

**Ga 5:22–23 (ESV)** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>(23)</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

### 1. We continue looking at the Fruit of the Spirit

- A. We've seen this grows naturally in our life as we yield to the Spirit  
Not letting sin sever that fellowship with Christ
- B. We've also seen this fruit that grows naturally is demonstrated through obedience
  - 1). IOW this fruit that grows internally is also a command to live it out externally  
Ex. Love is a fruit – Love is also a command = to express that fruit if we feel like it or not
- C. We choose to love – depending upon the Spirit to be able to live that love out
  - 1). He takes that fruit – that Christlike character and lives it out through us
  - 2). This is what we are also calling the exchanged life

**Ga 2:20 (ESV)** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- a). Our hatred exchanged for His love – anxiety for His peace – Sorrow for His joy  
Our impatience with His patience – our harshness with His gentleness...

### 2. We have seen five pieces of fruit so far

- A. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness.
- B. We pick up our list with two more: Faithfulness and gentleness – we'll finish it off next week

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS FAITHFULNESS

### 1. Word means: Loyalty and fidelity

- A. The faithful person is a man or woman with integrity
  - 1). They won't slander you behind your back
  - 2). You don't have to worry this person won't do what they said they'd do – person of their word

**Transition:** As usual like the rest this characteristic is found in God

- A. It is to be expressed through us who are made in His image

## The Faithfulness of the Father

### 1. God is referred to as a rock who is faithful

**Deu 32:4 (NIV)** *He is the Rock*, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. *A faithful God* who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

- A. That may seem strange at first – how could a rock and faithfulness link? It does and it's important
- B. God is called a rock because a rock demonstrates stability
  - 1). The wind can beat against it – the waves crash against it and it will not fail

**Why David said this: Ps 18:2 (ESV)** The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

- a). David said I run to Him – I hide in Him and let the circumstances of life beat against Him
- b). Those things that move you won't move Him
  - 1a). He is faithful – He is steadfast – He will keep His promises
  - 2a). When you hide yourself in Him you are safe

**Thought:** As I was thinking about God being a rock – unmovable – I thought of His character

- A. His character is unmovable – He is a loving Father who always has time for us
  - 1). A rock doesn't change moods – neither does He – He always want you to be around Him
  - 2). He will always be faithful to who He says He is – a loving Father – a good shepherd

**Transition:** Let me show you how freeing this thought of God’s faithfulness is

- A. Everything we rely on – all the promises are all built upon this
  - 1). If He weren’t faithful it would all crumble – but He is – that frees us up to really live

## 2. The freedom God’s faithfulness brings

**TURN: Mt 6:19–24 (ESV)** “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>(20)</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>(21)</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <sup>(22)</sup> “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, <sup>(23)</sup> but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! <sup>(24)</sup> “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

- A. Sounds serious – where your treasure is your heart will be also! That will steer your heart
  - 1). So Jesus says – make sure you’re putting your treasure in heaven – so you’ll be heavenly minded
    - a). So you’ll be attracted more to heaven than to earth = so important

**Transition:** To strengthen this – He adds in v. 24

**Mt 6:24 (ESV)** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

- A. Love money and eventually it will turn your heart from God – Jesus said that! What a verse for OC

**Thought:** But here is the problem – we’re afraid to release our grip on money

We worry – what if I don’t have enough – I need a big bank account and a big buffer zone

- A. We work so hard to get to a place where we will never feel like we really need God
  - 1). We keep ourselves in this vulnerable spiritual state
- B. To free us from that fear – Jesus reminds us of God’s faithfulness

**Mt 6:25 (ESV)** “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

- A. You’re so worried about having enough for your necessities – here is the command
 

I tell you *do not be anxious about those things*
- B. Then he tells us why anxiety makes no sense for a child of God – Your Father is faithful!

**Mt 6:26 (ESV)** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. *Are you not of more value than they?*

- A. A common technique in ancient literature – arguing for lesser to greater
  - 1). If He takes care of birds – if He is so concerned about them
 

How much more is He concerned about you and will take care of you

    - a). So why do you worry about having enough for food? Makes no sense

**Mt 6:27 (ESV)** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”

- A. He’s already figured out that moment you’re going to be with Him
 

**Psa 139:16 (NIV)** your eyes saw my unformed body. *All the days* ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

**Job 14:5 (NLT)** You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and *we are not given a minute longer.*

  - 1). All the days – down to the very minute are decided
    - a). Do you really think worrying about that is going to move that number
 

Jesus says it won’t – not by one minute!
- B. Trust that your loving Father has the perfect day and the perfect way for you to go

- 1). So many are so worried about dying – they never live – never take any risks
  - a). The whole time you haven't extended your time on earth by one second

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**Mt 6:28-30 (ESV)** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>(29)</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>(30)</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

- A. Food. Life. Clothing – God knows what you need and will provide them
- B. Notice the rebuke – “O you of little faith?” – our doubt dishonors Him
  - 1). We know the promises – when we don't believe them – we are calling Him a liar  
“I see what you said. I just don't believe it enough to rest.”
    - a). How long is it going to take until we've seen enough of His faithfulness to rest?  
How many times does He have to come through until we finally get it?

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**Mt 6:31 (ESV)** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

- A. Remember the rule for a “Therefore” = always ask “What is it therefore.”
  - 1). This is a word that looks back at what has been said before  
Here it is saying – because of what I've just said – the reasonable response is rest
- B. Don't go around worried when you have a loving Father
  - 1). If He provides food and drink for the birds how much more you  
If He clothes the fields in splendor – how much more you
  - 2). If you worry – you're not going to add anything to your life

**Transition:** Then He says what we are acting like when we do worry

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**Mt 6:32 (ESV)** For the Gentiles (pagans) seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

- A. When you worry about these things – you're acting like a pagan who doesn't know God at all
  - 1). You're acting like your heavenly Father doesn't know or care about your needs

**Transition:** Fine! Then what do I do instead? Where should I invest my energy instead of worry

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**Mt 6:33 (ESV)** But *seek first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, *and all these things will be added to you.*

- A. The fact that God is faithful – that He will keep His word – that He will take care of you  
Frees you up to seek Him first in all things
  - 1). Now you can return to the exhortation to store up treasures in heaven with no fear
    - a). I can put Him first in my finances – time – talents etc. = I will have enough
- B. The promise is live for Him – put Him first in all things then rest in all the rest
  - 1). One commentator called this the most guaranteed “retirement plan” ever devised
    - a). You're always hearing this plan is backed by the FDIC
    - b). This plan is backed by G O D – His faithfulness to His promises

**Point:** You *must learn to trust Him* – all His promises are backed by *His faithfulness*

- A. Learn to lean on Him in a daily manner – then you can Rest – LIVE LIFE!
- B. Back to the exchanged life – you yield to the Spirit – that is putting God first isn't it
  - 1). Then you rest in the exchange – the care of God
  - 2). Remember what was said about Hudson Taylor and the exchanged life

"He was an object lesson in quietness. He drew from the Bank of Heaven every farthing of his daily income. 'My peace I give unto you.' Whatever did not agitate the Savior, or ruffle His spirit was not to agitate him. The serenity of the Lord Jesus concerning any matter this was his ideal and practical possession. He knew nothing of rush or hurry, of quivering nerves or vexation of spirit. He knew there was a peace passing all understanding, and that he could not do without it."

a). That is the fruit of the yielded life – putting Him first – resting in His faithfulness

b). What do we sing? Do we believe it when we do?

“Great is Thy faithfulness!”

“Great is Thy faithfulness!”

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—

“Great is Thy faithfulness,” Lord, unto me!

1a). Because His faithfulness is great – all of His promises are sure

**Transition:** God is faithful – He expects His children to possess this quality too

## The Faithfulness of the Believer

### 1. God expects the believer to be faithful with all He’s given to us

1 Co 4:2 (ESV) Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

A. Remember: You are a steward NOT an owner of what He has given to you

1). Your time, finances, talent, possessions

2). God has entrusted you with these things – and expect you to be faithful with them

a). Scripture says He will return one day and we will stand before Him and give an account

### 2. God will only raise up those who are faithful

A. There are so many believers who really want to be something in the church

1). They are talented – gifted – but they’re not faithful – their inconsistency ruins what they could be

a). You never know when they’ll be there – if they’re going to keep their word

*“God has no larger field for the man who is not faithfully doing his work where he is.”*

B. Here is a principle you see all over the NT

Those God raises up are faithful in the little things – you can trust them – they are people of their word

1). Unfortunately that is a quality we don’t seem to esteem in this society

**Pr 20:6 (ESV)** ... but a faithful man who can find?

a). Our politicians lie – promise the world and give nothing – we still vote for them

b). People tell you they’re going to do something – last minute call – something better came up

1a). I can’t believe how many times that happens

C. We seem to think faithfulness is not that big of a deal today – God still thinks it is

1). So many parables talk about the importance of faithfulness

2). All our rewards will be determined by how faithful we are

3). Remember what God is going to say “Well done, good and faithful servant”

a). I want to hear that – but to hear that – I must be faithful

### 4. Faithfulness is a fruit – therefore it will grow naturally when we yield to Him Faithfulness is a command – therefore it is a choice

A. Yield to the Spirit so this important fruit is growing

Then choose – day-by-day – moment by moment to live faithfully for the Lord

1). Depending upon the Spirit to enable it

2). He will enable you to live faithfulness out – and as you do it will grow – 30-6-100 fold

B. I love this story about John Wesley – showing a man living faithfully for God

David Jeremiah tells a story about: John Wesley was once asked by a woman what he would do if he knew that at midnight the next night he would die. After he thought about it for a minute, he said, “Well, I would do just what I intend to do. I would preach at Gloucester this evening, and again at five o’clock tomorrow morning. I would ride to Tewkesbury and preach in the p.m. and I would meet the societies after the meeting. I would go to Martin’s who have invited me over for entertainment, and I would retire at ten o’clock. I would commend myself to the Holy Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in Glory.”

He was saying if he knew he would die tomorrow night, he wouldn’t have to change anything because he had determined to be faithful to what God had called him to do. He would just keep on doing what God had called him to do and it wouldn’t make any difference.

- 1). Just that steady – daily – commitment to the will of God in His life – yielded
- 2). If we knew God was coming back tomorrow we shouldn’t have to change a thing

## I. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS GENTLENESS (Some Translate this **Meekness**)

### 1. Meekness isn’t an esteemed characteristic in today’s age

A. People can see it as being a doormat – spineless – easily abused

- 1). We’re in the “I don’t get bitter. I get even” age.

B. Meekness is not being a doormat

- 1). Word in the Greek is interesting = Power under control
  - a). Picture the power of a horse submitting to the bit and bridle
  - b). It is the mark of a person who may be very powerful – but has been mastered by God
- 2). One defined it as: A gentleness by those who have the power to be otherwise

C. This is something you want because it leads to blessing

**Mt 5:5 (ESV)** “*Blessed are the meek*, for they shall inherit (**rule**) the earth.

**Transition:** Let’s look at a couple Biblical personalities who were described as Meek

### 2. Moses was meek

**Nu 12:3 (ESV)** Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.

A. Here is the perfect example to see that *meekness is not weakness*

- 1). There were times he was filled with a righteous anger  
Other times he was filled with a great compassion
- 2). He broke the tablets and slew those who worshipped the golden calf = righteous anger  
The next moment he’s pleading with God not destroy His people – blot me out = compassion

**Point:** So the meek man or woman will get angry at the right things

A. They will use power if they can correct injustice etc.

- 1). But there is also a great compassion – a meekness – mildness - running alongside of it

B. How do we know when to use what – power – and how to be gentle – we remain yielded to the Spirit

- 1). As we are filled – controlled – we will act properly

### 3. Jesus is the perfect example of a meek person

**Mat 11:28-29 (KJV)** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am *meek* and lowly in heart...

**Paul wrote: 2 Co 10:1 (ESV)** I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the *meekness and gentleness of Christ...*

A. Was Christ weak? A door mat? NO! Remember Him clearing the Temple? Power!

B. He was strong and had tremendous authority - BUT He also characterized Himself as being meek

**Point:** He got mad when it was appropriate - and took aggressive action when that was the right thing to do

A. But was extremely gentle when that was appropriate

- B. His power was under control - When anger & action wasn't the right thing to do He restrained Himself
  - 1). OTW He had the greatest possible strength under the greatest possible control
- C. Some people are wimps - never acting when they should
  - Other people are tyrants - throwing their weight around when they shouldn't
    - 1). The meek and Gentle person is controlled by the Spirit – their responses are appropriate

**Question:** What angered Jesus? One thought before we move on

### **The indifference of religion angered Jesus**

- A. The Pharisees regularly raised an angry response from Him = righteous anger
  - 1). Why? Many times - because they were so indifferent to the needs of others
- B. Remember when He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5
  - 1). A man was crippled for 38 years – forced to beg
    - Jesus healed him – gave him back his life again
    - “Rise take up your mat and walk!” – Praise God! There is compassion and mercy
  - 2). I’m sure even the Pharisees rejoiced over that! Right! Wrong? They are furious
    - “Hey Buddy, you know you’re not supposed to carry your mat on the sabbath.”
    - a). All they could see was their little man-made interpretation of the law was broken
    - b). While the rest rejoiced – they whined – legalists! Useless!
  - 3). They’d rather see that man lying there crippled then pick up his mat on the Sabbath
    - a). There was no compassion – no heart for the hurting – the lost
- C. I see these people arguing finer points of theology on the Internet – get so mean
  - 1). I feel like breaking in and saying – when was the last time you ever told anybody about Jesus
    - When was the last time you showed any compassion to the hurting around you?

**Point:** I have a feeling Jesus righteous anger is being aroused by much of the supposed church today

## **Meekness and the believer: Why it’s important**

### **1. It is necessary to receive from God**

**Jas 1:21 (ESV)** Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and *receive with meekness* the implanted word...

- A. Put away sin because it creates a hardness – an appetite suppression
  - 1). Receive the Word with meekness = submit yourselves to God so you can receive it
    - a). Bring your power – your ego – under His control – humble out!
  - 2). Become proud – exalt your power – your independence – you’ll receive nothing from Him
    - Lk 14:11 (ESV)** For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”
    - a). To receive from God you must humble yourself before Him

All that you are – under control – yielded to Him – *Spirit-filled*

**J. Oswald Sanders:** The meek person has a preference for the will of God.

**Point:** The meek read the Word – ready to obey what they read – bringing themselves under God through it

- A. Approach Him in this way – He will light that word up – He will give you understanding

### **2. It is necessary to help restore a fallen saint**

**Ga 6:1 (ESV)** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness (*or meekness*). Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

- A. When we catch somebody at something – we can feel empowered – really let them have it
  - I feel better about myself because I’ve caught you at something = evil
- B. Paul says – No – you must go to them expressing the fruit of gentleness or meekness

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- 1). You must put that power under the control of God – so that you act like Him  
You must go yielded to the Holy Spirit so you act like Christ
  - 2). People who lack this gentleness just blow people out of the water  
They don't accomplish anything but make the person harder – defensive
    - a). Then usually get proud about how tough they were  
“I really let them have it. I told them this or that” – How'd that work out?  
“They left the church” Great! Good job!
  - C. Meekness has a reasonableness to it – it wants to gain the heart  
It wants to promote Christ – so that the person will listen
    - 1). It's not so much about winning battles – it is about exalting God  
**2 Ti 2:24–25 (ESV)** And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, <sup>(25)</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,  
Dr. Hudson Taylor, a great missionary statesman, was once dressed in Chinese costume waiting for a boatman to take him across the river in his country. A richly dressed Chinese was waiting for transportation, too. When the boat came, the man decided to move up in line. Not seeing Mr. Taylor was a foreigner, he hit him in the head and pushed him off into the mud. Taylor's first impulse was to jump up and lay the man out. But God wouldn't let him. When the man discovered that Taylor was not a native, he said, “Are you a foreigner and you did not strike back?” Hudson Taylor said, “Friend, this is my boat. Get in and I'll take you wherever you want to go.” Dr. Taylor began telling him about Jesus. By the time they got to the other side of the river, the man had accepted Christ.
      - a). That was power under God's control – used for God's glory
- 3. Again it is a fruit that grows in the yielded life  
It is also a command that must be obeyed in the power of the Spirit**
- A. Because it is a command it is to be obeyed regardless of how you feel
    - 1). Hudson Taylor felt like lashing out – he responded to God instead – under His control
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## CONCLUSION

- 1. We add two more Christlike characteristics we need to see in our lives**
  - A. Faithfulness and meekness – so necessary to make an impact on this world
  - B. We will finish this up next week