive, be patient.
- When your children are unthankful, be patient.

God’s answer to unjust treated or unfairly words of is love, joy, peace, and **patience**.

If you would put patience right on the bite line. The Spirit produces patience in all we do especially when we are treated unjustly!

II. **The Spirit will also produce kindness, alongside love joy peace patience.**

Kindness comes from a Greek word that **means to be useful**.

It implies the act of lending or loaning that which is useful. **Kindness is an internal attitude that is expressed outwardly through serving others.**

In June I had several trees cut down from my property and several of the men in the church showed up with chainsaws, gloves, and muscles. For the morning they loaned what was useful to me in removing these trees by cutting them up and piling them in a burn pile. They were acting kindly toward me.

Kindness is giving the use of ones time, talents, tools, or treasure to the use of another. Kindness is an attribute that is evident in times of needed request. However, kindness is MOST EVIDENT without request.

While we were working, my neighbor Ken, came out on his own, with his chain saw, and began working alongside us cutting and piling. His kindness was shown because he was not asked, he just saw how he could be useful and jumped in.

I personally tend to think of kindness as a greeting. A person is kind because they are warm and say hello, or have pleasant conversations. **This however is NOT the kindness the Spirit produces.** The Kindness the Spirit produces, is active visible works which serve others.

Kindness has heart to be useful. To jump in and serve in every way possible.

- Kindness sees a person drop their cane, a book, a pen, money, or any possession on the floor and picks it up.
- Kindness cooks meals for those in need.
- Kindness helps a neighbor complete a project in their yard.
- Kindness loans a vehicle, a tool, or a helping hand.
- Kindness retrieves the carts in the parking lot, grabs top shelf items for the vertically challenged, serves the elderly, poor, and motherless.

There are so many ways to be useful and serve those around you. When you walk by the Spirit, he will lead you to an attitude of kindness through serving those around you. As you serve, as you are used, there is this sweetness that surrounds you.

Paul describes God's kindness in Romans 2:4

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

God's kindness led believer's to repentance. God is kind, not because of his disposition toward mankind, but because he became the suffering servant for mankind.

*Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.*

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;

*he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.*

God is kind because he acted on our behalf. He saw our need, he met our need.

Believer, the Spirit will produce kindness in your works. This is the social gospel of the Father. Kindness looks for needs and meets them, then gives glory to God. There are many needs in our world today. There are many people in our county and our neighborhoods who are hurting and need the kindness of the Savior exhibited through believers acts.

God's solution for the needs in this world is kindness. These acts will go unpublicized, unrecognized, and yet literally make or break it for someone.

And so on your plate write kindness on the inner ring.

Kindness serves, this Christmas as you are with family, friends, or strangers in the mall, grocery store, or restaurant. Walk by the Spirit and he will guide you to be useful. Serve others, be kind, walk by the Spirit and he will produce love, joy, peace, patience, and Kindness to be useful.

III. Third, the Spirit produces goodness.

At the root Goodness in the Greek is **benevolence**. Goodness is generosity in material and spiritual things.

Goodness seeks the welfare of others.

Kindness reflects **usefulness in personal service**,

goodness reflects **benevolence in personal generosity**.

Once again goodness is active and not passive. Goodness is giving but act of giving comes from an internal attitude of goodness.

Today when I think of a good person I usually limit it to mean they are mostly a moral or virtuous person. They live their life through a moral lens. However this is not the meaning these Galatian believers would have understood.

Goodness is more than an internal spiritual or moral compass. It acts out morality to benefit those within its reaches.

Interestingly, the Greek word used for goodness is ONLY Found in biblical writing. There is no secular mention of this form of goodness or benevolence. Scholars highlight this act as a self-denying attitude which reflects Christ.

Goodness therefore is more than moral character, and integrity; although both of those are rooted within goodness. Goodness is behavior that benefits others over self. It sees the image of God in all people. It sees the hand of God upon all creation. It seeks the betterment of those around even at a sacrificial cost.

John Barclay wrote, "Goodness is the widest word for goodness; it is defined as "virtue equipped at every point."

From a core of love, joy, and peace, with attitudes of patience and kindness the Spirit produces an acute awareness and generous passion for other people.

The Flesh ... well ... that is concerned with I, me, my, and mine. THE SPIRIT produces works that work for the good of others.

Friends, walking by the Spirit will produce an attitude of goodness.

- Goodness will cause you to sense, see, feel, and then give away to those around you.
- Goodness is paying the \$3 the person in front of you is short at the grocery store instead of looking away in embarrassment.
- Goodness will cause you interrupt your life, your agenda, your dreams to give of yourself to the life of struggling soul.
- Goodness is always spiritually edifying and beneficial to everybody you come in contact with.
- Goodness is uplifting because everything he does is spiritually beneficial to everybody who comes in contact with him.
- The Bible says it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Goodness is the work of the Spirit that touches the lives others.

Think on the goodness of God. God at every point is the producer of good things. From Creation to salvation, God is good and provides good. In Goodness God created. In Goodness God made promises to fallen mankind which led to the goodness which caused God to take the form of a servant. Goodness caused God to give himself as a ransom for many. Goodness caused God to raise from

the dead. Goodness causes God to work all things after the counsel of his will because God is Good.

Goodness is an internal passion with exterior works. It touches needs physically, so I think of Goodness as these ribs that funnel the inner workings outward. SO put Goodness on the rib.

This year, the world will remain focuses on itself! The season of me, me, me is upon us. Believer if you are tired of that, walk by the Spirit!

He will cause you to remove your focus from self and compel to produce acts of love, with joy and peace, exemplifying patience, kindness and goodness to those around you.

Ultimately the world will look at the Spirit lead believer and they will see faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To finish our illustration, write faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control on the outer edges because these three attributes are the visible attributes that are seen from a distance.

What is God's solution to this crazy, sinful, me filled world we live in?

Walking by his Spirit, trusting God's word is true, producing fruit that glorifies the Father.

When the lives of those around you are crazy, walk by the Spirit, produce everlasting fruit that cannot be mimicked by focusing on yourself.